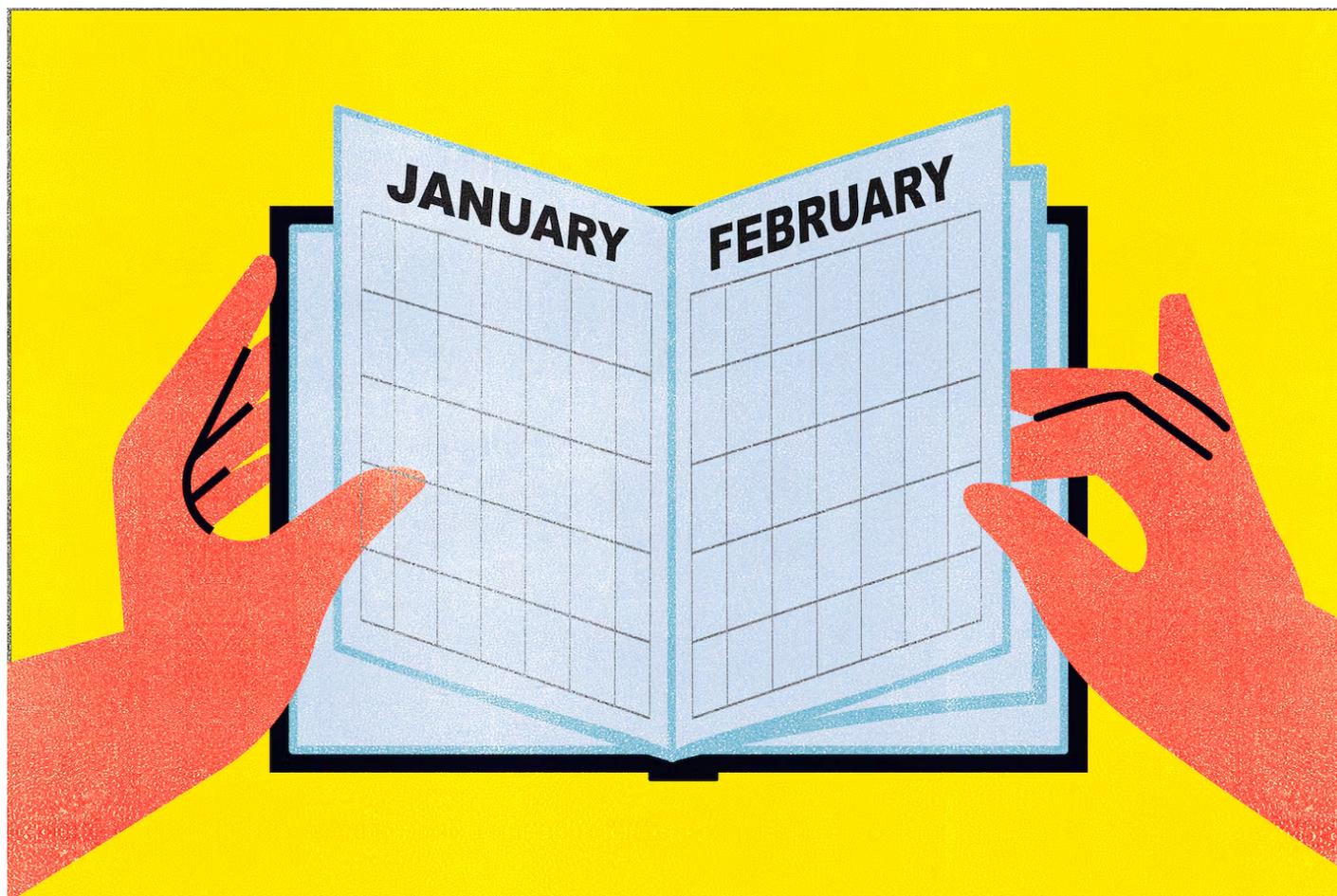


## BOOKS

# What's your New Year's reading resolution?

By **Kate Tuttle** Globe Correspondent, Updated December 17, 2025, 11:28 a.m.



ADOBE STOCK; RYAN HUDDLE \GLOBE STAFF

I'm not big on resolutions. I've joined too many gyms in January only to stop going in March. When it comes to reading, since it's both my passion and my profession, I don't need to set any particular rules or resolutions (although, like everyone else on the planet, I would like to be on my phone less in 2026. We'll see how that goes!) I was curious about how other people organize their reading lives, so I reached out to some of the most

voracious bibliophiles I know — the authors who help make Boston such a bookish city. Here's what they had to say:

Annie Hartnett, "[The Road to Tender Hearts](#)"

As I do with most resolutions, I keep the bar on the ground. I read two pages before bed and two pages in the morning before work (two different books usually). Sometimes I read much more than two pages, but I don't do well with ambitious goals. I'm an inch worm!

