

Classics A Very Short Introduction Very Short Introductions

India has a long, rich, and diverse tradition of philosophical thought, spanning some two and a half millennia and encompassing several major religious traditions. This Very Short Introduction emphasizes the diversity of Indian thought, and is structured around six schools which have achieved classic status. Sue Hamilton explores how the traditions have attempted to understand the nature of reality in terms of an inner or spiritual quest, and introduces distinctively Indian concepts such as karma and rebirth. She also shows how Indian thinkers have understood issues of reality and knowledge — issues which are also an important part of the Western philosophical tradition. ABOUT THE SERIES: The Very Short Introductions series from Oxford University Press contains hundreds of titles in almost every subject area. These pocket-sized books are the perfect way to get ahead in a new subject quickly. Our expert authors combine facts, analysis, perspective, new ideas, and enthusiasm to make interesting and challenging topics highly readable.

From Zeus and Europa, to Diana, Pan, and Prometheus, the myths of ancient Greece and Rome seem to exert a timeless power over us. But what do those

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myths represent, and why are they so enduringly fascinating? Why do they seem to be such a potent way of talking about our selves, our origins, and our desires? This imaginative and stimulating Very Short Introduction goes beyond a simple retelling of the stories to explore the rich history and diverse interpretations of classical myths. It is a wide-ranging account, examining how classical myths are used and understood in both high art and popular culture, taking the reader from the temples of Crete to skyscrapers in New York, and finding classical myths in a variety of unexpected places: from arabic poetry and Hollywood films, to psychoanalysis, the bible, and New Age spiritualism. ABOUT THE SERIES: The Very Short Introductions series from Oxford University Press contains hundreds of titles in almost every subject area. These pocket-sized books are the perfect way to get ahead in a new subject quickly. Our expert authors combine facts, analysis, perspective, new ideas, and enthusiasm to make interesting and challenging topics highly readable.

'I disapprove of what you say, but I will defend to the death your right to say it' This slogan, attributed to Voltaire, is frequently quoted by defenders of free speech. Yet it is rare to find anyone prepared to defend all expression in every circumstance, especially if the views expressed incite violence. So where do the limits lie? What is the real value of free speech? Here, Nigel Warburton offers a

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concise guide to important questions facing modern society about the value and limits of free speech: Where should a civilized society draw the line? Should we be free to offend other people's religion? Are there good grounds for censoring pornography? Has the Internet changed everything? This Very Short Introduction is a thought-provoking, accessible, and up-to-date examination of the liberal assumption that free speech is worth preserving at any cost. ABOUT THE SERIES: The Very Short Introductions series from Oxford University Press contains hundreds of titles in almost every subject area. These pocket-sized books are the perfect way to get ahead in a new subject quickly. Our expert authors combine facts, analysis, perspective, new ideas, and enthusiasm to make interesting and challenging topics highly readable.

A concise and lively introduction to the world of French literature.-publisher description.

This stimulating Very Short Introduction to music invites us to really think about music and the values and qualities we ascribe to it. The world teems with different kinds of music-traditional, folk, classical, jazz, rock, pop-and each type of music tends to come with its own way of thinking. Drawing on a wealth of accessible examples ranging from Beethoven to Chinese zither music, Nicholas Cook attempts to provide a framework for thinking about all music. By examining

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the personal, social, and cultural values that music embodies, the book reveals the shortcomings of traditional conceptions of music, and sketches a more inclusive approach emphasizing the role of performers and listeners. ABOUT THE SERIES: The Very Short Introductions series from Oxford University Press contains hundreds of titles in almost every subject area. These pocket-sized books are the perfect way to get ahead in a new subject quickly. Our expert authors combine facts, analysis, perspective, new ideas, and enthusiasm to make interesting and challenging topics highly readable.

