

What to read next: McKinsey's 2026 curated book recommendations

McKinsey Global Publishing's annual reading list is back, featuring compelling recommendations from a diverse group of leaders across the world. Our contributors have nearly 100 books for you to choose from.



Artificial intelligence

AI for Good: How Real People Are Using Artificial Intelligence to Fix Things That Matter

Josh Tyrangiel, Simon & Schuster

Recommended by: Nicholas Thompson, CEO, *The Atlantic*; author, *The Running Ground: A Father, a Son, and the Simplest of Sports*

Birds Up Close: An Engineer Explores Their Hidden Wonders

Lorna Gibson, MIT Press

Recommended by: Amy Brand, director and publisher, MIT Press

A Brief History of Intelligence: Evolution, AI, and the Five Breakthroughs That Made Our Brains

Max Bennett, Mariner Books/HarperCollins Publishers

Recommended by: Daron Acemoglu, Institute professor of economics, Massachusetts Institute of Technology; Nobel laureate, Nobel Memorial Prize in Economic Sciences

The Coming Wave: AI, Power, and Our Future

Mustafa Suleyman with Michael Bhaskar, Crown/Penguin Random House

Recommended by: Austin Gallagher, founder and CEO, Beneath The Waves

Human Magic: Leading with Wisdom in an Age of Algorithms

Johan Roos, Routledge/Taylor & Francis Group

Recommended by: Stephen Hodges, CEO, Efekta Education

Human Raised: Nurturing Connection, Curiosity & Lifelong Learning in the Age of AI

Dana Suskind, Dutton/Penguin Random House

Recommended by: Adam Grant, Saul P. Steinberg Professor of Management, and professor of psychology, The Wharton School, University of Pennsylvania; podcast host, *The Curiosity Shop* and *Re:Thinking*

I Am Not a Robot: My Year Using AI to Do (Almost) Everything

Joanna Stern, Harper/HarperCollins Publishers

Recommended by: Rebecca Blumenstein, president of editorial, NBC News; coauthor, *The Last Free Women: A Daring Escape from Afghanistan* and *Coming of Age in America*

The Infinity Machine: Demis Hassabis, DeepMind, and the Quest for Superintelligence

Sebastian Mallaby, Penguin Press/Penguin Random House

Recommended by:

Yuval Atsmon, senior partner and CFO, McKinsey

Michael Birshan, senior partner and managing partner for United Kingdom, Ireland, and Israel, McKinsey

Stephen Hodges, CEO, Efekta Education

Prophecy: Prediction, Power, and the Fight for the Future, from Ancient Oracles to AI

Carissa Véliz, Doubleday/Penguin Random House

Recommended by: Nicholas Thompson, CEO, *The Atlantic*; author, *The Running Ground: A Father, a Son, and the Simplest of Sports*

Rewired: How Leading Companies Win with Technology and AI

Eric Lamarre, Kate Smaje, and Robert Levin with Alex Singla and Alexander Sukharevsky, John Wiley & Sons

Recommended by: Ruth Heuss, senior partner, McKinsey

Supremacy: AI, ChatGPT, and the Race That Will Change the World

Parmy Olson, St. Martin's Press/Macmillan Publishers

Recommended by: Amy Webb, CEO, FTSG

Biography and memoir

All the Beauty in the World: The Metropolitan Museum of Art and Me

Patrick Bringley, Simon & Schuster

Recommended by: Carolyn Dewar, senior partner, McKinsey; coauthor, *A CEO for All Seasons: Mastering the Cycles of Leadership*

A Beginner's Guide to Dying

Simon Boas, Swift Press

Recommended by: Raju Narisetti, partner and leader, McKinsey Global Publishing and Marketing, McKinsey

Big Fan: Two Friends, 82,490 Miles, and the Wild, Wonderful Sports We Love

Michael Schur and Joe Posnanski, Dutton/Penguin Random House

Recommended by: Stephanie Mehta, CEO and chief content officer, Mansueto Ventures, publisher of *Inc.* and *Fast Company*

