Very Short Introductions online

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**Bestsellers: A Very Short Introduction**

John Sutherland

Print Publication Year: 2007 Published Online: Sep 2013  
Publisher: Oxford University Press  
DOI: 10.1093/actrade/9780199214891.001.0001  
Item type: book

Bestsellers: A Very Short Introduction shows that bestseller lists monitor one of the strongest pulses in modern literature and are therefore worthy of serious study. It lifts the lid on the bestseller industry, examines what makes a book into a bestseller, and asks what separates bestsellers from canonical fiction. Exploring the relationship between bestsellers and the fashions, ideologies, and cultural concerns of the day, this VSI includes short case-studies and lively summaries of bestsellers through the years, including both classic and contemporary novels, alongside some surprising titles and long-forgotten names.

**Crime Fiction: A Very Short Introduction**

Richard Bradford

Print Publication Year: 2015 Published Online: May 2015  
Publisher: Oxford University Press  
DOI: 10.1093/actrade/9780199658787.001.0001  
Item type: book

Crime Fiction: A Very Short Introduction explores the history of ‘crime fiction’ and the various definitions of the genre and considers how it has developed over time. Discussing the popularity of crime fiction worldwide and its various styles; the role that gender plays within the genre; spy fiction, legal dramas, and thrillers; it explores how the crime novel was shaped by the work of British and American authors in the 18th and 19th centuries. Highlighting the works of Edgar Allan Poe, Arthur Conan Doyle, Agatha Christie, and Raymond Chandler, the role of the crime novel in modern popular culture is considered and it asks whether crime fiction can be considered serious ‘literature’.

**Kafka: A Very Short Introduction**

Ritchie Robertson

Print Publication Year: 2004 Published Online: Sep 2013  
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Item type: book

Attending both to Kafka's crisis-ridden life and to the subtleties of his art, Kafka: A Very Short Introduction shows how his work explores such characteristically modern themes as
the place of the body in culture, the power of institutions over people, and the possibility of religion after Nietzsche had proclaimed ‘the death of God’. Kafka is among the most intriguing and influential writers of the 20th century. During his lifetime he worked as a civil servant and published only a few short stories. All three of his novels, The Trial, The Castle, and The Man Who Disappeared [Amerika], were published after his death and helped to found Kafka's reputation as a uniquely perceptive interpreter of the 20th century.