Very Short Introductions online

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Ancient Philosophy: A Very Short Introduction
Julia Annas

Print Publication Year: 2000 Published Online: Sep 2013  
Publisher: Oxford University Press
DOI: 10.1093/actrade/9780192853578.001.0001

Ancient Philosophy: A Very Short Introduction introduces ancient debates and focuses on important and revealing features of the subject providing a sense of its freshness and liveliness, and of its wide variety of themes and styles. The tradition of ancient philosophy is a long, rich and varied one, in which a constant note is that of discussion and argument. What did ancient philosophers think about the conflict of reason and emotion within man? Are there any subjects that engaged the minds of ancient philosophers that do not concern their modern counterparts? What can we learn from the thoughts of the ancient philosophers?

Plato: A Very Short Introduction
Julia Annas

Print Publication Year: 2003 Published Online: Sep 2013  
Publisher: Oxford University Press
DOI: 10.1093/actrade/9780192802163.001.0001

Plato: A Very Short Introduction explores the philosophy and argument of Plato's writings, looking at Plato as a thinker grappling with philosophical problems in a variety of ways, rather than a philosopher with a fully worked-out system. It discusses Plato's style of writing: his use of the dialogue form, his use of what we today call fiction, and his philosophical transformation of myths. It looks at his discussions of love and philosophy, his attitude to women and to homosexual love, and his claim that virtue is sufficient for happiness. It also examines his arguments for the immortality of the soul, and his ideas about the nature of the universe.

Presocratic Philosophy: A Very Short Introduction
Catherine Osborne

Print Publication Year: 2004 Published Online: Sep 2013  
Publisher: Oxford University Press
DOI: 10.1093/actrade/9780192840943.001.0001

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Presocratic Philosophy: A Very Short Introduction introduces the first thinkers to explore ideas about the nature of reality, time, and the origin of the universe. It begins by discussing a new papyrus fragment of Empedocles, and uses the story of its discovery and interpretation to highlight the way our understanding of early philosophers is marked by their presentation in later sources. Generations of philosophers have traced their inspiration back to the Presocratics. The fragmentary remains of thinkers from Thales to Pythagoras, and from Heraclitus to Protagoras, are explored to try to fill in the bits of a jigsaw that has been rejigged many times and in many different ways.

Socrates: A Very Short Introduction
C. C. W. Taylor

Print Publication Year: 2019 Published Online: Aug 2019
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Socrates has a unique position in the history of philosophy; had it not been for his influence on Plato, the whole development of Western philosophy might have been unimaginably different. Socrates wrote nothing himself so our knowledge of him is derived primarily from the engaging and infuriating figure who appears in Plato’s dialogues. Socrates: A Very Short Introduction explores Socrates’ life and his philosophical activity, before considering the responses his philosophical doctrines have evoked in the centuries since his death. It examines the relationship between the historical Socrates and the Platonic character, and explores the enduring image of Socrates as the ideal exemplar of the philosophic life.