The Black Family Who Built America: The McKissacks, Two Centuries of Daring Pioneers

Cheryl McKissack Daniel with Nick Chiles, Atria/Black Privilege Publishing/Simon & Schuster

Recommended by: Cheryl McKissack Daniel, chair of the board, McKissack & McKissack

Born of This Land: My Life Story

Chung Ju-yung, The Asan Academy

Recommended by: Sandra Peter, codirector, Sydney Executive Plus; associate professor, University of Sydney Business School

Daughters of the Bamboo Grove: From China to America, a True Story of Abduction, Adoption, and Separated Twins

Barbara Demick, Random House/Penguin Random House

Recommended by: Rebecca Blumenstein, president of editorial, NBC News; coauthor, *The Last Free Women: A Daring Escape from Afghanistan and Coming of Age in America*

A Different Kind of Power

Jacinda Ardern, Crown/Penguin Random House

Recommended by: Katherine Garrett-Cox, CEO, Gulf International Bank Asset Management

Famesick

Lena Dunham, Random House/Penguin Random House

Recommended by: Yael Taqqu, senior partner and managing partner of Technology, Media & Telecommunications, McKinsey

From Third World to First: The Singapore Story: 1965–2000

Lee Kuan Yew, Harper/HarperCollins Publishers

Recommended by: Marty Natalegawa, member of the Geopolitics Advisory Council, McKinsey; former foreign minister, Indonesia

Gender Queer

Maia Kobabe, Oni-Lion Forge Publishing Group

Recommended by: Kevin Ashton, cofounder, MIT Auto-ID Laboratory; author, of *The Story of Stories: The Million-Year History of a Uniquely Human Art*

God, Human, Animal, Machine: Technology, Metaphor, and the Search for Meaning

Meghan O'Gieblyn, Vintage/Penguin Random House

Recommended by: Casey Newton, founder and editor, *Platformer*; podcast cohost, *Hard Fork* (a *New York Times* podcast)

Making It Big: Lessons from a Life in Business

Femi Otedola, FO Books

Recommended by: Acha Leke, senior partner, McKinsey

Nelson: A Personal History

Christopher Hibbert, Da Capo/Hachette Book Group

Recommended by: Lindy Elkins-Tanton, professor and director, UC Berkeley Space Sciences Lab; principal investigator, NASA Psyche mission

An Odyssey: A Father, a Son, and an Epic

Daniel Mendelsohn, Vintage/Penguin Random House

Recommended by: Stephanie Mehta, CEO and chief content officer, Mansueto Ventures; publisher of *Inc.* and *Fast Company*

Oh My Mother!: A Memoir in Nine Adventures

Connie Wang, Viking/Penguin Random House

Recommended by: Kweilin Ellingrud, senior partner and McKinsey Global Institute director, McKinsey

Raising Hare

Chloe Dalton, Pantheon/Penguin Random House

Recommended by: Dymfke Kuijpers, senior partner, McKinsey

Rough Sleepers: Dr. Jim O'Connell's Urgent

Mission to Bring Healing to Homeless People

Tracy Kidder, Random House Trade Paperbacks/Penguin Random House

Recommended by: Sarah Kaufman, author, *Verb Your Enthusiasm: How to Master the Art of the Verb and Transform Your Writing*; Pulitzer Prize winner, 2010 Pulitzer Prize for Criticism

Thank You, Teachers: True Stories from America's Teachers, Our Last Line of Defense and Our First Line of Hope

James Patterson and Matt Eversmann, Little, Brown and Company/Hachette Book Group

Recommended by: Ginni Rometty, cochair, SkillsRight; former chair and CEO, IBM

What Could Possibly Go Right?: The Essential Journey to Scale an Enduring Culture

Danny Meyer, Random House/Penguin Random House

Recommended by: Adam Grant, Saul P. Steinberg Professor of Management, and professor of psychology, The Wharton School, University of Pennsylvania; podcast host, *The Curiosity Shop* and *Re:Thinking*

