

50 book suggestions for scientific English

1. Witness to AIDS by Edwin Cameron
The background to the epidemic in South Africa, written in a moving way by an AIDS sufferer taking triple therapy.
2. Dark Star Safari by Paul Theroux.
Interested in the problems of Africa? This is an excellent introduction, but you decide for yourself on many of the issues.
3. "Longitude" by Dava Sobel.
Today, we navigate with GPS; 200 years ago, navigation was little more than guesswork. Read about the science and the people behind it all!
4. "Pasteur and Modern Science" by Rene Dubois.
I wager that Pasteur would have found a vaccine against HIV by now!
5. "The Power of One" by Bryce Courtenay.
Injustice and hope in South Africa. This book kept me up till 5 o'clock in the morning. The sound track of the film is also worth a listen - so exciting!
6. "Fermat's last theorem" by Simon Singh.
But did Fermat really have a solution himself?
7. "Naturalist" by Edward O. Wilson.
Harvard biologist, museum curator and winner of two Pulitzer prizes, one for a book on ants. I kid you not.
8. "On Giant's Shoulders" by Melvyn Bragg.
Melvyn interviews the famous about the lives and times of great scientists. Find out about Darwin's views on Women and Marriage, why Newton was knighted and what life for Marie Curie might have been like.
9. "Bourbaki's Gambit" by Carl Djerassi.
10. Four pensioned scientists invent the polymerase chain reaction. Watch the fireworks as they fight for recognition and authorship.
11. The Map That Changed the World: A Tale of Rocks, Ruin and Redemption by Simon Winchester
12. "Unweaving the Rainbow" by Richard Dawkins.
13. "Zen and the Art of Motorcycle Maintenance" by Robert M. Pirsig.
This book, written by a former biochemist, had a profound influence on me.
14. "The Affair" by C.P. Snow. The story of an investigation into possible scientific fraud in a Cambridge college.
15. "Lucky Jim" by Kingsley Amis. A more light-hearted look at British university life.
16. "The Double Helix" by James D. Watson. You'll love him or you'll hate him.
17. "The Dark Lady of DNA" Brenda Maddox. Setting the record straight.
18. "What Mad Pursuit" by Francis Crick. See above!
19. "The Blind Watchmaker" and "The Selfish Gene", both by Richard Dawkins. How to make a difficult subject easier to comprehend.
20. "Memoirs of a Thinking Radish" by P. B. Medawer. Will I ever achieve his style?

21. "On the Road" by Jack Kerouac. Don't go to the USA without having read this one! Let me know what you think of his style!
22. "Is Science Necessary?" by Max Perutz. A collection of thought-provoking essays.
23. "Surely, You're Joking, Mr Feynmann?" by Richard P. Feynmann. A genius, pure and simple.
24. Mauve by Simon Garfield
Wealth and fashion from waste and sludge
25. Guns, Germs and Steel by Jared Diamond
Why didn't the Incas conquer Europe?
26. Nathaniel's Nutmeg by Giles Milton
Spices, wars and New Amsterdam
27. A Scientific Romance by Ronald Wright
What would you take with on a trip 500 years into the future?
28. Code to Zero by Ken Follett
The space race as a background to the space race. Many useful scientific words
29. Enigma by Hugh Sebag-Montefiore
Code-breaking in WWII as the start of computing
30. The Code Book by Simon Singh
31. Entdeckung der Langsamkeit by Sven Nadolny
Exploration as a paradigm for thinking before acting. Yes, I know it's in German. You can read it in English, if you want....)
32. The Periodic Table by Primo Levi
A life under the influence of the elements
33. The Silver Castle by Clive James
You may think learning English is hard, but imagine being an illiterate street boy from Bombay.
34. Catching Cold by Pete Davies
The background to the 1918 influenza outbreak. When will it happen again?
35. Loose Ends by Sydney Brenner
Uncle Syd's advice to Scientists young and old.
36. Cantor's Dilemma by Carl Djerassi.
A Stanford Professor of Chemistry of Viennese origin pokes fun at University Science.
37. The Songlines by Bruce Chatwin.
Part travel book on Australia, part anthropological theory, part linguistic theory, part evolutionary theory, this book is the most thought-provoking I have read in a long time. (It also contains an interview with Konrad Lorenz).
38. Marie Curie by Susan Quinn.
Apparently, the definitive biography.
39. The Cunning Man by Roberston Davies.
Tale of an unusual doctor and English women in Toronto.
40. River out of Eden by Richard Dawkins.
More elegantly put ideas on evolution.
41. Porterhouse Blue by Tom Sharpe.
Is this what is wrong with British Universities?

42. Book with most ecology (animals?) by Carl Hiaasen.
Place alongside E.O. Wilson?
43. "And the band played on" by Randy Shilts. The first years of AIDS and HIV. Always be prepared to question everything written on AIDS
44. The number one ladies` detective agency by Alexander McCall-Smith. A different look at life in Botswana.
45. "Einstein in Berlin" by Thomas Levenson. Who chose Einstein's second wife for him?
46. Uncle Tungsten Memories of a chemical boyhood by Oliver Sacks
47. Into the Blue: Boldly Going Where Captain Cook Has Gone Before by Tony Horwitz
48. Andromeda strain by Michael Crichton
49. George Beadle: An Uncommon Farmer by Paul Berg and Maxine Singer
50. What evolution is by Ernst Mayr
51. Coffeeshouse notes on Virology by Tim Skern
Note form it is, but the English is very straightforward.

Books which could be added:

Vermessung der Welt

Book on Medvedev

Peter Sis on Darwin

Silent Spring

Sceptical ecologist Denmark

Literary companion to science.

Walter Gratzer, Ed.

What evolution is. Basic Books New York 0-465-04425-5

Kenneth Clark

Leonardo da Vinci