Mary Beard is one of the world's best-known classicists - a brilliant academic, with a rare gift for communicating with a wide audience both through her TV presenting and her books. In a series of sparkling essays, she explores our rich classical heritage - from Greek drama to Roman jokes, introducing some larger-than-life characters of classical history, such as Alexander the Great, Nero and Boudicca. She invites you into the places where Greeks and Romans lived and died, from the palace at Knossos to Cleopatra's Alexandria - and reveals the often hidden world of slaves. She takes a fresh look at both scholarly controversies and popular interpretations of the ancient world, from The Golden Bough to Asterix. The fruit of over thirty years in the world of classical scholarship, *Confronting the Classics* captures the world of antiquity and its

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modern significance with wit, verve and scholarly expertise.

For generations, the study of Greek and Latin was used to train the elites of the western world. Knowledge of classical culture, it was believed, produced more cultivated, creative individuals; Greece and Rome were seen as pinnacles of civilization, and the origins of western superiority over the rest of the world. Few today are willing to defend this elitist, sometimes racist, vision of the importance of classics, and it is no longer considered essential education for politicians and professionals. Shouldn't classics then be obsolete? Far from it. As Neville Morley shows, the ancients are as influential today as they ever have been, and we ignore them at our peril. Not only do they have much to teach us about the past, but they can offer important lessons for the complex cultural, social and political worlds of the present. Introducing Polity's Why It Matters series: In these short and lively books, world-leading thinkers make the case for the importance of their subjects and aim to inspire a new generation of students.

What is dreaming, and what causes it? Why are dreams so strange and why are they so hard to remember? Replacing dream mystique with modern dream science, J. Allan Hobson provides a new and increasingly complete picture of how dreaming is created by the brain. Focusing on dreaming to explain the mechanisms of sleep, this book explores how the new science of dreaming is

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affecting theories in psychoanalysis, and how it is helping our understanding of the causes of mental illness. J. Allan Hobson investigates his own dreams to illustrate and explain some of the fascinating discoveries of modern sleep science, while challenging some of the traditionally accepted theories about the meaning of dreams. He reveals how dreaming maintains and develops the mind, why we go crazy in our dreams in order to avoid doing so when we are awake, and why sleep is not just good for health but essential for life. ABOUT THE SERIES: The Very Short Introductions series from Oxford University Press contains hundreds of titles in almost every subject area. These pocket-sized books are the perfect way to get ahead in a new subject quickly. Our expert authors combine facts, analysis, perspective, new ideas, and enthusiasm to make interesting and challenging topics highly readable.

Introduces major topics in ancient Greek civilization through the development of eleven characteristic city states, ranging from prehistoric Cnossos through Byzantion, and including the future Marseilles as well as Athens and Sparta.

Very Short Introduction offer stimulating, accessible introductions to a wide variety of subjects, demonstrating the finest contemporary thinking about their central problems and issues.

Viruses are big news. From pandemics such as HIV, swine flu, and SARS, we are

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constantly being bombarded with information about new lethal infections. In this Very Short Introduction Dorothy Crawford demonstrates how clever these entities really are. From their discovery and the unravelling of their intricate structures, Crawford demonstrates how these tiny parasites are by far the most abundant life forms on the planet. With up to two billion of them in each litre of sea water, viruses play a vital role in controlling the marine environment and are essential to the ocean's delicate ecosystem. Analyzing the threat of emerging virus infections, Crawford recounts stories of renowned killer viruses such as Ebola and rabies as well as the less known bat-borne Nipah and Hendra viruses. Pinpointing wild animals as the source of the most recent pandemics, she discusses the reasons behind the present increase in potentially fatal infections, as well as evidence suggesting that long term viruses can eventually lead to cancer. By examining our lifestyle in the 21st century, Crawford looks to the future to ask whether we can ever live in harmony with viruses, and considers the ways in which we may need to adapt to prevent emerging viruses with devastating consequences. ABOUT THE SERIES: The Very Short Introductions series from Oxford University Press contains hundreds of titles in almost every subject area. These pocket-sized books are the perfect way to get ahead in a new subject quickly. Our expert authors combine facts, analysis, perspective, new ideas, and enthusiasm to make interesting and challenging topics highly readable.