The Years

Annie Ernaux, translated by Alison L. Strayer, Seven Stories Press

Recommended by: Kamini Ramani, former chief marketing officer, Mayfield; author, *Lotus Leadership: A Modern Playbook of Ancient Wisdom*

Business

Apple: The First 50 Years

David Pogue, Simon & Schuster

Recommended by: Joanna Stern, founder and chief everything officer, The New Things Media Group; chief technology analyst, NBC News; author, *I Am Not a Robot: My Year Using AI to Do (Almost) Everything*

The Art of Spending Money: Simple Choices for a Richer Life

Morgan Housel, Portfolio/Penguin Random House

Recommended by: Gautam Kumra, senior partner and chair for Asia (ex-China), McKinsey

Enshittification: Why Everything Suddenly Got Worse and What to Do About It

Cory Doctorow, MCD/Macmillan Publishers

Recommended by: Jimmy Wales, cofounder, Wikipedia; author, *The Seven Rules of Trust: A Blueprint for Building Things That Last*

The Fearless Organization: Creating Psychological Safety in the Workplace for Learning, Innovation, and Growth

Amy C. Edmondson, John Wiley & Sons

Recommended by: Stephan Seifert, CEO, Körber

Hidden Potential: The Science of Achieving Greater Things

Adam Grant, Viking/Penguin Random House

Recommended by: Ginni Rometty, cochair, SkillsRight; former chair and CEO, IBM

Inside the Box: How Constraints Make Us Better

David Epstein, Riverhead Books/Penguin Random House

Recommended by: Peter Orszag, CEO and chair, Lazard

Leadership: In Turbulent Times

Doris Kearns Goodwin, Simon & Schuster

Recommended by: David Rogier, founder and CEO, MasterClass

The Listening Leader: How to Drive Performance by Using Communicative Leadership

Emilio Galli Zugaro with Clementina Galli Zugaro, FT Publishing/Pearson

Recommended by: Stephan Seifert, CEO, Körber

The Origins of Efficiency

Brian Potter, Stripe Press

Recommended by: Michael Birshan, senior partner and managing partner for United Kingdom, Ireland, and Israel, McKinsey

The Tao of Fundraising: The Science, Philosophy, and Psychology Behind Attracting Capital

John Kim with Seth Libby, Mission Driven Press/Simon & Schuster

Recommended by: Noor Sweid, founder and managing partner, Global Ventures

The Unaccountability Machine: Why Big Systems Make Terrible Decisions—and How the World Lost Its Mind

Dan Davies, University of Chicago Press

Recommended by: Marina Nitze, crisis engineer and partner, Layer Aleph; coauthor, *Crisis Engineering: Time-Tested Tools for Turning Chaos into Clarity*

Fiction

The Correspondent

Virginia Evans, Crown/Penguin Random House

Recommended by: S. Mitra Kalita, cofounder and CEO, URL Media; cofounder and publisher, Epicenter-NYC

Exit Party

Emily St. John Mandel, Knopf/Penguin Random House

Recommended by: Casey Newton, founder and editor, *Platformer*; podcast cohort, *Hard Fork* (a *New York Times* podcast)

Foundation

Isaac Asimov, Del Rey/Penguin Random House

Recommended by: Carolyn Dewar, senior partner, McKinsey; coauthor, *A CEO for All Seasons: Mastering the Cycles of Leadership*

How to End a Love Story

Yulin Kuang, Avon/HarperCollins Publishers

Recommended by: Melinda Hsu, TV writer and producer, FOX ; author, *Lead with Kindness: How to Change the Culture of the Workplace and the World*

The Infinite Extent (Book 6 of the *Bobiverse* series)

Dennis E. Taylor, Saga Press/Simon & Schuster

Recommended by: Andreas Schindler, founder and CEO, DNL Deep Neuron Lab

Now Then

Morgan Radford, Amistad/HarperCollins Publishers

Recommended by: Shelley Stewart III, senior partner and global leader of Insights, Reputation & Engagement, McKinsey

