

Life Science suggestions for reading and other things.

We thought you might like some ideas for things to read and watch in preparation of coming to University, especially during lockdown. These are aimed at stimulating your scientific and inquiring mind. This list is eclectic, suggested by a number of colleagues working across the field of biology and includes fact-based and fictional works, also some opinion and journalistic books too. We absolutely do NOT expect you to have read these books but thought they might entertain and enlighten you. If you have any suggestions please do let us know at k.purdy@warwick.ac.uk.

New Scientist, Scientific American and Biological Sciences Review (edited by Prof Moffat)

Always good for keeping up with new and developing ideas in science

Richard Dawkins

The Ancestor's Tale

This is particularly recommended

The Oxford Book of Modern Science Writing (Ed. Richard Dawkins)

A volume of short extracts on many aspects of science.

Paul Colinvaux

Why big fierce animals are scarce

Good for ecology

Oliver Sacks

An Anthropologist on Mars: Seven paradoxical tales

Stories of the histories of seven people with neurological disorders.

Alice Roberts

(plus other books)

The Incredible Unlikelihood of Being: Evolution and the Making of Us

A masterful account of why our bodies are the way they are...

Ben Goldacre

Bad Science

More journalistic and focused on biomedical.

Francis Ashcroft

Life at the Extremes: [The Science of Survival]

How do people survive extremes of heat, cold, depth, speed etc?

Peter Godfrey-Smith

Other Minds: The Octopus and the Evolution of Intelligent Life

What if intelligent life on Earth evolved not once, but twice?

Ed Yong

I Contain Multitudes: The microbes within us and a grander view of life

A "microbe's-eye view" of the world.

Georgina Ferry

Dorothy Hodgkin: A Life

Biography of the nobel prize winner. A pioneer in her field and in new technology, but also shows a scientist as a human being

- Frans de Waal** **Are We Smart Enough to Know How Smart Animals Are?**
In what way we are different from the rest of the animal kingdom?
- Rebecca Skloot** **The immortal life of Henrietta Lacks**
The award-winning story of the ethics and impact of the origin of HeLa cells.
- Alex Boese** **Elephants on Acid and Other Bizarre Experiments**
The title says it all!
- Primo Levi** **The Periodic Table**
A collection of short stories each centred around a specific element from Levi's experiences in Fascist Italy, and in Auschwitz.
- John Pilger** **Distant Voices**
Something political that is relevant to being a scientist.
- Fiction**
- Margaret Atwood** **The MaddAddam trilogy**
 The Year of the Flood / MaddAddam / Oryx and Crake
Atwood is a scientifically literate author who writes great books.

For examples of concise and excellent story telling:

- Raymond Carver** **Cathedral**
A short story by the poet and author
- Jorge Luis Borges** **Labyrinths**
Short stories by the Argentinian writer
- JD Salinger** **Nine Stories**
Includes a couple of the famous short stories from the author of The Catcher in the Rye.

Also perhaps have a look at

The Naked Scientists podcasts at: <https://www.thenakedscientists.com/>

- BBC IPlayer** **Pain, Pus and poison: The search for modern medicines.**
This is an excellent BBC series on pharmacology with Michael Mosley.

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