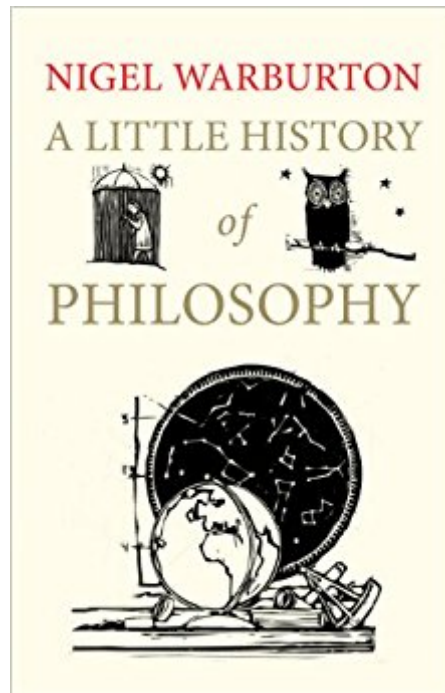


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# A Little History Of Philosophy (Little Histories)



## Synopsis

Philosophy begins with questions about the nature of reality and how we should live. These were the concerns of Socrates, who spent his days in the ancient Athenian marketplace asking awkward questions, disconcerting the people he met by showing them how little they genuinely understood. This engaging book introduces the great thinkers in Western philosophy and explores their most compelling ideas about the world and how best to live in it. In forty brief chapters, Nigel Warburton guides us on a chronological tour of the major ideas in the history of philosophy. He provides interesting and often quirky stories of the lives and deaths of thought-provoking philosophers from Socrates, who chose to die by hemlock poisoning rather than live on without the freedom to think for himself, to Peter Singer, who asks the disquieting philosophical and ethical questions that haunt our own times. Warburton not only makes philosophy accessible, he offers inspiration to think, argue, reason, and ask in the tradition of Socrates. *A Little History of Philosophy* presents the grand sweep of humanity's search for philosophical understanding and invites all to join in the discussion.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

"Survey the entire history of (western) philosophy through short intellectual biographies of 40 philosophers from Socrates to Peter Singer, in as broadly approachable a style as EH Gombrich's *A Little History of the World*. A tall order; that Warburton (of the excellent podcast *Philosophy Bites*) has succeeded so well is a triumph." —Steven Poole, *The Guardian* "Forty short chapters offer an informative, clear guide to forty major Western philosophers. Warburton's casual, conversational style belies the erudition that has gone into his

book." — Katie Owen, Sunday Telegraph "This brisk primer is, for the neophyte, a good place to start immersing oneself in the history of Western thought."

— Publishers Weekly "A charming read."

— Christian Century "The book has a certain quality that comes from accepting a challenge under severe conditions, then taking it on without making a big deal of the whole thing. And the word for that quality is grace."

— Scott McLemee, Inside Higher Ed "With this sweeping and enjoyable work the author affirms that deliberating on reality and questioning how our lives are best lived is still worth the trouble."

— PopMatters "If you are looking for a book about philosophy, Nigel Warburton's A Little History of Philosophy is the place to begin. . . . Accessible, funny and informative."

— Sacramento News and Review "A primer in human existence: philosophy has rarely seemed so lucid, so important, so worth doing and so easy to enter into. It's refreshing to see the subject presented in terms of the history of ideas rather than of timeless concepts. A wonderful introduction for anyone who's ever felt curious about almost anything."

— Sarah Bakewell, author of How To Live: A Life of Montaigne in One Question and Twenty Attempts at an Answer "A lively and eye-catching book, written in an easy style which should have splendid appeal for a young audience."

— Peter Cave, author of Can a Robot be Human?: 33 Perplexing Philosophy Puzzles "This book is a little classic."

— Merryn Williams, Oxford Times (Merryn Williams Oxford Times) "A charming read."

— Christian Century (Christian Century) "This brisk primer is, for the neophyte, a good place to start immersing oneself in the history of Western thought."

— Publishers Weekly (Publishers Weekly) "This book is a little classic, invaluable for the man or woman in the street who would like to know more about philosophy. . . . [It] suggests that philosophy is 'not harsh and crabbed, as dull fools suppose,' but a thoroughly enjoyable way to stretch your mind."

— Merryn Williams, Oxford Times (Merryn Williams Oxford Times 2011-10-06) "A primer in human existence: philosophy has rarely seemed so lucid, so important, so worth doing and so easy to enter into. It's refreshing to see the subject presented in terms of the history of ideas rather than of timeless concepts. A wonderful introduction for anyone who's ever felt curious about almost anything."

— Sarah Bakewell, author of How To Live: A Life of Montaigne in One Question and Twenty Attempts at an Answer (Sarah Bakewell) "A lively and eye-catching book, written in an easy style which should have splendid appeal for a young audience."

— Peter Cave, author of Can a Robot be Human?: 33 Perplexing Philosophy Puzzles (Peter Cave) ". . . a tour of the major ideas and thinkers in the history of philosophy, nicely presented in 40 brief chapters."

— The Bookseller (The Bookseller 2011-06-10) "Warburton packs a heck of a lot in to what is something of a Goldilocks volume: neither too much nor too little, the exegesis neither too thin or too thick and

lumpy, his Little History can be consumed as a nourishing treat in its own right or provide the perfect fuel to kick-start anyone's journey into philosophy."

• Julian Baggini, The Observer (Julian Baggini The Observer 2011-09-04)"The book has a certain quality that comes from accepting a challenge under severe conditions, then taking it on without making a big deal of the whole thing. And the word for that quality is grace."

