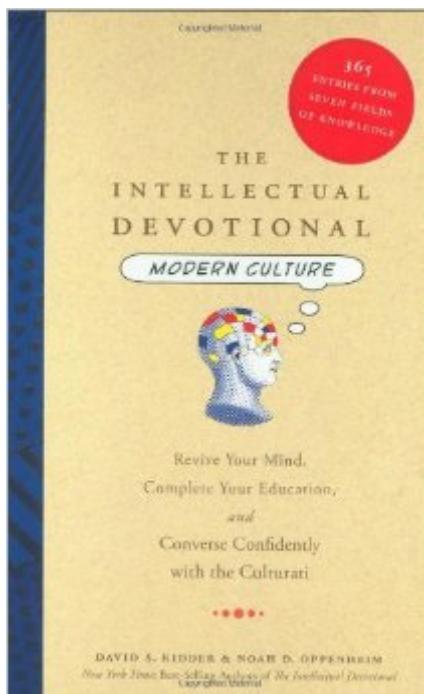


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The Intellectual Devotional Modern Culture: Revive Your Mind, Complete Your Education, And Converse Confidently With The Culturati



Synopsis

In the tradition of the instant bestsellers *The Intellectual Devotional* and *The Intellectual Devotional: American History* comes the third installment in this indispensable series. In *The Intellectual Devotional: Modern Culture*, authors David S. Kidder and Noah D. Oppenheim explore the fascinating world of contemporary culture to offer 365 daily readings that provide the essential references needed to navigate the world today. Quench your intellectual thirst with an overview of the literature, music, film, personalities, trends, sports, and pop references that have defined the way we live. From the Slinky to Star Wars; Beatlemania to Babe Ruth; flappers to fascismâ •refreshing your memory and dazzling your friends has never been easier, or more fun. Whether you're a trivia genius, pop-culture buff, or avid reader, you'll be riveted by this comprehensive journey through contemporary culture.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

"The Intellectual Devotional" is an intriguing concept and fairly well executed. Each day of the week features a brief, one page article about a given subject, followed by a smattering of "additional facts"--Monday's topic is history, Tuesday's is literature, Wednesday's is the visual arts, Thursday's is science, Friday's is music, Saturday's is philosophy and Sunday's is religion. I've been reading the book for a couple of weeks now, and I've found the brief essays to be informative, up-to-date and (on topics with which I'm already familiar) accurate. I read each daily "devotional" at breakfast over a cup of coffee, and it's a pleasant way to start the day (and certainly less painful than the newspaper). Several of the reviews on have criticized the book's small type, and this is in fact

something to be wary of if you have vision problems. The first paragraph on each page is in what appears to be a regular-sized font, but subsequent paragraphs are quite a bit smaller. The "Additional Facts" (which set out some of the most intriguing ideas on each page) are quite small indeed.

This is a fun book, no doubt about it, and quite educational in its own right. But it is also full of errors and misrepresentations from page one -- mostly minor ones, but even those are glaring embarrassments for a work which continually flaunts how "intellectual" and "cultured" it is. The very first entry, for example, deals with "Egyptian hieroglyphics." Any amateur Egyptologist worth his or her salt will immediately tell you that the proper term is "hieroglyphs" -- "hieroglyphic" is the adjectival form of the word. A nitpick, perhaps, but one that tends to raise the hackles of Egyptian history professors. Later entries contain cringe-inducing mistakes, such as the claim that the Hebrew Torah is the Christian Old Testament. In fact, the Hebrew Tanakh is equivalent to the (Protestant) Old Testament: the Torah consists only of the Pentateuch, the Five Books of Moses. This is not a minor point. Other entries contain not so much outright errors, but a lack of nuanced understanding. To refer to the Mass as a "ritual reenactment," for instance, may pass muster for a Calvinist, but would make any Roman Catholic, Lutheran, Episcopalian, etc. wince at the authors' lack of understanding. In short, it's certainly a book worth buying and enjoying. But take its summaries with a grain of salt. Tackling such massive swathes of learning necessitates that the work be far wider than it is deep.

Do you frequently find yourself at a loss for words? Are you the constant listener to someone else's mindless chatter simply because you can't think of anything interesting to say? Authors Kidder and Oppenheim offer factual options in this cleverly written book to enliven your conversations and broaden your knowledge on a variety of subjects. Their compilation offers History, Literature, Visual Arts, Science, Music, Philosophy and Religion explained in brief one page summaries. Each day you read one page only, absorb it. By the end of the week you will have explored each field of knowledge at least once a week. As your knowledge expands, so does your confidence and your conversations have more interesting substance. Each day, while reading the book, I shared the information I had learned with my husband and friends who were delighted to discuss Ernest Hemingway, Cloning, illusion vs reality, Hammurabi's code of Laws, Noah, Plato, The Solar System, Vaccines, Albert Einstein, the Solar system, Da Vinci, Plato, Handel, atoms, Aristotle, Mozart, and Vermeer's "Girl with a Pearl Earring" painting, just to mention a few passages. Actress Scarlett

Johanssen portrayed "the girl" in a recent film based on Vermeer's life, so we gained more insight into how that portrait, "Girl with a Pearl Ear-ring," manifested, then our conversation strayed naturally to the quality of current motion pictures like "The Horse Whisperer" and "Island," in which Scarlett Johanssen was also featured, and that is exactly the purpose of this book, "to wake up our brains," enliven our thoughts, enhance our communication skills so that we become more confident and knowledgeable and stop hesitating to engage in diverse and dynamic conversations. No need to be a hesitant, shy, silent observer. After reading this book, step into life armed with more knowledge and facts!

What a fabulous concept! As a fan of daybooks and devotionals, I love the idea of this book. Covering seven key areas of knowledge, one for each day of the week, it delivers what it promises in the title and subtitle. I would have given the book FIVE stars if it weren't for the incredibly SMALL TYPE that makes reading very difficult for middle-aged readers like me -- especially at the end of the day. I am hoping that the publishers will release a "large print" version for anyone past 50. I will look forward to more editions of this wonderful book. Other than the typesize, it's highly recommended.

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