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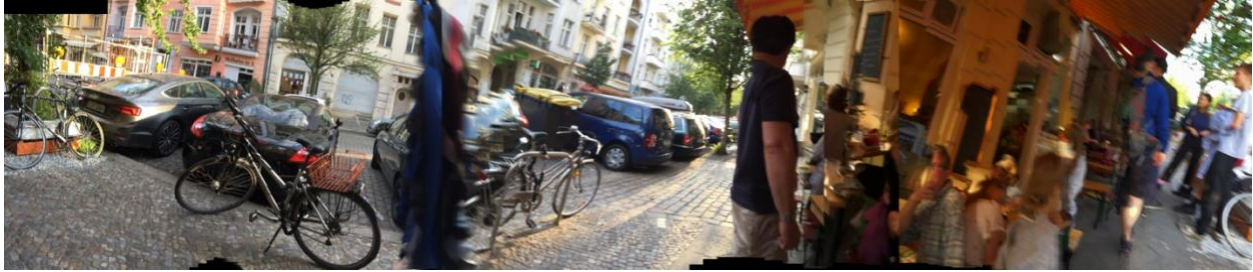


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Reference Books

In an age of thoughtless "googling" and "sponsored" content, it's worth remembering the value of reference guides. The great ones combine concision and breadth with a distinct yet reliable perspective. Here are the reference books that I've relied on the most in my life. Pick up a new or used copy and thank me later!

American Heritage Dictionary of the English Language

I fell in love with this book as a teenager because it included curse words. I keep buying each new edition because of the word histories and usage notes on tricky or controversial words. Googling words might be faster in the short run, but you will learn so much more with this dictionary.

Videohound's Golden Movie Retriever

The thematic index is a great way to discover movies. Where else can you find an authoritative list of movies about "Killer Bugs" or "Road Trips", or hundreds of other creative categories? The four-bone review system also provides reliable

quality assurance. Any movie that receives four bones is worth your time, and you might enjoy the “woof” movies (ones so bad they don’t receive any bones).

The Universal Self-Instructor: A Facsimile of the 1883 Edition

It's easy to mock the hubris of its title, but this book delivers. If you ever need to send flowers with a specific message, learn the average weight of different chicken breeds (circa 1883), or deliver a clever wedding toast, this book is for you.

What To Drink with What You Eat (Dornenburg and Page)

Did you know that popcorn pairs well with champagne, or that celery soda enhances a pastrami sandwich? I didn't until I got this book. Its ingenious two-way index lets you search by food or by beverage.

History Books

These aren't necessarily the best books I've read (though some are); they are just books that had a powerful effect at the time I read them.

William Appleman Williams, *The Tragedy of American Diplomacy*

Michael H. Hunt, *Ideology and U.S. Foreign Policy*

Emily S. Rosenberg, *Spreading the American Dream*

John F. Kasson, *Rudeness and Civility: Manners in Nineteenth-Century Urban America*

Thomas Frank, *The Conquest of Cool: Business Culture, Counterculture, and the Rise of Hip Consumerism*

Roland Marchand, *Creating the Corporate Soul: The Rise of Public Relations and Corporate Imagery in American Big Business*

Annelise Orleck, *Storming Caesar's Palace: How Black Mothers Fought Their Own War on Poverty*

Tomiko Brown-Nagin, *Courage to Dissent: Atlanta and the Long History of the Civil Rights Movement*

Fiction

Georges Perec: *La vie mode d'emploi* (Life: A User's Manual)
So tedious and yet so good! Jigsaw puzzles!

Herman Melville, *Moby Dick*
Another oddly tedious book that I could not put down.

Salman Rushdie, *Midnight's Children*
Changed how I think of mango chutney, snotty noses, and nationalism.

Günther Grass, *Tin Drum*
A German version of *Midnight's Children*, with herring instead of chutney.

Aldous Huxley, *Brave New World*
Are we there yet?

JK Rowling, *Harry Potter* series
I'm pretty sure I'm a Hufflepuff.

Ursula K. LeGuin, *The Left Hand of Darkness*
Imagine a world where humans have no fixed sex or gender. Then write a diplomatic history thriller about it.

Octavia Butler, *Parable of the Sower* and *Parable of the Talents*
Perfectly terrifying reading for a pandemic, or for anytime.

Essay Writing

John L. Casti, *Paradigms Lost: Images of Man in the Mirror of Science*
Great essays on enduring puzzles: How did life start? Why do we have language? What does artificial intelligence really mean?

Paul Fussell, *Class: A Guide Through the American Status System*
Though smug and elitist, this curmudgeonly 1980s book helped me learn social criticism while growing up in Ronald Reagan's America.

Francis Fukuyama, *The End of History and the Last Man*
This 1992 book has a flawed argument, but I still appreciate the clarity with which Fukuyama applied philosophies of human nature to political systems. His thesis was silly, even at the time, but his approach has stayed with me.

Joan Didion, *The Year of Magical Thinking*
There's no handbook for dealing with grief, but this memoir gets close.

Music

Favorite Albums (in rough chronological order)

These albums received lots of playing at the time, or they introduced me to a new genre of music.

