



# A History of Reading

By Alberto Manguel

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At one magical instant in your early childhood, the page of a book—that string of confused, alien ciphers—shivered into meaning, and at that moment, whole universes opened. You became, irrevocably, a reader. Noted essayist and editor Alberto Manguel moves from this essential moment to explore the six-thousand-year-old conversation between words and that hero without whom the book would be a lifeless object: the reader. Manguel brilliantly covers reading as seduction, as rebellion, and as obsession and goes on to trace the quirky and fascinating history of the reader's progress from clay tablet to scroll, codex to CD-ROM.

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## Editorial Review

### Amazon.com Review

This wide-ranging and erudite exploration of the topic of reading is suffused with the spirit of Manguel's fellow Argentinian Jorge Luis Borges. Manguel takes us through the history of reading as if leading us room by room through the infinite library Borges constructed in one of his famous stories. Manguel's approach is not chronological, but thematic. His chapter topics jump from attempts to censor reading to the physical surroundings favored by readers, from the limitations of translations to the esotericism of books written for a restricted readership. Throughout he moves easily through time and geography to quote anecdotes and examples from diverse sources. Manguel's enthusiasm, and the impressive breadth of his reading, will make his readers eager to rush to the nearest library.

### From Library Journal

Writer, translator, and editor Manguel (In Another Part of the Forest, LJ 6/15/94) has produced a personal and original book on reading. In 22 chapters, we find out such things as how scientists, beginning in ancient Greece, explain reading; how Walt Whitman viewed reading; how Princess Enheduanna, around 2300 B.C., was one of the few women in Mesopotamia to read and write; and how Manguel read to Jorge Luis Borges when he became blind. Manguel selects whatever subject piques his interest, jumping backward and forward in time and place. Readers might be wary of such a miscellaneous, erudite book, but it manages to be invariably interesting, intriguing, and entertaining. Over 140 illustrations show, among other things, anatomical drawings from 11th-century Egypt, painting of readers, cathedral sculptures, and stone tables of Sumerian students. The result is a fascinating book to dip into or read cover to cover. For public and academic libraries. Nancy Shires, East Carolina Univ., Greenville, N.C.  
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### From [Booklist](#)

Reading, Manguel tells us, is almost as essential to our existence as breathing. How did this come to be, and how has reading shaped our minds and our cultures? These are big, complex questions, but Manguel, who has devoted his life to books, is able, by virtue of assiduous research and creative analysis, to answer them, delighting his enraptured readers in the process. Much of the charm of this highly original history lies in the autobiographical sketches Manguel, who has lived all over the world, includes, from his own childhood epiphany when he realized he could read, to an account of his experiences reading aloud to the blind writer Jorge Luis Borges. Manguel spices his discussion of such rich topics as "metaphors of reading," books and religious traditions, book design, and the voluptuousness of reading with profiles of the likes of Petrarch, Proust, Kafka, Colette, and Whitman. Then, because one can't talk about books without talking about libraries, he offers a lively portrait of Callimachus, the clever fellow who organized the legendary lost library of Alexandria. Unique, enlightening, and as captivating as a celebration of reading should be. *Donna Seaman*

## Users Review

### From reader reviews:

#### Matthew Williams:

In this 21st century, people become competitive in every way. By being competitive today, people have to do something to make all of them survive, being in the middle of the particular crowded place and notice by surrounding. One thing that occasionally many people have underestimated this for a while is reading. Yeah,

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**Bryan Lewis:**

The book untitled A History of Reading contain a lot of information on the idea. The writer explains her idea with easy method. The language is very straightforward all the people, so do definitely not worry, you can easy to read that. The book was authored by famous author. The author will bring you in the new era of literary works. You can actually read this book because you can keep reading your smart phone, or product, so you can read the book throughout anywhere and anytime. If you want to buy the e-book, you can wide open their official web-site along with order it. Have a nice study.

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