Sweeping across two millennia and every literary genre, acclaimed scholar and

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biographer Jonathan Bate provides a dazzling introduction to English Literature. The focus is wide, shifting from the birth of the novel and the brilliance of English comedy to the deep Englishness of landscape poetry and the ethnic diversity of Britain's Nobel literature laureates. It goes on to provide a more in-depth analysis, with close readings from an extraordinary scene in King Lear to a war poem by Carol Ann Duffy, and a series of striking examples of how literary texts change as they are transmitted from writer to reader. The narrative embraces not only the major literary movements such as Romanticism and Modernism, together with the most influential authors including Chaucer, Donne, Johnson, Wordsworth, Austen, Dickens and Woolf, but also little-known stories such as the identity of the first English woman poet to be honoured with a collected edition of her works. Written with the flair and passion for which Jonathan Bate has become renowned, this book is the perfect Very Short Introduction for all readers and students of the incomparable literary heritage of these islands. ABOUT THE SERIES: The Very Short Introductions series from Oxford University Press contains hundreds of titles in almost every subject area. These pocket-sized books are the perfect way to get ahead in a new subject quickly. Our expert authors combine facts, analysis, perspective, new ideas, and enthusiasm to make interesting and challenging topics highly readable.

Law underlies our society - it protects our rights, imposes duties on each of us, and establishes a framework for the conduct of almost every social, political, and economic

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activity. The punishment of crime, compensation of the injured, and the enforcement of contracts are merely some of the tasks of a modern legal system. It also strives to achieve justice, promote freedom, and protect our security. The result is a system that, while it touches all of our daily lives, is properly understood by only a few, with its impenetrable jargon, obsolete procedures, and interminable stream of Byzantine statutes and judgments of the courts. This clear, jargon-free Very Short Introduction aims to redress that balance, as it introduces the essentials of law and legal systems in a lively, accessible, and stimulating manner. Explaining the main concepts, terms, and processes of the legal system, it focuses on the Western tradition (the common law and the civil law), but also includes discussions of other legal systems, such as customary law and Islamic law. And it looks to the future too, as globalization and rapid advances in technology place increasing strain on our current legal system. ABOUT THE SERIES: The Very Short Introductions series from Oxford University Press contains hundreds of titles in almost every subject area. These pocket-sized books are the perfect way to get ahead in a new subject quickly. Our expert authors combine facts, analysis, perspective, new ideas, and enthusiasm to make interesting and challenging topics highly readable.

From popular histories through to reworkings of classical subject matter by contemporary poets, dramatists, and novelists, the classical world and the masterpieces of its literature continue to fascinate readers and audiences in a huge

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variety of media. In this Very Short Introduction, William Allan explores what the 'classics' are and why they continue to shape our Western concepts of literature. Presenting a range of material from both Greek and Latin literature, he illustrates the variety and sophistication of these works, and considers examples from all the major genres. Ideal for the general reader interested in works of classic literature, as well as students at A-Level and University, this is a lively and lucid guide to the major authors and literary forms of the ancient period. ABOUT THE SERIES: The Very Short Introductions series from Oxford University Press contains hundreds of titles in almost every subject area. These pocket-sized books are the perfect way to get ahead in a new subject quickly. Our expert authors combine facts, analysis, perspective, new ideas, and enthusiasm to make interesting and challenging topics highly readable. An exploration of the concept of "nothing" journeys from ancient ideas and cultural traditions to the latest scientific research, discussing the history of the vacuum, theories on the nature of time and space, and other discoveries.

