



# Philosophy: 100 Essential Thinkers

*Philip Stokes*

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## **Philosophy: 100 Essential Thinkers** Philip Stokes

Philosophy in the West has a long and venerable tradition, stretching back to almost six centuries before the birth of Christ. Philosophy 100 Essential Thinkers introduces one hundred of the world's greatest philosophers and locates them within the school to which their work belongs.

## **Philosophy: 100 Essential Thinkers Details**

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# From Reader Review Philosophy: 100 Essential Thinkers for online ebook

## Michael says

Easy to read and most of the two page spreads for each philosopher feel like they have just a paragraph or two that really boils down what this guy (or one of the couple of women) were getting at. Skimming back through it for a second time allows you to catch the relationships/evolution of western philosophy a lot better too, as the book is separated into different schools of thought various philosophers fall into (whilst still being basically chronological) and also references back and forth between the philosophers a lot. Enlightening ;)

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## A. J. McMahon says

The basic premise of this book is to select 100 thinkers of all time and present their ideas by giving three or four pages to each. There are two problems with this idea. The first is how to select the thinkers in question. Admittedly, this sounds straightaway like a recipe for a very long argument, preferably with a glass or two of wine to quench the thirst which might well accompany such a debate. To my mind, for example, Philip Stokes bizarrely omits the incomparable Nicholas of Cusa while including a pointless nutter like Moritz Schlick, and this would be only the first of my many objections to his selection. The second problem has to do with the difficulties of any one person summarising the ideas of the thinkers in question in the aforementioned three or four pages. This might well be a task beyond the powers of any scholar living or dead or yet to be born. Encyclopaedias usually get around this problem by giving each separate summary to a particular expert in the field, thus dividing the labour. In the daunting circumstances in which Stokes was placed, his only strategy to write a book worth reading (in mine own humble opinion) would have been to just write something totally idiosyncratic, a kind of blogging riff on the eternal themes of philosophy in the spirit of Burton's Anatomy of Melancholy, but instead he makes the fatal error of trying to write something conventional.

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## Avery says

This book's simplicity may have been what cursed it. Giving only three and half pages at most to each of the 100 philosophers presented, it sometimes went way too basic and other times had to cram so much information in such a small space that it left me feeling very confused. It didn't help that it would introduce concepts in philosophy without really fleshing out what they meant.

The organization would also seem at the surface to be a good idea, but it wasn't handled well. The philosophers were divided into specific philosophical groups or movements, such as the Stoics, the Sceptics, the Idealists, the Materialists, etc. However, these different movements and groups are never fully explained, and there isn't even a dividing page when you go from one group to another. The only indication you get is in the left hand corner of each page.

I was also disappointed to find that there wasn't any kind of a glossary. Even a really basic set of terms and definitions would have been helpful, especially in an introductory book where it's normal to assume the reader is being exposed to all of the information for the first time.

Overall, I did not like this book, and am giving it one star. It was a major chore to get through despite the fact that I genuinely find this subject interesting. However, it did at least leave me with some idea of works I can read in the future.

Review originally posted at The Book Cat.

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### Χρ?στος Αναστασ?πουλος says

Παιδαρι?δες. Π?ς μπορε? να χωρ?σει ολ?κληρη φιλοσοφ?α κ?θε φιλοσ?φου σε μια μ?νο σελ?δα; Αυτ? το βιβλ?ο ε?ναι απλ? για να γνωρ?σουμε τους φιλοσ?φους που υπ?ρξαν στην ιστορ?α και τ?ποτα ?λλο.

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### Matt says

A well organized and fairly concise reference guide to some very big Western thinkers. I appreciated the grouping of thinkers into schools of thought, their portraits (always helpful to put faces to names), and the author's ability to show the progression of ideas throughout the millenia and tie it all together with plenty of cross-references and a helpful (for other neophytes) glossary.

However, I admit that much of the latter 20th century sections had me struggling (particularly "The Linguistic Turn"), but I don't know if I can fault the author for this. These concepts might just be too dense to try to adequately unpack and explain in one page.

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### Phil says

a good introduction to many good philosopher. It is short so don't think of it as a complex work but more a starting point to go in search of further information

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### Terese says

Good summary of the history of philosophical thoughts. Though the texts are more or less brief introductions to the individuals it is pretty much what is expected and required from a book with this layout.

Though most of the material was familiar I was pleased with the founding (for me) of the pragmatists and a few of the linguistics I had never heard about and will now look into further.

This book is excellent to give you an overview in order to decide where your interest lies and where you want to read deeper into the subject.

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## **Raoul says**

This comes across a bit like a highly abridged and less (openly) biased version of *A History of Western Philosophy*. In fact, *Western Philosophy: 100 Essential Thinkers* might have been a more suitable title.

Keeping the book to a sane length means that the profiles are all rather shallow, which was particularly obvious when I actually knew something about the people being discussed. I wouldn't want to face a test on those mentioned, whether the unexamined life is worth living or not, particularly as listening to it as an audiobook means that a short distraction can result in missing a significant chunk of a profile, but it seems to work fine as a collection of brief summaries of the views of various important figures.

Random fact: J Austin wrote *Sense and Sensibilia*.