Vic Flick, *On Top of Spaghetti and Other Songs That Tickle Your Funnybone*

Depeche Mode, *Some Great Reward*

Dead Kennedys, *Give Me Convenience or Give Me Death*

New Order, *Power, Corruption, and Lies*

Joy Division, *Closer*

The Smiths, *The Smiths*

Public Enemy, *It Takes a Nation of Millions to Hold Us Back*

Fairport Convention, *House Full*

Duke Ellington, *Money Jungle*

Laurie Anderson, *Big Science*

Parliament, *Mothership Connection*

Phish, *Junta*

Bill Monroe, *Live at Bean Blossom*

John Coltrane, *First Meditations*

OutKast, *Stankonia*

Yo La Tengo, *And Then Nothing Turned Itself Inside Out*

Café Tacuba, *Re*

Sufjan Stevens, *Come On Feel the Illinoise!*

Janelle Monáe, *The ArchAndroid*

Haruomi Hosono, *Cochin Moon*

Courtney Barnett, *Sometimes I Sit and Think, and Sometimes I Just Sit*

Big Thief, *Dragon New Warm Mountain I Believe in You*

Albums that helped me get through the Covid-19 pandemic:

Jean Grae and Quelle Chris, *Everything is Fine*

Perfume Genius, *Set My Soul on Fire*

Moses Sumney, *grae*

Sparks, *A Steady Drip, Drip, Drip*

Superchunk, *What A Time to Be Alive*

Fiona Apple, *Fetch the Bolt Cutters*

Toots and the Maytals, *Got To Be Tough*

Lomelda, *Hannah*

Angel Bat Dawid and Tha Brotherhood, *LIVE*

What I am listening to now? You can find me on Spotify at [cendy-288](#). I share this account with my kids, so I can't vouch for everything.

Movies

Creepy Movies

Pan's Labyrinth

The Cabinet of Dr. Caligari

The Orphanage

Spirited Away

Get Out

Us

Nope (and probably whatever Jordan Peele does next)

Creepy/Funny

Blade 2

Shaun of the Dead

What We Do in the Shadows

Funny Movies (Intentionally or Not)

Some Like it Hot

Troy

Pacific Rim

Dr. Strangelove

Playtime (Tati)

Weekend (Godard)

Monty Python and the Holy Grail

O' Brother, Where Art Thou?

Talladega Nights

Thor: Ragnarok

Guardians of the Galaxy, Vol. 2

The Death of Stalin

The Unbearable Weight of Massive Talent

Romantic Movies

The Shop Around the Corner

Amélie

Titanic (sob!)

The Princess Bride

Harold and Maude

My Neighbor Totoro

Serious/Dark Movies

Apocalypse Now

The Lives of Others

Grave of the Fireflies (quite possibly the saddest movie ever made)

The Devil and Daniel Johnston

An Inconvenient Truth

The Act of Killing

Lone Star
Parasite

Hard to Categorize

Y tu mamá también
Nashville (Altman)
Garlic Is as Good as Ten Mothers
Tampopo
Everything Everywhere All at Once

TV Shows

These are the shows that I watched faithfully each week as a kid, or that I've binged online. In rough chronological order.

Star Blazers
The A-Team
Monty Python's Flying Circus
120 Minutes (MTV)
The Simpsons
The X-Files
Mad Men
Glee
Community
Stranger Things
The Great British Baking Show
Ted Lasso
Attack on Titan (My kids talked me into this one.)

Cheeses

I really like cheese. Let's start with [pictures of handsome cheeses](#).

The best cheese shop I've ever entered is [Xavier](#) in Toulouse. At Xavier, you will not find the cheeses suffocating in refrigerator cases or plastic wrap. Let your cheese breathe!

Read about two formidable Normandy cheeses here: [Pont L'Evêque](#) and [Livarot](#).

California has some pretty good cheese too, such as Red Hawk from [Cowgirl Creamery](#) up north in Point Reyes. My favorite U.S. cheeses come from Vermont. Besides the classic Vermont sharp cheddar, the woodsy, mushroomy smell of a ripe [Harbison](#) from Jasper Hill Farm offers a taste experience on par with great French funky cheeses.

Last, but not least in my heart, are the "cheese food products" of my childhood: [Cheez Whiz](#) (good on cheese steaks) and [Easy Cheese](#) (best on hard pretzels or simply consumed from the tube via a straw connected to the nozzle.)

Soccer Referees

The world needs more referees. You should become one. At minimum, be kind to the ones in your life.

[Brigade Hartmut Strampe](#): This German group attends games with the express purpose of cheering for the poor referee.

[Referees subreddit](#): Come here for questions and stories about facilitating the beautiful game.

[Law 5 blog](#): Did you watch ever watch a game and wonder if the ref made a mistake? Of course, you have. But why do it alone? Users on this site review referee calls in major tournament matches, often in real time.

[The Watch and the Whistle](#): Sound advice on running a soccer game. Much of what's written here applies to other areas of life. Show up early. Be prepared. Work hard. Communicate. Realize that it's not all about you. Learn from mistakes. Have fun.