Platform Decay

Martha Wells, Tor Books/Tor Publishing Group

Recommended by: Daniel Roth, editor in chief and vice president of content, LinkedIn

Player Piano

Kurt Vonnegut, The Dial Press/Penguin Random House

Recommended by: Clara Shih, founder and executive director, New Work Foundation

Something Wicked This Way Comes

Ray Bradbury, Simon & Schuster

Recommended by: Jimmy Wales, cofounder, Wikipedia; author, *The Seven Rules of Trust: A Blueprint for Building Things That Last*

A Swim in a Pond in the Rain: In Which Four Russians Give a Master Class on Writing, Reading, and Life

George Saunders, Random House Trade Paperbacks/Penguin Random House

Recommended by: Kat Downs Mulder, senior vice president and general manager, Yahoo News

The Things We Never Say

Elizabeth Strout, Random House/Penguin
Random House

Recommended by: Tracy Francis, senior partner
and managing partner for Latin America, McKinsey

What We Can Know

Ian McEwan, Knopf/Penguin Random House

Recommended by:
Amy Brand, director and publisher, MIT Press
Nora Gardner, senior partner, McKinsey

Health

*The Anxious Generation: How the Great
Rewiring of Childhood Is Causing an Epidemic
of Mental Illness*

Jonathan Haidt, Penguin Press/Penguin
Random House

Recommended by: Clara Shih, founder and
executive director, New Work Foundation

*Models of the Mind: How Physics, Engineering and
Mathematics Have Shaped Our Understanding of
the Brain*

Grace Lindsay, Bloomsbury Sigma/Bloomsbury
Publishing

Recommended by: Daron Acemoglu, Institute
professor of economics, Massachusetts Institute of
Technology; Nobel laureate, Nobel Memorial Prize
in Economic Sciences

*The Parkinson's Plan: A New Path to Prevention
and Treatment*

Ray Dorsey and Michael S. Okun, PublicAffairs/
Hachette Book Group

Recommended by: Alan Tisch, cofounder and CEO,
Atria Health and Research Institute

Replaceable You: Adventures in Human Anatomy

Mary Roach, W. W. Norton & Company

Recommended by: Sarah Kaufman, author, *Verb
Your Enthusiasm: How to Master the Art of the Verb
and Transform Your Writing*; Pulitzer Prize winner,
2010 Pulitzer Prize for Criticism

*Up to Speed: The Groundbreaking Science of
Women Athletes*

Christine Yu, Riverhead Books/Penguin
Random House

Recommended by: Karen Korellis Reuther, Design
lecturer, Harvard University Graduate School of
Design; former global creative director, Nike; author,
*Man-Made: How We Designed a World That Leaves
Women Out, and How We Can Make It Right*

History

*1929: Inside the Greatest Crash in Wall Street
History—and How It Shattered a Nation*

Andrew Ross Sorkin, Viking/Penguin Random
House

Recommended by: Tracy Francis, senior partner
and managing partner for Latin America, McKinsey

*An African History of Africa: From the Dawn of
Humanity to Independence*

Zeinab Badawi, WH Allen/Penguin Random House

Recommended by: Dymfke Kuijpers, senior
partner, McKinsey

*The Boundless Deep: Young Tennyson, Science
and the Crisis of Belief*

Richard Holmes, Pantheon/Penguin Random House

Recommended by: Nora Gardner, senior partner,
McKinsey

*The British Are Coming: The War for America,
Lexington to Princeton, 1775–1777* (Volume 1 of the
Revolution Trilogy)

Rick Atkinson, Henry Holt and Co./Macmillan
Publishers

Recommended by: Daniel Roth, editor in chief and
vice president of content, LinkedIn

Endurance: Shackleton's Incredible Voyage

Alfred Lansing, Basic Books/Hachette Book Group

Recommended by: David Rogier, founder and
CEO, MasterClass

Freedom's Forge: How American Business Produced Victory in World War II

Arthur Herman, Random House Trade Paperbacks/Penguin Random House

Recommended by: Ruth Heuss, senior partner, McKinsey

An Indigenous Peoples' History of the United States

Roxanne Dunbar-Ortiz, Beacon Press

Recommended by: Kevin Ashton, cofounder, MIT Auto-ID Laboratory; author, *The Story of Stories: The Million-Year History of a Uniquely Human Art*