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## **Bertrand Brasil says**

Para muitos, filosofia é um assunto complexo e de difícil entendimento. Porém, com o lançamento do livro de Philip Stokes essa impressão com certeza vai mudar. Os 100 Pensadores Essenciais da Filosofia apresenta, por meio de texto e ilustrações, uma análise minuciosa acerca daqueles que são considerados os maiores intelectuais de todos os tempos. De consulta fácil, este é um livro obrigatório para qualquer biblioteca que pretenda ser respeitada e admirada.

A obra, nono volume da coleção Os 100 +, é resultado de anos de pesquisa. Stokes começa sua análise pelos pré-socráticos e acadêmicos, passando pelos estoicos e escolásticos, chegando aos racionalistas, aos liberais e, finalmente, aos novos cientistas. Os pensadores comentados neste livro representam as ideias de mais de vinte escolas diferentes.

Não à toa Os 100 Pensadores Essenciais da Filosofia recebeu tantas críticas positivas na internet, entre elas a dos leitores da Amazon. Excelente tanto para os neófitos, estudantes e curiosos quanto para os mais eruditos, professores e especialistas.

Alguns dos pensadores presentes na obra são: John Locke, Arthur Schopenhauer, Heráclito, Zenão de Eleia, Epicuro, René Descartes, Charles Darwin, Friedrich Nietzsche, Noam Chomsky e Émile Durkheim.

Uma obra sem igual, simples, concisa, informativa e totalmente ilustrada.

“Uma incursão fascinante no mundo cerebral dos pensadores essenciais.” (The Boox Review)

“Um livro de referência que o leitor vai querer consultar constantemente.” (Carol Raker Collins, Ph.D.)

“Philip Stokes tem uma abordagem perfeita de seu material: ele o leva a sério, mas o resultado é intelectualmente divertido.” (Daniel Levinson)

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## **Sean McGowan says**

Good.

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## **Tash says**

Really enjoyed the well done overview of philosophy through history. Although I did find that the descriptions of each philosopher very short and filled with too much contextual information.

Good beginning point to start your own philosophical thoughts and find philosophers for further reading!

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## **Pablo Arce says**

It's a great introduction to Philosophy, in chronological order starting from the ancients. Gives you a short summary of their bio and main ideas up to the modern time thinkers.

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## **Timothy McNeil says**

Very readable, Stokes' Philosophy - 100 Essential Thinkers suffers mostly from the lack of interdisciplinary expertise the author brings to the project. The errors in the histories of the philosophers are frequent (Stokes often relies on the laziest explanation of events rather than any complex investigation of the realities of the individuals, in part, I imagine, because it does not advance the traditional narrative of their works), but he also does a grave disservice to the fields of mathematics (when separated from philosophy), physics, and linguistics (notably ignoring the advancements in neurolinguistics that have shown the philosophic endeavors of the 20th Century have been very much in error).

It is hard to expect much from a survey of 100 figures, but the book does give a nice overview to each. My preference would have been that instead of giving whole page pictures to most of the subjects that Stokes would have brought in experts in other fields to better elucidate the theories and the impact(s) on thought/society, but more to catch the various errors reported as fact.

It is also interesting that Stokes (in 2002) is still advancing Einstein's Theory of Relativity as unchallenged in its conclusions. Seeing as how it has glaring problems (including it being outright wrong on several fronts), Stokes' effort to build towards a current understanding bound by Quine (overrated) and Einstein is just further proof that a project like this needs many people of specific expertise to keep an agenda driven (and ultimately false) narrative from making the project appear to be laughable.

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## **Britt says**

I have discovered the difference between empiricism and existentialism, and I certainly prefer the former. I absolutely despise materialism, but that's no big surprise. My problem with philosophy is that we are often subjected to the ramblings of some rich idiot who never had a work a day in his life, or a lazy bum who lives off of a family member his whole life (Marx). Neitzsche was in love with his own sister. These are not people we should take advice from. Many of them were unstable themselves. Don't get me wrong, I appreciate some good philosophy, but to sit around and pontificate...that in and of itself is not succeeding at life. Of course, that's just my philosophy.

This was a good book! I no longer feel as confused when I hear obscure words. If nothing else, it notes the subtle changes in language over time, and also shows how some things never change.

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### **Rachel Noel says**

This book is pretty much what you would expect it to be based on the title and the publisher's summary. It is a glimpse into the lives and philosophies of 100 western philosophers. As someone with a BA in Philosophy, I can tell you that this was a pretty pleasant refresher. If you are looking for a place to start in terms of studying philosophy, this is a good book.

I do wish that Stokes had either specified that it would be all western philosophers or that he would have included some alternate philosophies. In the US you don't normally get to study philosophers outside of western philosophy, and I had hoped that this book would introduce me to some new people. Also, while I applaud the idea that all the philosophers get the same number of pages, it was evident the author had problems with this. Sometimes the pages would be dense and you felt much was left out, other times they would be sparse and you could tell things were stretched.

If you're teaching or taking a Philosophy 101 course, this could be a good supplement. If you're wondering where to begin in your own personal philosophy readings, this is a good place to start.

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