

reading

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The Reading Room

Free books you can actually keep. Everything listed here is in the public domain in the United States, which means you can download it, copy it, put it on a device, print it, give it away, or set it in type and sell it — without asking anyone and without paying anyone.

Every download link on these pages points at a file, not at a web reader. Most are EPUB, which every e-reader and phone understands; Project Gutenberg titles also carry a Kindle format and a plain text file.

Shelves

- [Religious Texts](#) — scripture and religious classics from seventeen traditions. **185 books, and this is the shelf being built out first.**

More shelves are planned — fables and folk tales, the ancient classics, and the standard novels — all from the same public-domain pool. See [Public Domain Books](#) for what qualifies.

Before you download

- [E-readers and Kindle](#) — which format to pick, and how to get a file onto a Kindle, Kobo, or phone.
- [Public Domain Books](#) — what public domain actually means, what you are allowed to do with these files, and where the edges are.
- [Book Archives](#) — the four archives these links point at, who runs them, and what each is good for.

How this library is built

The download links are not typed by hand. Each book is recorded as an identifier in a build catalogue, and the builder resolves that identifier against the source archive's own catalogue before writing the table. A wrong identifier fails the build instead of shipping as a live link to a missing file.

Wikisource entries are additionally checked by file size, because several of its Sacred Books of the East volumes are table-of-contents pages that export as a twenty-kilobyte shell rather than a book. Anything under forty kilobytes is rejected and replaced with a scanned copy from the Internet Archive.

To add books, edit the catalogue and re-run the builder:

```
node scripts/build-reading-library.mjs --check      # resolve everything, write nothing
node scripts/build-reading-library.mjs             # write the tables
node scripts/build-reading-library.mjs --scaffold  # also create any new shelf page
```

Related

- [Literature](#) — writing about books rather than the books themselves.

- [Religion](#) — the religion section, which the religious texts shelf serves.
- [Leisure](#) — the front page.