



# Readings for Critical Response and Writing



Mortimer J. Adler

*Mortimer Jerome Adler (1902–2001) was born in New York City and received his PhD from Columbia University in 1928. A staunch advocate for classical philosophy, Adler believed that there are unshakable truths—an idea rejected by most contemporary philosophers. For this reason, Adler has not been taken seriously by the academic establishment. He was a champion of knowledge, believing that philosophy should be a part of everyone's life and that access to the great ideas in philosophy can be of value to everyone. Many of his over 75 books attempt to edify the general reader by explaining basic philosophical concepts in everyday language. He was also chairman of the editorial board of the Encyclopedia Britannica. To make knowledge more accessible to everyone, he also assumed editorship of the Encyclopedia Britannica's Great Books project, partly sponsored by the University of Chicago. This project, which has put 443 of the world's "classics" into a 54-volume set, graces the bookcases of many dens and studies in middle-class American homes. Despite his advancing years, Adler continued to work on many projects to promote his goal of universal education and enlightenment. "How to Mark a Book" is typical of his didactic, pragmatic approach to education.*