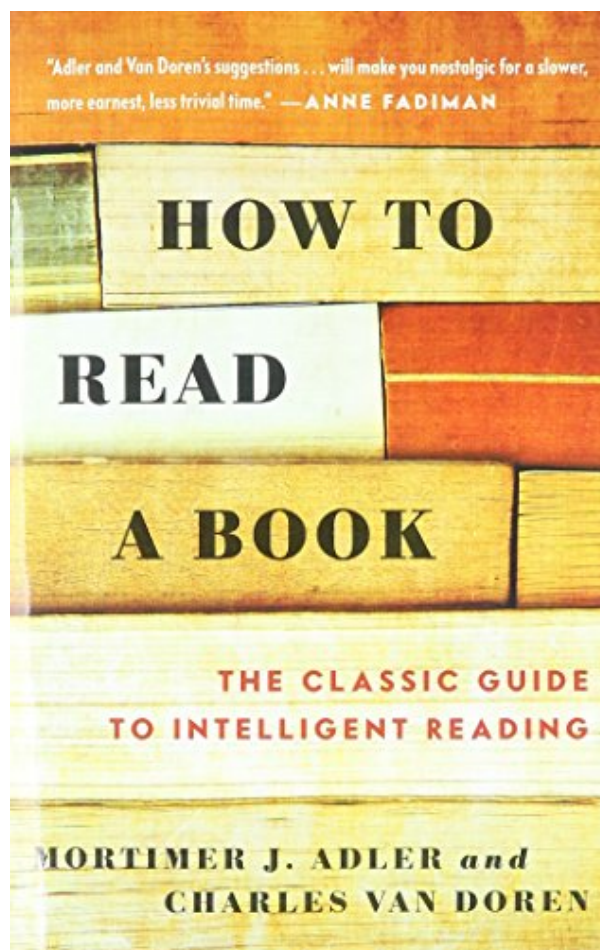


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On Rereading this Classic 50 Years Later

By John Mccarthy

I first read this book 50 years ago and then took from it one basic idea that has guided my reading ever since...That one idea was that every good non-fiction book deserves 3 readings. The purpose of the first rapid read is to get an overview of the general thrust or central thesis of the book. The second reading involves digging in, an attempt to understand and analyze the author's central argument or thesis, and the third reading

is for the purpose of argument, i.e., of reflecting on where we agree with the book and where we disagree, and why...

50 years after that first reading, i still try to follow the advice (above), and find it as helpful and true today as it was back then.

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First, re the value of reading the intro or the preface in which the author often says specifically and explicitly what his central thesis is.

Second, re the value of reading the last chapter or even the very last 8 to 10 paragraphs in which the author may, once again, summarize the whole central purpose and argument of the book, which gives you a key to understanding the work in its entirety.

And, third, don't begin arguing with a book until you are certain that you have understood it as well as you possibly can.

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The best reference book you can have!!!!

By A Customer

Now in my last year of law school, I found myself extremely angry upon completing this book. How invaluable this book would have been if I had read it before reading the hundreds of books that were assigned to me in high school, college, and law school. Why didn't anybody tell me about this marvelous gem?!! But the good news is that I have my entire life ahead of me, and I will begin putting this book to use right away.

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79 of 88 people found the following review helpful.

A promise kept

By Jennifer Hoins

Adler does exactly what he promises in the title. He tells you how to read a book. I read this book for a high school rhetoric class and though we read it in three weeks, I was so impacted by it that I have tried to apply his many suggestions.

He covers reading very thoroughly. Ideally, when we read a book, we first grasp what the author is saying (the who's and what's), then what he means, then how that relates to our life. These three steps fit into the first three levels of reading. The first asks 'What is the book saying?,' the second 'What type of book is it?,' and the third 'What does the book mean?.' There is another level which basically is a topical study- reading books to find what various authors say about a given topic.

Adler recognizes that we often don't get much from a book because we don't know how to read well. (He covers the relationship between reader and writer and their responsibilities toward each other)So for each level he gives rules and suggestions for how to read on that level. Often these are in the form of questions to ask that book.

Another thing Adler recognizes is that not all books are equal. Many books only need to be read on the first

level, some on the second, and a few on the third. This also affects how fast one reads. The speed should match the difficulty, importance, and quality of the reading- even within the same book.

In addition to covering the four reading levels, Adler takes different types of books and gives specific applications of his suggestions to these books. You would not ask the same questions of a history book that you would of a play.

Oh and Adler provides exercises and a very good reading list to get you started on the road to good reading. So Adler is very thorough and logical in his presentation and the reading is very enjoyable. His style is easy to understand and interesting at the same time. He covers some other topics here and there like reading education and the great books. This is an excellent book for both students (life long learners included) and those who just want to learn and enjoy books more.

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