One of the best ways to get yourself ready for college—and life—is by reading. No, not just skimming your homework assignments or breezing through romance novels, but really getting into some of the classics.

After all, there’s a reason these books are classics: people enjoy them, are challenged by them, and learn from them. In addition, they help you improve your reading skills, increase your vocabulary, expand your horizons, and prepare you for college entrance tests.

Compiled below is a list of classics that are a good place to start in building your reading program. Check off those you’ve already read. Talk with your friends, parents, and teachers about which ones might be the best ones for you to read first.

- The Bible
- Achebe, Chinua *Things Fall Apart*
- Aesop *Aesop’s Fables*
- Agee, James *A Death in the Family*
- Alcott, Louisa May *Little Women*
- Angelou, Maya *I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings*
- Austen, Jane *Pride and Prejudice*
- Baldwin, James *Go Tell It on the Mountain*
- Beals, Melba Patillo *Warriors Don’t Cry*
- Bonham, Frank *Durango Street*
- Bronte, Charlotte *Jane Eyre*
- Bronte, Emily *Wuthering Heights*
- Browning, Robert *Poetry*
- Bunyan, John *Pilgrim’s Progress*
- Camus, Albert *The Stranger*
- Carroll, Lewis *Alice in Wonderland*
- Cather, Willa *Death Comes for the Archbishop*
- Chaucer, Geoffrey *The Canterbury Tales*
- Conrad, Joseph *Lord Jim*
- Crane, Stephen *The Red Badge of Courage*
- de Cervantes, Miguel *Don Quixote*
- Defoe, Daniel *Robinson Crusoe*
- Dickens, Charles *A Tale of Two Cities*
- Dickens, Charles *David Copperfield*
- Dickens, Charles *Oliver Twist*
- Dickens, Charles *Great Expectations*
- Doyle, Sir Arthur Conan *Adventures of Sherlock Holmes*
- Dumas, Alexandre *The Three Musketeers*
- Ellison, Ralph *Invisible Man*
- Faulkner, William *As I Lay Dying*
- Faulkner, William *Light in August*
- Fielding, Henry *Tom Jones*
- Fitzgerald, F. Scott *The Great Gatsby*
- Forster, E. M. *A Passage to India*
- Frank, Anne *Diary of a Young Girl*
- Frost, Robert *Poetry*
- Golding, William *Lord of the Flies*
- Greene, Graham *The Power and the Glory*
- Hamilton, Edith *Mythology*
- Hawthorne, Nathaniel *House of the Seven Gables*
- Hawthorne, Nathaniel *The Scarlet Letter*
- Heller, Joseph *Catch-22*
- Hemingway, Ernest *For Whom the Bell Tolls*
- Hemingway, Ernest *The Sun Also Rises*
- Homer *The Iliad*
Stowe, Harriet Beecher
Uncle Tom's Cabin

Swift, Jonathan
Gulliver's Travels

Thackeray, William
Vanity Fair

Tolkien, J. R. R.
Lord of the Rings

Tolstoy, Leo
War and Peace

Twain, Mark
The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn

Twain, Mark
The Adventures of Tom Sawyer

Twain, Mark
Life on the Mississippi

Verne, Jules
Around the World in 80 Days

Wells, H. G.
The Time Machine

Wharton, Edith
The Age of Innocence

Wharton, Edith
Ethan Frome

Wilde, Oscar
The Picture of Dorian Gray

Wilder, Thornton
Our Town

Williams, Tennessee
A Streetcar Named Desire

Woolf, Virginia
To the Lighthouse

Wyss, Johann David
The Swiss Family Robinson