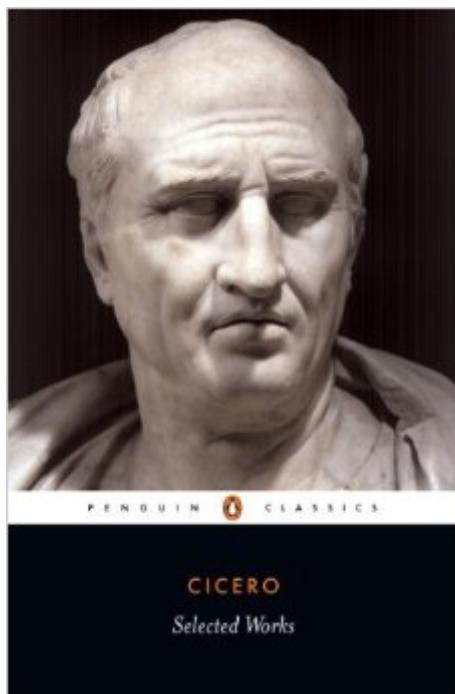


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Cicero: Selected Works



Synopsis

Collecting the most incisive and influential writings of one of Rome's finest orators, Cicero's Selected Works is translated with an introduction by Michael Grant in Penguin Classics. Lawyer, philosopher, statesman and defender of Rome's Republic, Cicero was a master of eloquence, and his pure literary and oratorical style and strict sense of morality have been a powerful influence on European literature and thought for over two thousand years in matters of politics, philosophy, and faith. This selection demonstrates the diversity of his writings, and includes letters to friends and statesmen on Roman life and politics; the vitriolic Second Philippic Against Antony; and his two most famous philosophical treatises, *On Duties* and *On Old Age* - a celebration of his own declining years. Written at a time of brutal political and social change, Cicero's lucid ethical writings formed the foundation of the Western liberal tradition in political and moral thought that continues to this day. For more than seventy years, Penguin has been the leading publisher of classic literature in the English-speaking world. With more than 1,700 titles, Penguin Classics represents a global bookshelf of the best works throughout history and across genres and disciplines. Readers trust the series to provide authoritative texts enhanced by introductions and notes by distinguished scholars and contemporary authors, as well as up-to-date translations by award-winning translators.

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Customer Reviews

Cicero perhaps doesn't need introducing. He was a powerful politician of the last decades of the Roman Republic, the 70s to the 40s BC. Originally a lawyer and an orator, he made his name

prosecuting corrupt figures of the senatorial establishment, before joining the conservative camp against the populist tribunes and against Caesar. Cicero was consul in 63BC. His writings are massive and are one of the period's key historical sources, even if obviously not unbiased. He also wrote a set of philosophical treatises. This edition contains only a tiny portion of the 800 or so letters, countless speeches, works on the constitution, on laws, and on moral questions that Cicero produced. The selection, furthermore, is problematic. The editors have labelled the larger section, comprising political texts, 'Against Tyranny' (which they also call, anachronistically, 'totalitarianism'). This section includes the Verrine indictment and speeches in defiance of Marc Antony, glossing over Cicero's switching to the side of Verres' friends in the intervening decades. Moreover, the editors avoid mention of Cicero's contentious role, as consul, in using extra-judicial means to repress the Catilinarian conspiracy. The Catilinarian speeches, perhaps his best known, are essential to an honest portrait of Cicero's politics; they are missing from this edition. The philosophical, second section likewise aims to portray Cicero as a grand old moral figure, comprising only *On Duties* and *On Old Age*. It misses fancier but interesting essays such as *On Divination* (Cicero was also an augur, an official soothsayer) and *On the Nature of the Gods*. The selection of letters, finally, is interesting, though only for the reader with good basic knowledge of their background (the editors' notes don't quite suffice).

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