King of Kings: The Iranian Revolution; A Story of Hubris, Delusion and Catastrophic Miscalculation

Scott Anderson, Doubleday/Penguin Random House

Recommended by:

Peter Orszag, CEO and chair, Lazard

Zongyuan Zoe Liu, Maurice R. Greenberg senior fellow for China studies, Council on Foreign Relations

London Falling: A Mysterious Death in a Gilded City and a Family's Search for Truth

Patrick Radden Keefe, Doubleday/Penguin Random House

Recommended by:

Kamini Ramani, former chief marketing officer, Mayfield; author, *Lotus Leadership: A Modern Playbook of Ancient Wisdom*

Shelley Stewart III, senior partner and global leader of Insights, Reputation & Engagement, McKinsey

Yael Taqqu, senior partner and managing partner of Technology, Media & Telecommunications, McKinsey

The Singing Word: 168 Years of Atlantic Poetry

Walt Hunter, ed., Atlantic Editions/Zando

Recommended by: Kat Downs Mulder, senior vice president and general manager, Yahoo News

Thinking Historically: A Guide to Statecraft and Strategy

Francis J. Gavin, Yale University Press

Recommended by: Shivshankar Menon, member of the Geopolitics Advisory Council, McKinsey; former national security adviser, India

The Warmth of Other Suns: The Epic Story of America's Great Migration

Isabel Wilkerson, Random House/Penguin Random House

Recommended by: Cheryl McKissack Daniel, chair of the board, McKissack & McKissack

Personal development

The 5 Types of Wealth: A Transformative Guide to Design Your Dream Life

Sahil Bloom, Ballantine Books/Penguin Random House

Recommended by: Kweilin Ellingrud, senior partner and McKinsey Global Institute director, McKinsey

Die with Zero: Getting All You Can from Your Money and Your Life

Bill Perkins, Mariner Books/HarperCollins Publishers

Recommended by: Raju Narisetti, partner and leader, McKinsey Global Publishing and Marketing, McKinsey

Four Thousand Weeks: Time Management for Mortals

Oliver Burkeman, Farrar, Straus and Giroux/Macmillan Publishers

Recommended by: Melinda Hsu, TV writer and producer, FOX; author, *Lead with Kindness: How to Change the Culture of the Workplace and the World*

How to Not Know: The Value of Uncertainty in a World That Demands Answers

Simone Stolzoff, W. W. Norton & Company

Recommended by: Joanna Stern, founder and chief everything officer, The New Things Media Group; chief technology analyst, NBC News; author, *I Am Not a Robot: My Year Using AI to Do (Almost) Everything*

How to Start: Discovering Your Life's Work

Jodi Kantor, Little, Brown and Company/Hachette Book Group

Recommended by: S. Mitra Kalita, cofounder and CEO, URL Media; cofounder and publisher, Epicenter-NYC

Life in Three Dimensions: How Curiosity, Exploration, and Experience Make a Fuller, Better Life

Shigehiro Oishi, Doubleday/Penguin Random House

Recommended by: Yuval Atsmon, senior partner and CFO, McKinsey

The Meaning of Your Life: Finding Purpose in an Age of Emptiness

Arthur C. Brooks, Portfolio/Penguin Random House

Recommended by: Arun Gupta, CEO, NobleReach Foundation

The Surrender Experiment: My Journey into Life's Perfection

Michael A. Singer, Harmony/Penguin Random House

Recommended by: Gautam Kumra, senior partner and chair for Asia (ex-China), McKinsey

What to Make of a Life: Cliffs, Fog, Fire and the Self-Knowledge Imperative

Jim Collins, Harper Edge/HarperCollins Publishers

Recommended by: Noor Sweid, founder and managing partner, Global Ventures

Politics

The Accidental Superpower: Ten Years On

Peter Zeihan, Twelve/Hachette Book Group

Recommended by: Shubham Singhal, senior partner and McKinsey Global Institute chair, McKinsey

