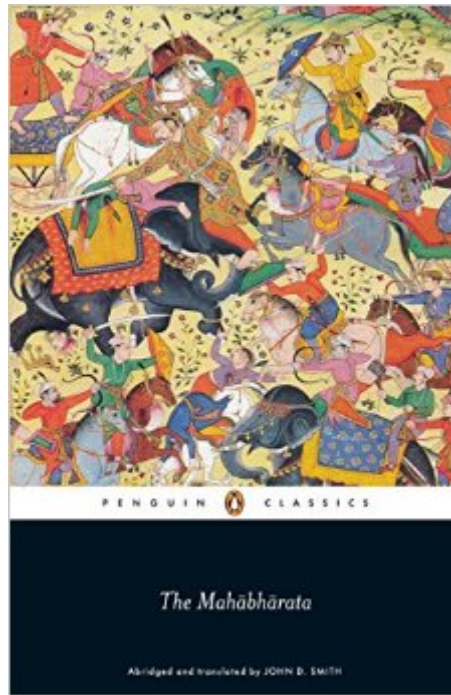


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# The Mahabharata (Penguin Classics)



## Synopsis

^ A new selection from the national epic of India Originally composed in Sanskrit sometime between 400 BC and 400 AD, The Mahabharata-with one hundred thousand stanzas of verse-is one of the longest poems in existence. At the heart of the saga is a conflict between two branches of a royal family whose feud culminates in a titanic eighteen-day battle. Exploring such timeless subjects as dharma (duty), artha (purpose), and kama (pleasure) in a mythic world of warfare, magic, and beauty, this is a magnificent and legendary Hindu text of immense importance to the culture of the Indian subcontinent. 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.

## Book Information

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Average Customer Review: 4.6 out of 5 stars^ ^ See all reviews^ (27 customer reviews)

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## Customer Reviews

This version of the Mahabharata is mostly a paraphrase in English. I have not been able to find more than that without great expense, however it is very good for someone who wants the narrative with the details of the story but also wants to get the feeling of the text. The paraphrase is interspersed with fairly lengthy sections of text. All the things you might get in an English retelling

are reproduced in really beautiful prose. The battle scenes are harrowing. Anyone who might be squeamish at the Iliad (I have not met such a person, but I am told they exist) would be wise to steer clear. I am not a scholar of Indian Literature and have only the most basic grasp of Hindu pantheon and tradition, but I found this accessible and really compelling. The characters are really unforgettable. The enduring message of the work about faith and dharma has not lost any beauty and relevance today. It would be wise to get a good version of the Bhagavad Gita and read that in its entirety when you arrive at the relevant passages, for that really would complete the experience. For the price of a penguin book you could not get better.

Some reviews are a bit misleading: this book is half translation half summary (as the author says, translation occupies more pages than summary.) I prefer to call this book an anthology of translated highpoints with summary intercalated, more than a summary with a few original passages. But in fact, Mahabharata is a very huge and varied book (thousands of printed pages), so the author translated about a 11 per cent of the actual text. It is an about 400 page anthology of translation plus an about 400 page of good and complete summary, by far the best readable abridged edition in the market and far better than retelling or novelized versions. For the translated part, based on the critical Pune edition, is accurate to the Sanskrit text and readable, beautiful English. With intermediate knowledge of the Sanskrit language, one can compare the original with the translation and learn a lot. Besides, chapters and paragraphs from the critical edition (available on the web) are provided, so one can search any exact shloka in the original and check the translation. A good tool for Sanskrit students. Unfortunately, the Buitenen-Fitzgerald complete and highly accurate translation is far from finished (4 volumes, 7 Mahabharata books) and the old Ganguli is hard to read as a pleasure (the original is beautiful verse) This anthology/summary fills a gap, and achieves it in the better manner. Is enjoying and accurate, and most time one can read actual translation from the Mahabharata text.

I did a translation of Bhagavad Gita which I published under the title of Bhagavad Gita English. I also did three commentaries. These can be seen here: <http://www..com/-/e/B002PJ2ZMAI> mentioned this because the Sanskrit (Devanagari) text was taken from an online source which is supervised by the author of this Mahabharata translation. At the time of his allowing the use of that part of the Mahabharata Sanskrit text, I was unaware that he was to publish this book. This is an exceptional translation and in a way it is on par with the work which was begun by J.A.B. van Buitenen for the University of Chicago, except that this is not as extensive. This is a good primer for the Mahabharata

published by University of Chicago. The English is a true rendering and is practically flawless.

well basically this book of more than 800 pages is a very abridged translation of the Hindu epic-encyclopedia. the Mahabharata the same as the bible tries to unify in one narrative different accounts from ancient folklore, philosophy and mythology, the problem is that the original form its huge! You really have to be selective in order to offer a readable version to sane people. But if you are looking for Indian philosophy and mythology better look for another book, this one is focused on the battle narrative, that occupies more or less half of the book in monotonous, excessively related, boring, details of the battle. I would preferred that the 400 pages of battle would be resumed in 10 and the rest to be focused on the philosophical speeches and to be less abridged about the rich mythology. the same number of pages but different priority on what to put and what to leave out.

I really like the Penguin Classics. I also have the Bhagavad Gita, and have found their translations very clear, without a lot of extraneous prose. Very direct translations that are easy to understand.

This version of the Mahabharata was more of a summary of the Mahabharata rather than the actual epic. Albeit a good summary, I felt like the translation failed to retain its authenticity- over 90% of the book is summarized and paraphrased, and the remaining 10% is written as prose rather than poetry. However, if you are not looking for an authentic reading of the epic then this book definitely serves its purpose.

If you are interested in Asian mythology or Indian mythology (or more correctly ancient history) this is a must read. I purchased an abridged version and it is still at least a thousand pages long so be prepared to take some time to finish it. They have taken out most of the long repetitive portions of the story which I didn't mind. It is still engaging and interesting with all important story points intact.

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