Games are everywhere: Drivers maneuvering in heavy traffic are playing a driving game. Bargain hunters bidding on eBay are playing an auctioning game. The supermarket's price for corn flakes is decided by playing an economic game. This Very Short Introduction offers a succinct tour of the fascinating world of game theory, a ground-breaking field that analyzes how to play games in a rational way. Ken Binmore, a renowned game theorist, explains the theory in a way that is both entertaining and

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non-mathematical yet also deeply insightful, revealing how game theory can shed light on everything from social gatherings, to ethical decision-making, to successful card-playing strategies, to calculating the sex ratio among bees. With mini-biographies of many fascinating, and occasionally eccentric, founders of the subject--including John Nash, subject of the movie *A Beautiful Mind*--this book offers a concise overview of a cutting-edge field that has seen spectacular successes in evolutionary biology and economics, and is beginning to revolutionize other disciplines from psychology to political science. About the Series: Oxford's Very Short Introductions offers concise and original introductions to a wide range of subjects--from Islam to Sociology, Politics to Classics, and Literary Theory to History. Not simply a textbook of definitions, each volume provides trenchant and provocative--yet always balanced and complete--discussions of the central issues in a given topic. Every Very Short Introduction gives a readable evolution of the subject in question, demonstrating how it has developed and influenced society. Whatever the area of study, whatever the topic that fascinates the reader, the series has a handy and affordable guide that will likely prove indispensable.

Introduction; 1 The information revolution; 2 The language of information; 3 Mathematical information; 4 Semantic information; 5 Physical information; 6 Biological information; 7 Economic information; 8 The ethics of information; Conclusion; References.

This book is intended to capture the interest of anyone who has been attracted to Russian

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culture through the greats of Russian literature, either through the texts themselves, or encountering them in the cinema, or opera. Rather than a conventional chronology of Russian literature, the book will explore the place and importance of literature of all sorts in Russian culture. How and when did a Russian national literature come into being? What shaped its creation? How have the Russians regarded their literary language? The book will use the figure of Pushkin, 'the Russian Shakespeare' as a recurring example as his work influenced every Russian writer who came after him, whether poets or novelists. It will look at such questions as why Russian writers are venerated, how they've been interpreted inside Russia and beyond, and the influences of such things as the folk tale tradition, orthodox religion, and the West

ABOUT THE SERIES: The Very Short Introductions series from Oxford University Press contains hundreds of titles in almost every subject area. These pocket-sized books are the perfect way to get ahead in a new subject quickly. Our expert authors combine facts, analysis, perspective, new ideas, and enthusiasm to make interesting and challenging topics highly readable.

The Koran has constituted a remarkably strong core of identity and continuity for a religious tradition that is now in its fifteenth century. This Very Short Introduction explores the significance of the Koran both in the modern world and in traditional Muslim culture. Michael Cook provides a lucid and direct account of the Koran as codex, as scripture, as liturgy, and as the embodiment of truth, and examines its means of formation and dissemination. He also discusses issues of interpretation for certain key verses, demonstrating that fecundity of the text for readers throughout the world.

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Examines the origins of life on Earth and the search for extraterrestrial life, through an understanding of the factors that have allowed life to exist on this planet and the commonalities on others that may enable life elsewhere.

"Vivam" is the very last word of Ovid's masterpiece, the *Metamorphoses*: "I shall live." If we're still reading it two millennia after Ovid's death, this is by definition a remarkably accurate prophecy. Ovid was not the only ancient author with aspirations to be read for eternity, but no poet of the Greco-Roman world has had a deeper or more lasting impact on subsequent literature and art than he can claim. In the present day no Greek or Roman poet is as accessible, to artists, writers, or the general reader: Ovid's voice remains a compellingly contemporary one, as modern as it seemed to his contemporaries in Augustan Rome. But Ovid was also a man of his time, his own story fatally entwined with that of the first emperor Augustus, and the poetry he wrote channels in its own way the cultural and political upheavals of the contemporary city, its public life, sexual mores, religion, and urban landscape, while also exploiting the superbly rich store of poetic convention that Greek literature and his Roman predecessors had bequeathed to him. This *Very Short Introduction* explains Ovid's background, social and literary, and introduces his poetry, on love, metamorphosis, Roman festivals, and his own exile, a restlessly innovative oeuvre driven by the irrepressible ingenuity or wit for which he was famous. Llewelyn Morgan also explores Ovid's immense influence on later literature and art, spanning from Shakespeare to Bernini. Throughout, Ovid's poetry is

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revealed as enduringly scintillating, his personal story compelling, and the issues his life and poetry raise of continuing relevance and interest. ABOUT THE SERIES: The Very Short Introductions series from Oxford University Press contains hundreds of titles in almost every subject area. These pocket-sized books are the perfect way to get ahead in a new subject quickly. Our expert authors combine facts, analysis, perspective, new ideas, and enthusiasm to make interesting and challenging topics highly readable.