• Scott McLemee, Inside Higher Ed (Scott McLemee Inside Higher Ed)Read Nigel Warburton's post on how E.H. Gombrich inspired A Little History of Philosophy on the Yale Press Log (<http://goo.gl/wUa94S>)"With this sweeping and enjoyable work the author affirms that deliberating on reality and questioning how our lives are best lived is still worth the trouble."

• PopMatters (PopMatters)"The magic of Nigel Warburton's book is its disarming accessibility. It closely follows the template of A Little History Of The World's Ernst Gombrich's 1935 introductory text for children, recently translated by Yale Press and Warburton is the ideal shout for a writer to match Gombrich's terse charm and easy authority. Anyone who's enjoyed Warburton's brilliant podcast series, Philosophy Bites, where he and fellow demystifier David Edmonds half-nelson academics into spelling out their theories, will know he has a special gift for defusing complexity."

• Chris Brown, Time Out (Chris Brown Time Out 2011-11-17)"If you are looking for a book about philosophy, Nigel Warburton's A Little History of Philosophy is the place to begin. . . . Accessible, funny and informative."

• Sacramento News and Review (Sacramento News and Review)"Nigel Warburton takes the reader on a journey through the history of Western philosophy, in a highly accessible way. . . . Illuminating, informative and most of all enjoyable."

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• Gavin Engelbrecht, Northern Echo (Christmas Books) (Gavin Engelbrecht Northern Echo (Christmas Books) 2011-11-28)"Survey the entire history of (western) philosophy through short intellectual biographies of 40 philosophers from Socrates to Peter Singer, in as broadly approachable a style as EH Gombrich's A Little History of the World. A tall order; that Warburton (of the excellent podcast Philosophy Bites) has succeeded so well is a triumph."

• Steven Poole, The Guardian (Steven Poole The Guardian 2011-11-12)"This is a thought-provoking and engaging introduction to philosophy, sweeping through over 2000 years of Western philosophical ideas. . . . The core ideas are clearly described with engaging anecdotal

elaborations, both visual and written, which reveal to the reader the real people behind the concepts." – Good Book Guide (Good Book Guide 2012-11-01)"Forty short chapters offer an informative, clear guide to forty major Western philosophers. Warburton's casual, conversational style belies the erudition that has gone into his book." – Katie Owen, Sunday Telegraph (Katie Owen Sunday Telegraph 2012-12-02)

Nigel Warburton is a freelance philosopher, bestselling author of many popular introductions to philosophy, and co-host of the much-loved Philosophy Bites podcast. He lives in Oxford, UK.

This must be the best introductory book I could offer students to Western philosophy with, and I have read far too many of them. Warburton manages to grab some of the best insights of great philosophers, and bring them to the bloodflow of any intellectually curious reader outside of the narrow confines of contemporary philosophy. Very easy to read, and this covers quite a bit while managing to include a few people who are often unfortunately left out--especially Schopenhauer. People will nitpick on what is in and out of this, but we do get so much for under 300 pages and less than \$15. I have fallen in love with this little book, and now I have to hurry up and find a way to include it in my classes. The Audible version (I bought both) made for a good road trip, too!

I love this book. It's fascinating... before talking about their ideas, the author shares interesting details about what the philosophers were like as people: how they lived, what inspired them, and sometimes how they thought about each others' work. The narratives are fun and memorable, and really help frame philosophy not as an abstract academic subject but more as a practical effort by real human beings to make sense of the big questions we all wrestle with in life. I hope Nigel Warburton makes more of these books. A Little History of Philosophy offers a friendly overview of some big ideas in Western philosophy, and I'd love to read his take on some of the great Eastern philosophers' lives and ideas.

This is a splendid overview, largely of Western philosophy, with brief glimpses of other schools of thought in passing. To compress the life work of these great thinkers into six or fewer pages inevitably makes for very superficial treatment, yet all the themes are there and the progression of thought over time is coherently assembled and presented. This book would be a fabulous introduction to an inquisitive teenager (I have lent my copy to one) as well as essential background reading for anybody doing European languages, history or indeed philosophy at tertiary level. Great

for starting provocative dinner table discussions within the family! (Does anyone still sit down to dinner with their children nowadays?)

This book provides a concise and illuminating history of philosophy. It is a sort of super Cliff Note, in that its 40 chapters cover 46 philosophers (Kant has two chapters) from Socrates to Peter Singer, and they are linked together over time. My own demographic is that of a retired but still curious civil servant who is still trying to catch up on the great span of my own life and learning. My only philosophy course at Yale was taught by the renowned Professor Rorty, and it was incomprehensible to me at the time. This book clarifies and organizes the course of western philosophy from its beginnings in readable chapters. The author is very articulate and even handed. Every one of these thinkers was controversial in their times, and the author notes and balances their thoughts with competing thoughts and shows how they were linked to each other and to the history of their respective times. I give copies of this book to friends, one of whom remarked that it would help him with his cocktail conversation for all time. This is true, but the book is much better than that!

Hello all, I really enjoyed this book. In the beginning I started with audio only, however it helped me stay focused when I read along. This book gives a chronological recap about many important philosophers. Ive been meaning to brush up my knowledge, this was the perfect refresher. I cant waiy to explore other books about philosophy.

Wonderfully readable text on philosophy. There are a number of philosophers and concepts that I have previously read about, some several times, and this book definitely did the best job of providing clear concise explanations of complex thinkers/ideas.

Good concise history of great philosopher. Amazingly written in easy to understand complex theory. This book surprisingly is page turner. Definety deserves 5 star.

This book is clear and gives a brief yet deep understanding about the history of philosophy through out the century. After reading this book, I know which philosopher has which idea and how the idea of one philosopher connected to other philosopher. This book is illuminating and stimulates our interest to study philosophy even further.

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