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The Portable Enlightenment Reader [PORTABLE ENLIGHTENMENT RE]

From Penguin Books : The Portable Enlightenment Reader [PORTABLE ENLIGHTENMENT RE] before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised The Portable Enlightenment Reader [PORTABLE ENLIGHTENMENT RE]:

2 of 2 people found the following review helpful. Anthology of Brilliant MindsBy Edward J. BartonPerhaps the best of the "Portable" series by Viking-Penguin. The book covers the Enlightenment period from approximately 1650 through 1800, and is superbly edited by Isaac Kramnick. Covering such luminaries as Voltaire, Kant, Hume, Locke, Rousseau, Jefferson, Pope, Montesquieu, Franklin, Paine, Bentham, Adam Smith and a score of lesser known philosophers and writers; the book hits on major elements of the era - religion, politics, liberty, race, gender and slavery - among others. Within these 700 or so pages, the book provides the reader with an introduction to the Enlightenment and does so in such a way that there's an appreciation as to the role of this unique era in the foundation of our modern society. The selection of readings were both famous and obscure, but the reader is not left feeling that they didn't get a fair shake at the real elements of the philosophy that fueled the American and French revolutions, led to the establishment of the modern Western democracy, and continues to serve as a foundation of modern political and ethical thought. If there is one book for every student to read before they leave high school, or certainly college, it is this one. A must read. 0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. A superb collectionBy CustomerMany historical anthologies focus upon a single theme and thus fail to provide their readers with an adequate range of sources. Yet Isaac Kramnick's Enlightenment Reader avoids this pitfall. This book will introduce you to the key texts

of the period - in addition to many delightful works of which you may never have heard. Readers looking for pure philosophy will not be disappointed: the anthology contains a fine selection of excerpts from Bacon, Descartes, Leibnitz, Newton, Hume, Kant, and others. But the Enlightenment embodied more than abstract speculation, and Kramnick skillfully arranges sections on science, religion, art, morality, education, history, politics, economics, crime, war, gender, and race. Each topic draws upon a diverse array of authors. This gives the reader a sense of the popularity of Enlightenment thought, as well as its development from the middle of the seventeenth century to the start of the nineteenth. Intellectual giants like Voltaire, Rousseau, and Locke appear alongside a gallery of lesser-known but fascinating figures: Nicolas de Condorcet, mathematician and revolutionary terrorist; William Godwin, anarchist and lover of Mary Wollstonecraft; Olympe de Gouges, early feminist playwright; John Cleland, author of the scandalous *Fanny Hill* - a vital source for the study of eighteenth-century sexuality, and still hilarious after 270 years. Any collection as ambitious as Kramnick's is bound to have a few faults. The most glaring omission is George Berkeley, whose philosophy of radical skepticism makes no appearance. A few texts from writers outside of the Enlightenment tradition - I'm thinking of Goethe, Herder, and the Marquis de Sade - would have rounded out the reader's sense of the diversity of eighteenth-century thought. That said, I know Penguin has commissioned another volume in this series, on Romanticism, so I expect that some of these 'Counter-Enlightenment' authors will feature in the coming volume. These are all petty quibbles. If you are looking for a fresh and thorough introduction to the Western Enlightenment, Isaac Kramnick's *Enlightenment Reader* is the ideal place to start. This compendium brings to life one of the most important periods in the history of Europe and its colonies: you will find that the great men and women of the eighteenth century were just that - men and women - and yet no less great for their humanity. I am extremely pleased with my purchase, and I am confident that you will feel the same. 1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. Great buy By MGBReceived as advertised. Excellent transaction!

Portable Enlightenment Reader by Isaac Ed. Kramnick. Penguin Books, Inc., 1995