The Roman Empire was a remarkable achievement. With a population of sixty million people, it encircled the Mediterranean and stretched from northern England to North Africa and Syria.

This Very Short Introduction covers the history of the empire at its height, looking at its people, religions and social structures. It explains how it deployed violence, 'romanisation', and tactical power to develop an astonishingly uniform culture from Rome to its furthest outreaches.

From the schools of ancient times to the present day, Gary Thomas explores how and why education has evolved as it has. Examining education worldwide, he explains the way schools work, noting how curricula are remarkably consistent around the world. Delving into some of the big questions, Thomas explores the history of education in this Very Short Introduction. Considering various styles such as progressive versus formal, he also explores the ideas of some of the big theorists, including Piaget and Vygotsky. Looking at different forms of education and styles of teaching, he considers the ways in which education is being improved by matching styles of learning to teaching, and ensuring that schools are more inclusive and meaningful for a broader range of students. He finishes by considering the ways in which education may develop over the coming century. ABOUT THE SERIES: The Very Short Introductions series from Oxford University Press contains hundreds of titles in almost

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every subject area. These pocket-sized books are the perfect way to get ahead in a new subject quickly. Our expert authors combine facts, analysis, perspective, new ideas, and enthusiasm to make interesting and challenging topics highly readable.

Explores the relationship between the contemporary world and the ancient one.

William Allan's *Very Short Introduction* provides a concise and lively guide to the major authors, genres, and periods of classical literature. Drawing upon a wealth of material, he reveals just what makes the 'classics' such masterpieces and why they continue to influence and fascinate today.

Sport is one of the largest industries in the world and the global reach of major sporting events is enormous. In this *Very Short Introduction*, Mike Cronin explores the historical development of sport. Exploring a variety of activities from rugby and cricket to tennis, athletics, and skiing, he considers the central role it plays in modern society.

This title introduces a wide array of approaches to understanding myth from varied disciplines. It uses the famous ancient myth of Adonis to analyse the ideas and individual approaches and theories of theorists such as Sigmund Freud, Claude Lévi-Strauss, Albert Camus, and Roland Barthes. This new edition considers the interactions of myth theory with cognitive science, the implications of the myth of Gaia, and the differences between story-telling and myth, as well

as the future study of myth.

The Greeks and Romans are part of our history and part of our heritage. In a thousand ways, their legacy continues to live today. Their literature, languages, architecture, drama, religious beliefs and philosophical ideas have inspired and challenged us for centuries. This book provides an introduction to the world of classical culture both for the general reader and for the student. It draws richly on ancient sources and texts, from the well known to the obscure. It serves as a tour guide to Graeco-Roman society, pointing out both the similarities and the differences between the ancient world and our own.

The history of decadent culture runs from ancient Rome to nineteenth-century Paris, Victorian London, fin de siècle Vienna, Weimar Berlin, and beyond. The decline of Rome provides the pattern for both aesthetic and social decadence, a pattern that artists and writers in the nineteenth century imitated, emulated, parodied, and otherwise manipulated for aesthetic gain. What begins as the moral condemnation of modernity in mid-nineteenth century France on the part of decadent authors such as Charles Baudelaire ends up as the perverse celebration of the pessimism that accompanies imperial decline. This delight in decline informs the rich canon of decadence that runs from Joris-Karl Huysmans's *A Rebours* to Oscar Wilde's *The Picture of Dorian Gray*, Aubrey

