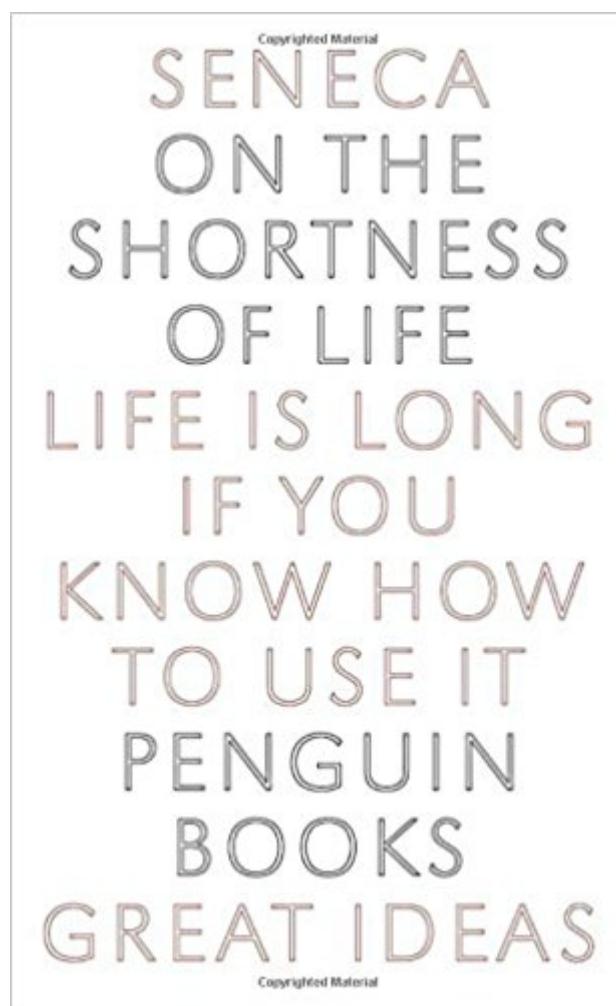


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# On The Shortness Of Life: Life Is Long If You Know How To Use It (Penguin Great Ideas)



## Synopsis

Throughout history, some books have changed the world. They have transformed the way we see ourselves and each other. They have inspired debate, dissent, war and revolution. They have enlightened, outraged, provoked and comforted. They have enriched lives and destroyed them. Now, Penguin brings you the works of the great thinkers, pioneers, radicals and visionaries whose ideas shook civilization, and helped make us who we are. Penguin's Great Ideas series features twelve groundbreaking works by some of history's most prodigious thinkers, and each volume is beautifully packaged with a unique type-drive design that highlights the bookmaker's art. Offering great literature in great packages at great prices, this series is ideal for those readers who want to explore and savor the Great Ideas that have shaped the world. The Stoic writings of the philosopher Seneca, who lived from c. 5 BC to AD 65, offer powerful insights into the art of living, the importance of reason and morality, and continue to provide profound guidance to many through their eloquence, lucidity and timeless wisdom. This selection of Seneca's works was taken from the Penguin Classics edition of *Dialogues and Letters*, translated by C.D.N. Costa, and includes the essays *On the Shortness of Life*, *Consolation to Helvia*, and *On Tranquility of Mind*.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

Lucius Annaeus Seneca, statesman, philosopher, advocate and man of letters, was born at Cordoba in Spain around 4 BC. He rose to prominence in Rome, pursuing a career in the courts and political life, for which he had been trained, while also acquiring celebrity as an author of tragedies

and essays. Falling foul of successive emperors (Caligula in AD 39 and Claudius in AD 41), he spent eight years in exile, allegedly for an affair with Caligula's sister. Recalled in AD 49, he was made praetor and was appointed tutor to the boy who was to become, in AD 54, the emperor Nero. On Nero's succession, Seneca acted for some eight years as an unofficial chief minister. The early part of this reign was remembered as a period of sound government, for which the main credit seems due to Seneca. His control over Nero declined as enemies turned the emperor against him with representations that his popularity made him a danger, or with accusations of immorality or excessive wealth. Retiring from public life he devoted his last three years to philosophy and writing, particularly the *Letters to Lucilius*. In AD 65 following the discovery of a plot against the emperor, in which he was thought to be implicated, he and many others were compelled by Nero to commit suicide. His fame as an essayist and dramatist lasted until two or three centuries ago, when he passed into literary oblivion, from which the twentieth century has seen a considerable recovery.

**On the Shortness of Life**  
Most human beings, Paulinus,\* complain about the meanness of nature, because we are born for a brief span of life, and because this spell of time that has been given to us rushes by so swiftly and rapidly that with very few exceptions life ceases for the rest of us just when we are getting ready for it. Nor is it just the man in the street and the unthinking mass of people who groan over this - as they see it - universal evil: the same feeling lies behind complaints from even distinguished men. Hence the dictum of the greatest of doctors: 'Life is short, art is long.' Hence too the grievance, most improper to a wise man, which Aristotle expressed when he was taking nature to task for indulging animals with such long existences that they can live through five or ten human lifetimes, while a far shorter limit is set for men who are born to a great and extensive destiny. It is not that we have a short time to live, but that we waste a lot of it. Life is long enough, and a sufficiently generous amount has been given to us for the highest achievements if it were all well invested.\* A friend of Seneca's.â Hippocrates

One of the most insightful books I have ever read. Seneca, being one of the better known philosophers at the time, delves into our thoughts as well as others thoughts from across the generations. Even though his musings were made back in the early 1st century, he still had valid points. My favorite take-away from this book: "People are frugal in guarding their personal property, but as soon as it comes to squandering time, they are most wasteful of the one thing in which it is right to be stingy." He does what any good philosopher is supposed to do: make you think. How quick are we to dismiss someone who is asking us for \$100, while we will gladly give away an

afternoon at an event that we did not want to attend? We all have birth certificates, so we know how long we have existed, but how much of that time is actually spent living? Also, if we knew what the other end was, our death date, how differently would we live? If we knew that we only had 50,000 hours left on earth, how stingy would we be with our time? I reread this book all the time.

Book worth reading even though it has some controversial points of views, great while getting to know Stoicism and its fundamental basics. For sure not about the shortness of life, but more - how to deal with time and what to change, so we can use all of it.

Great read, in excellent condition, easy to carry around as it is very small.

I think everyone should be familiar with Seneca. He has so much insight to offer that is still completely relevant today

Great readings, as always Seneca, Stoicism and simple life principles to live in peace, happy and full of gratefulness

Seneca has written numerous letters and this is, in my estimation, one of the best (and concise) set to read if you want to understand his approach. This is the gateway Seneca book you've been looking for.

Buy this book. It will make open your blind eyes to the world you've been missing on. Short and profound insight into what we are all missing the "now."

Life is better with Seneca. Epictetus and Cicero were pretty awesome too. Marcus Aurelius is another. Generally the stoics got a lot about the good life right.

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