

# Reading Recommendations

We always recommend that readers consult the original works of Epicurus, and we maintain here at the forum a collection of [Ancient Epicurean Texts](#), including [Diogenes Laertius Book 10](#) (which contains all of Epicurus' Letters), [Lucretius' De Rerum Natura](#), and many others.

For people who are brand new to Epicurus, we recommend that you start with the two books we recommend most: [Epicurus and His Philosophy](#) by Norman DeWitt, and [Living For Pleasure: An Epicurean Guide to Life](#) by Emily Austin:

1. The most sweeping, thorough, and innovative "textbook" of Epicurean philosophy available is Norman DeWitt's ["Epicurus and His Philosophy."](#) No other book presents the full sweep and detail of the philosophy as well as this one. The opening chapter of DeWitt's book can be [read for free here](#), and an article ("Philosophy For The Millions") summarizing DeWitt's perspective is [here](#).
2. The most current and best general introduction to [Epicurean ethics](#) is [Dr. Emily Austin's "Living For Pleasure."](#) This is a very readable introduction to Epicurean ideas on how to live that is consistent with the general approach here at EpicureanFriends. Our 2023 interview with Dr. Austin on the Lucretius Today podcast is a good introduction to her book.

There are of course other good books about Epicurus, and we maintain a section of our forum devoted to discussion of them [here](#). A word of caution is appropriate: There are many different interpretations of Epicurus, and many of them "adulterated" with Stoic, Buddhist, Judeo-Christian, Platonic, or other philosophies and religions, according to the preferences of their authors. We recommend that those seeking to understand Epicurus start with [Epicurus and His Philosophy](#) and [Living For Pleasure](#), and then review Diogenes Laertius Book Ten and Lucretius, before moving to other works. The DeWitt and Austin books provide a firm grounding in classical Epicureanism, and they point out where the reader can expect to find controversies elsewhere as to what Epicurus really taught.

The full list we recommend for students of Epicurus is as follows:

1. ["Epicurus and His Philosophy"](#) by Norman DeWitt
2. ["Living For Pleasure"](#) by Emily Austin
3. [The Biography of Epicurus by Diogenes Laertius.](#) This includes the surviving letters of Epicurus, including those to [Herodotus](#), [Pythocles](#), and [Menoceus](#).
4. ["On The Nature of Things"](#) - by Lucretius (a poetic abridgement of Epicurus' "On Nature")
5. ["Epicurus on Pleasure"](#) - An article by Boris [Nikolsky](#)
6. The chapters on Epicurus in [Gosling and Taylor's "The Greeks On Pleasure."](#)
7. [Cicero's "On Ends" - Torquatus Section](#)
8. [Cicero's "On The Nature of the Gods" - Velleius Section](#)
9. [The Inscription of Diogenes of Oinoanda - Martin Ferguson Smith translation](#)
10. [A Few Days In Athens" - Frances Wright](#) - with the [criticisms referenced here](#).
11. Lucian of Samosata - Lucian mentions Epicurus in a number of articles, but among the best are [Alexander the Oracle-Monger](#), [Hermetimus](#), and others [listed here](#).
12. [Philodemus "On Methods of Inference"](#) (De Lacy version, including his appendix on the history of the Epicurean Canon)
13. *Lucretius and the Transformation of Greek Wisdom* by David Sedley, an in depth exploration of how Lucretius interpreted Epicurus
14. *The Sculpted Word* by Bernard Frischer, a study of Epicurean bronzes and marbles from the ancient world.
15. Haris Dimitriadis' ["Epicurus' And The Pleasant Life"](#)
16. Consider also the following essays/lectures/letters:
  1. The Letter of [Cosma Raimondi](#)
  2. Norman DeWitt's ["Philosophy For The Millions"](#)

3. John Tyndall's [\*Belfast Address\*](#)
4. An essay on Lucretius from George Santayana's [\*Three Philosophical Poets\*](#)
5. Prof. Ian Johnston's [\*Lecture on Lucretius\*](#)
6. Lucy Hutchinson's [\*Letter to the Earl of Anglesey\*](#), disavowing her very early translation of Lucretius

[Here is a "library" page](#) at NewEpicurean.com with links to where many additional translations are available for free on the internet.

[Profile of Past Reading](#)

[Discussion of this FAQ entry at EpicureanFriends.com is here.](#)