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Beardsley's drawings, Gustav Klimt's paintings, and numerous other works. In this Very Short Introduction, David Weir explores the conflicting attitudes towards modernity present in decadent culture by examining the difference between aesthetic decadence--the excess of artifice--and social decadence, which involves excess in a variety of forms, whether perversely pleasurable or gratuitously cruel. Such contrariness between aesthetic and social decadence led some of its practitioners to substitute art for life and to stress the importance of taste over morality, a maneuver with far-reaching consequences, especially as decadence enters the realm of popular culture today. ABOUT THE SERIES: The Very Short Introductions series from Oxford University Press contains hundreds of titles in almost every subject area. These pocket-sized books are the perfect way to get ahead in a new subject quickly. Our expert authors combine facts, analysis, perspective, new ideas, and enthusiasm to make interesting and challenging topics highly readable.

Children's literature takes many forms - works adapted for children in antiquity, picture books and pop-ups - and now includes the latest online games and eBooks. This vast and amorphous subject is both intimately related to other areas of literary and cultural investigation but also has its own set of concerns, issues and challenges. From familiar authors including Beatrix Potter and Roald

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Dahl, classic books such as Pooh, Alice in Wonderland, and The Secret Garden, to modern works including Harry Potter and the Twilight series, this Very Short Introduction provides an overview of the history of children's literature as it has developed in English, whilst at the same time introducing key debates, developments, and figures in the field. Raising questions about what shape the future of literature for children should take, and exploring the crossover with adult fiction, Reynolds shows that writing for children - whether on page or screen - has participated in shaping and directing ideas about culture, society and childhood. ABOUT THE SERIES: The Very Short Introductions series from Oxford University Press contains hundreds of titles in almost every subject area. These pocket-sized books are the perfect way to get ahead in a new subject quickly. Our expert authors combine facts, analysis, perspective, new ideas, and enthusiasm to make interesting and challenging topics highly readable.

Marina Warner guides us through the rich world of fairy tale, from Cinderella and Hansel and Gretel to Snow White and Pan's Labyrinth. Exploring pervasive themes of folklore, myth, the supernatural, imagination, and fantasy, Warner highlights the impact of the genre on human understanding, history, and culture. Starting with an examination of how historians work, this "Very Short Introduction" aims to explore history in a general, pithy, and accessible manner,

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rather than to delve into specific periods.

This Very Short Introduction to Classics links a haunting temple on a lonely mountainside to the glory of ancient Greece and the grandeur of Rome, and to Classics within modern culture—from Jefferson and Byron to Asterix and Ben-Hur. We are all Classicists - we come into touch with the Classics daily: in our culture, politics, medicine, architecture, language, and literature. What are the true roots of these influences, however, and how do our interpretations of these aspects of the Classics differ from their original reception? This introduction to the Classics begins with a visit to the British Museum to view the frieze which once decorated the Apollo Temple at Bassae. Through these sculptures, John Henderson and Mary Beard prompt us to consider the significance of Classics as a means of discovery and enquiry, its value in terms of literature, philosophy, and culture, and its importance as a source of imagery. ABOUT THE SERIES: The Very Short Introductions series from Oxford University Press contains hundreds of titles in almost every subject area. These pocket-sized books are the perfect way to get ahead in a new subject quickly. Our expert authors combine facts, analysis, perspective, new ideas, and enthusiasm to make interesting and challenging topics highly readable.

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Greece and Rome seem to exert a timeless power over us. But what do those myths represent, and why are they so enduringly fascinating? This imaginative and stimulating Very Short Introduction goes beyond a simple retelling of the stories to explore the rich history and diverse interpretations of classical myths in both high art and popular culture.