The Avoidable War: The Dangers of a Catastrophic Conflict Between the US and Xi Jinping's China

Kevin Rudd, PublicAffairs/Hachette Book Group

Recommended by: Mark Sedwill, member of the Geopolitics Advisory Council, McKinsey; former national security adviser, United Kingdom

Breakneck: China's Quest to Engineer the Future

Dan Wang, W. W. Norton & Company

Recommended by:

Enrico Letta, member of the Geopolitics Advisory Council, McKinsey; former prime minister, Italy

Sandra Peter, codirector, Sydney Executive Plus; associate professor, University of Sydney Business School

Capitalism, Socialism, and Democracy (Third Edition)

Joseph A. Schumpeter, Harper Perennial Modern Classics/HarperCollins Publishers

Recommended by: Amy Webb, CEO, FTSG

A Century of Plenty: A Story of Progress for Generations to Come

Sven Smit, Chris Bradley, Nick Leung, and Marc Canal, McKinsey Global Institute

Recommended by: Shubham Singhal, senior partner and McKinsey Global Institute chair, McKinsey

Destined for War: Can America and China Escape Thucydides's Trap?

Graham Allison, Mariner Books/HarperCollins Publishers

Recommended by: Mark Sedwill, member of the Geopolitics Advisory Council, McKinsey; former national security adviser, United Kingdom

The Invisible People: How a Quarter of Humanity Can Thrive in Africa by 2050

Phuthuma Nhleko, Penguin Random House South Africa

Recommended by: Acha Leke, senior partner, McKinsey

Sovereign Funds: How the Communist Party of China Finances Its Global Ambitions

Zongyuan Zoe Liu, Belknap Press/Harvard University Press

Recommended by: Zongyuan Zoe Liu, Maurice R. Greenberg senior fellow for China studies, Council on Foreign Relations

Standing Firm for Indonesia's Democracy: An Oral History of President Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono

Takashi Shiraishi et al., eds., World Scientific Publishing

Recommended by: Marty Natalegawa, member of the Geopolitics Advisory Council, McKinsey; former foreign minister, Indonesia

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Who Is the City For?: Architecture, Equity, and the Public Realm in Chicago

Blair Kamin, University of Chicago Press

Recommended by: Karen Korellis Reuther, Design lecturer, Harvard University Graduate School of Design; former global creative director, Nike; author, *Man-Made: How We Designed a World That Leaves Women Out, and How We Can Make It Right*

Why Nothing Works: Who Killed Progress—and How to Bring It Back

Marc J. Dunkelman, PublicAffairs/Hachette Book Group

Recommended by: Marina Nitze, Crisis engineer and partner, Layer Aleph; coauthor, *Crisis Engineering: Time-Tested Tools for Turning Chaos into Clarity*

Sustainability

The High Frontier: Human Colonies in Space

Gerard K. O'Neill, Space Studies Institute

Recommended by: Andreas Schindler, founder and CEO, DNL Deep Neuron Lab

The Underworld: Journeys to the Depths of the Ocean

Susan Casey, Vintage/Penguin Random House

Recommended by: Austin Gallagher, founder and CEO, Beneath The Waves

Workplace culture

The Mission Generation: Reclaim Your Purpose, Rewrite Success, Rebuild Our Future

Arun Gupta and Thomas J. Fewer, John Wiley & Sons

Recommended by: Arun Gupta, CEO, NobleReach Foundation

Mission Ready: How to Build Teams That Perform Under Pressure

Lindy Elkins-Tanton, Basic Venture/Hachette Book Group

Recommended by: Lindy Elkins-Tanton, professor and director, UC Berkeley Space Sciences Lab; principal investigator, NASA Psyche mission

The Work We Need: A 21st Century Reimagining

Hilary Cottam, Virago Press/Hachette UK

Recommended by: Katherine Garrett-Cox, CEO, Gulf International Bank Asset Management

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