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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Top 10 Classic Books to Read Before You Die

Did you find the Greek Classics and other masterpieces of Western literature too daunting to even begin in high school or college?

[Richer Resources Publications](#) is making reading the Classics a lot easier with translations that make the books accessible, especially to readers who found earlier versions too difficult, but still want to read the great works of literature. As [NPR](#) said, the translations by Richer Resources' Ian Johnston of Homer's *Iliad* and *Odyssey* make the epic tales more accessible to an audience less grounded in the classics.

Here is a "bucket list" of Classics you always wanted to read but were afraid to try that Richer Resources Publications put together and recommends as a holiday gift package. The translations by Richer Resources make the books easier to read than what you may remember from high school or college:

1. The *Iliad* by Homer. [Full](#) or [abridged](#) version.

The story of the Achilles and other warriors in the tenth year of the Trojan War is the oldest and finest epic poem in Western culture. The poem tells of the famous quarrel between Agamemnon and Achilles and all that resulted, the extraordinary battlefield accomplishments of the world's most famous warriors and the final encounter between the Trojan Prince Hector and Achilles.

2. The *Odyssey* by Homer. [Full](#) or [abridged](#) version.

The *Odyssey* tells the story of famous Odysseus, hero of ancient Greece, and his 20 year wandering return from the Trojan War. Beset by heartache and diversion, Odysseus' story is one of adventure, glory and despair of one man's determination to return home and of the times in which he lived. Timeless in the telling, it depicts an age when mythology and truth merged into reality in literary form. The translation remains very close to Homer's text, yet the modern English idiom is extremely fluent and clear, with a rhythm well suited to the speaking voice.

3. [Oedipus the King](#) by Sophocles.

This is Sophocles' finest play and the purest and most powerful expression of Greek tragic drama. The new verse translation by Ian Johnston captures the compelling tension of Sophocles' drama in one of the great masterpieces of Western literature.

4. [Antigone](#) by Sophocles.

The story of Antigone begins soon after Oedipus' downfall and the ensuing quarrel between his two sons over who should rule Thebes, a conflict which leads to a battle in which the two sons kill each other.

5. [The Oresteia](#) by Aeschylus.

One of the most popular plays of all time, *The Oresteia* is a sequence of three plays that can't be matched for tragic power and has lessons for the ages.

6. [Bacchae](#) by Euripides.

The story holds up a desperate view of human experience, a vision that led Aristotle to call Euripides "the most tragic of the poets." Here the royal power in the polis, represented by the young king of Thebes, Pentheus, is quite incapable of dealing with a political crisis in an effective way, and the god who has initiated the crisis, Dionysus, a son of Zeus and a cousin of Pentheus, displays a selfish, arrogant, and unforgiving malice which leads him to destroy in the most horrific way the oldest human royal family in Greek legend because he believes he has been insulted by the citizens of Thebes. Whatever hopes men entertain for a peaceful harmony between the gods who rule the world and the human beings who live in it are here exposed as futile and cruel delusions.

7. [Birds](#) by Aristophanes.

The play celebrates the extraordinary character of Athens in a manner that is at once robust, lyrical, satiric, and full of ironic resonance. In the play, two Athenians, Pisthetairos and Euelpides, seek to escape the aggressively quarrelsome climate of Athens by hiking up into the mountains to seek advice from the birds about where they might find a more peaceful place to live, a city where they can relax and enjoy life. But once they begin interacting with the birds, the Athenians cannot resist persuading the creatures to organize themselves into a city state, so that they can exert pressure on the gods above and men below in order to gain power over them (for example, by controlling the gods' access to human beings). The impromptu scheme escalates, and by the end of the play, Pisthetairos has supplanted the gods and now rules everything, an occasion which they all celebrate by eating a meal of cooked birds.

8. [Clouds](#) by Aristophanes.

Aristophanes, the greatest comic dramatist of ancient times, takes issue with the intellectual and moral depravity of his fellow Athenians, particularly with their thirst for radical innovations in

traditional ways of thinking and for their unscrupulous self-interest. The play is particularly famous for its portrayal of Socrates, the target of much of the very robust satire.

9. [On the Nature of Things](#) by Lucretius.

The poem is a long, impassioned plea for a materialistic understanding of the universe and of human life, without reference to divine creativity or benevolence or to a future life.

10. [The Metamorphosis, A Hunger Artist, In the Penal Colony, and Other Stories](#) by Kafka.

Kafka's fictions typically present an unusual, sometimes surreal story, in a deliberately flat prose, so that there is a wrenching gap between the weirdness, tension, humor, or horror of the events described and the apparently calm surface of the language.

All of these translations were done for Richer Resources Publications by [Ian Johnston](#), who is available for interviews on how he made these 10 Classics easy to read and not as daunting for readers to enjoy. The publisher is also available for press interviews.

Starting Dec. 1, Richer Resources is giving away one copy of each of these 10 must-reads to its followers on Facebook and Twitter. Follow it on Twitter at [@RicherResources](#) and on Facebook at [Richer Resources Publications](#). Richer Resources is also offering 20% discount off [packages](#) of Classic books to its Facebook and Twitter followers, who can get the discount code by following Richer Resources.

For other holiday gifts, Richer Resources offers books full of [quotations of mankind's wisdom](#) on such topics as art, childhood, parenting, education, aging, gardening, music, poetry, the sea, and a roundup of mankind's wisdom from Aristotle to Zimmerman. A 20% discount is also offered for a [package](#) of the quotation books.

For more information, contact:

Media Release Contact:

Aaron Crowe at aaron.crowe.consulting@gmail.com or 925-482-5934 or [@aaroncrowe](#)

Richer Resources Publications Contact:

Patty Crowe - Publisher 1926 N. Woodrow Street Arlington, VA 22207

Phone: 703-276-9344 Toll Free: 1-800-856-3060 Fax: 703-276-0193

email: PR@RicherResourcesPublications.com

Website: www.RicherResourcesPublications.com