The Gothic is wildly diverse. It can refer to ecclesiastical architecture, supernatural fiction, cult horror films, and a distinctive style of rock music. It has influenced political theorists and social reformers, as well as Victorian home décor and contemporary fashion. Nick Groom shows how the Gothic has come to encompass so many meanings by telling the story of the Gothic from the ancient tribe who sacked Rome to the alternative subculture of the present day. This unique Very Short Introduction reveals that the Gothic has predominantly been a way of understanding and responding to the past. Time after time, the Gothic has been invoked in order to reveal what lies behind conventional history. It is a way of disclosing secrets, whether in the constitutional politics of seventeenth-century England or the racial politics of the United States. While contexts change, the Gothic perpetually regards the past with fascination, both yearning and horrified. It reminds us that neither societies nor individuals can escape the consequences of their actions. The anatomy of the Gothic is richly complex and perversely

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contradictory, and so the thirteen chapters here range deliberately widely. This is the first time that the entire story of the Gothic has been written as a continuous history: from the historians of late antiquity to the gardens of Georgian England, from the mediaeval cult of the macabre to German Expressionist cinema, from Elizabethan Revenge Tragedy to American consumer society, from folk ballads to vampires, from the past to the present. ABOUT THE SERIES: The Very Short Introductions series from Oxford University Press contains hundreds of titles in almost every subject area. These pocket-sized books are the perfect way to get ahead in a new subject quickly. Our expert authors combine facts, analysis, perspective, new ideas, and enthusiasm to make interesting and challenging topics highly readable.

Revolutions have shaped world politics for the last three hundred years. This volume shows why revolutions occur, how they unfold, and where they created democracies and dictatorships. Jack A. Goldstone presents the history of revolutions from America and France to the collapse of the Soviet Union, 'People Power' revolutions, and the Arab revolts.

Robertson covers the life and work of Johann Wolfgang von Goethe (1749-1832): scientist, administrator, artist, art critic, and literary writer in a variety of genres. Homer's mythological tales of war and homecoming, the Iliad and the Odyssey,

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are widely considered to be two of the most influential works in the history of western literature. Yet their author, 'the greatest poet that ever lived' is something of a mystery. By the 6th century BCE, Homer had already become a mythical figure, and today debate continues as to whether he ever existed. In this Very Short Introduction Barbara Graziosi considers Homer's famous works, and their impact on readers throughout the centuries. She shows how the Iliad and the Odyssey benefit from a tradition of reading that spans well over two millennia, stemming from ancient scholars at the library of Alexandria, in the third and second centuries BCE, who wrote some of the first commentaries on the Homeric epics. Summaries of these scholars' notes made their way into the margins of Byzantine manuscripts; from Byzantium the annotated manuscripts travelled to Italy; and the ancient notes finally appeared in the first printed editions of Homer, eventually influencing our interpretation of Homer's work today. Along the way, Homer's works have inspired artists, writers, philosophers, musicians, playwrights, and film-makers. Exploring the main literary, historical, cultural, and archaeological issues at the heart of Homer's narratives, Graziosi analyses the enduring appeal of Homer and his iconic works. ABOUT THE SERIES: The Very Short Introductions series from Oxford University Press contains hundreds of titles in almost every subject area. These pocket-sized books are the perfect way

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to get ahead in a new subject quickly. Our expert authors combine facts, analysis, perspective, new ideas, and enthusiasm to make interesting and challenging topics highly readable. This book was previously published in hardback as *Homer*.

In this Very Short Introduction, Prof Lord John Krebs provides a brief history of human food, from our remote ancestors 3 million years ago to the present day. By looking at the four great transitions in human food - cooking, agriculture, processing, and preservation - he considers a variety of questions, including why people like some kinds of foods and not others; how your senses contribute to flavour; the role of genetics in our likes and dislikes; and the differences in learning and culture around the world. In turn he considers aspects of diet, nutrition, and health, and the disparity between malnutrition in some places and overconsumption in others. Finally, he considers some of the big issues - the obesity crisis, sustainable agriculture, the role of new technologies such as genetic modification of crops, and ends by posing the question: how will it be possible to feed a population of 9 billion in 2050, without destroying our natural environment? ABOUT THE SERIES: The Very Short Introductions series from Oxford University Press contains hundreds of titles in almost every subject area. These pocket-sized books are the perfect way to get ahead in a new subject

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