

Prison Reading Groups (PRG) was created in 1999 to set up, support and fund informal reading groups in prisons. We now support more than 60 groups in over 45 prisons nationwide. PRG is part of Give a Book.



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Finding a Good Read

A regular column to help you find a good read even if you can't get to the library yet

Biography and memoir

'The way we should take life is to ensure that if a biography is ever written about us, it's a bloody good read'

This month we're browsing the shelves for good stories about real people. The great thing about biographies and memoirs is that libraries are full of them and there are so many different kinds – from Barack Obama's inspirational *Dreams from My Father* to Mr Nice, Howard Marks' astonishing story of a drug-dealing career and 43 aliases.

Below are just some of the categories you could ask for, along with a few authors and titles for each one.

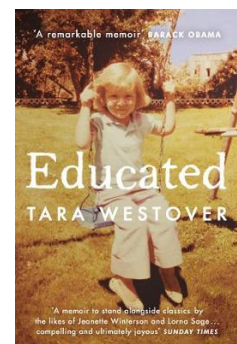
Comedians

- Billy Connolly: *Tall Tales and Wee Stories* and lots of others
- Dawn French: *Dear Fatty*
- Romesh Ranganathan *Straight Outta Crawley* and *As Good as It Gets: Life Lessons from a Reluctant Adult*
- Spike Milligan: seven books of memoir, including *Adolf Hitler: My Part in His Downfall*



Growing up

- *Born a Crime, Stories from a South African Childhood*: Trevor Noah's fierce and funny account of growing up as a mixed-race child during the twilight of apartheid
- *Educated*: Tara Westover's story of growing up in a survivalist Mormon family and her fight for education and escape
- *A Life Like Other People's*: Alan Bennett's brilliant account of his family, by turns hilarious and heart-breaking
- *Bageye at the Wheel, A 1970s Childhood in Suburbia*: Colin Grant's memoir of growing up as a child of the Windrush generation
- *The Louder I Will Sing, A Story of Racism, Riots and Redemption*: Lee Lawrence's memoir tells the story of the police shooting of his mother when he was eleven and his determination to bring it to light
- *In Order to Live*: Yeonmi Park's horrifying account of her childhood in North Korea and her struggle to escape
- *My Name is Why*: Lemn Sissay's searing story of his childhood in the care system and his eventual triumph over it
- *I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings*: Maya Angelou's memoir of her black girlhood in the racist American South of the 1930s



Politicians and public figures

- Barack Obama: *Dreams from My Father, A Promised Land*
- Nelson Mandela, *Long Walk to Freedom*
- Sonia Purnell, *Just Boris, A Tale of Blond Ambition*
- Michelle Obama, *Becoming*
- *The Autobiography of Malcom X*



Prison Memoirs

- *The Sun Does Shine*: Anthony Ray Hinton's story of 29 years on Death Row for a crime he didn't commit and how he not only survived but triumphed over it
- *Orange is the New Black*: Piper Kerman's account of her time in a US women's prison which became a bigtime Netflix hit
- *A Sense of Freedom*: Jimmy Boyle's experience of growing up in the gangland violence of Gorbals, his imprisonment for murder and a rehabilitation programme that saved him
- *In the Belly of the Beast*: Jack Henry Abbott's letters to writer Norman Mailer about his life in a US maximum security prison
- *If this is a Man*: Primo Levi's haunting account of his survival in Auschwitz and what it cost him

Musicians

- Stormzy: *Rise Up*
- Keith Richards: *Life*
- Amy Winehouse: subject of several biographies, including ones by both her father and her mother
- Pati Smith: *Just Kids* and *M Train*
- Bob Marley: biography by Colin Grant, *I & I: The Natural Mystics, Marley, Tosh and Wailer*

Spies and Adventurers

- Ben Macintyre is the king of spy biographers. His books include *The Spy and the Traitor*, *Agent Zigzag*, *Double Cross* and *Agent Sonya*
- *Prisoners of Honour*: David Levering Lewis tells the story of Alfred Dreyfus, a Jewish army officer falsely convicted for spying against France in the 1890s and sent to the notorious Devil's Island prison off the coast of French Guiana in South America
- *Wild*: Cheryl Strayed's lone walk across eleven hundred miles of the west coast of America in search of herself
- *Into the Wild*: Jon Krakauer's account of the pull of the American wilderness and what it cost one young man



Calling book reviewers

If you've read a good book recently send a review to Inside Time in no more than 100 words and mark it 'Finding a Good Read'. We'll print the best ones.