Megan Marshall, "[After Lives: On Biography and the Mysteries of the Human Heart](#)"

The resolutions we can keep are the ones that hold us to a course we've already set — so that's my plan. Six years ago, Harvard Book Store co-owner Jeff Mayersohn and I started a two-person book club devoted to reading books we "should have read," so as not to embarrass ourselves when should-have-read titles come up in conversation. We kept the club a secret for a couple of years until we discovered that more people than we'd imagined hadn't read Proust, or Henry James's late novels, or even Cather's "My Antonia." (Guarded confessions of our scheme prompted confessions in return.) To get through the tough reads, we assign ourselves about one hundred pages per week and talk them over by phone on Sunday nights. We read an average of ten books per year, and we'll be keeping the pace through 2026 and beyond. Up next — we haven't decided yet, but maybe Twain's "Innocents Abroad" or Cheever's "Bullet Park." (Have I embarrassed myself?)

Stephanie Burt, "[Taylor's Version: The Poetic and Musical Genius of Taylor Swift](#)"

I'm always reading at least five books at the same time: at least one book of poems, at least one work of fiction, and at least one work of nonfiction or literary criticism. That way I've got something at hand that fits my mood and my powers of attention. Unless I've agreed to review it or I need to read it for work, I feel very OK about putting any book

down in the middle and never picking it up again: life's too short to finish books that don't appeal to you after 50-odd pages, because life's so full of books that might, or do.

I do not set goals for number of books read per week, or per year. If you want to make a resolution that will cause you to read more, don't start counting your books toward numerical goals; instead, keep books around you, physical paper ones, at home, several kinds; take a book with you wherever you go (a Kindle is fine if you're worried about your backpack/purse capacity); don't feel guilty about reading books you like (not even romantasy, if that's your thing; Shakespeare's *Winter's Tale* is, also, romantasy!); and put down the damn phone.

Grace Talusan, "[The Body Papers: A Memoir](#)"

Because I serve on the Board of Directors of the National Book Critics Circle, once the short list of books is announced in late January, I have a couple of months to read the short list in all categories, about 35 books, at least once through. Some titles I will read several times. This means that for the first third of the new year, outside of my job, my resolution is to be reading constantly with two or three hardcover books in my bag and audiobooks on my phone for when I'm commuting, exercising, and doing laundry and dishes. It's a challenge even for a voracious reader like me, but it is truly a joy to be reading for this purpose. I am reading to be astonished by what books can do.

Joseph Finder, "[The Oligarch's Daughter](#)"

I read almost exclusively fiction (and usually not within my genre) seven days a week, afternoons or evenings but never mornings, at least an hour a day.

Joanna Rakoff, "[My Salinger Year](#)"

I love this question and think about it a lot. I'm not a numbers person so I've never, ever set goals about how much I read (it's possible I already read too much?), and I'm also not a goals person, but I do have two reading *traditions* for the first month of any new year:

At the end of every year, I make a pile (and/or written list) of the new releases I'd wanted to read but didn't get to (because of blurbing or assignments or who knows what), and I read those books in January. My list for this year includes "Playland" by Adam Ross, "Flashlight" by Susan Choi, "Water" by Chiara Barzini, and "One of Us" by Dan Chaon.

Every January, I begin the year by re-reading a Jane Austen novel, which sometimes turns into my reading two or three, and sometimes turns into my reading another novel from a different era. Why? Because, first, as a writer it can be so easy to get caught up in the language patterns and thought processes of the precise moment in which we live, or to be influenced by trends in literature, without even realizing it. Purposefully reading work from previous eras knocks all that out of me and reminds me of who I am, as a writer and a human. And, second, because returning to favorite novels is so comforting and alleviates the anxiety of beginning a new year!

Adrienne Brodeur, "[Little Monsters](#)"

Because I read so much professionally ...

1. **The Ratio Rule:** For every four books I read for work, I will read one purely for pleasure, with no professional obligation attached.
2. **The Genre Trespass:** For every ten books, one must fall outside my genre comfort zone.
3. **The Re-Read:** I will reread at least one book annually to remember why I fell in love with reading in the first place.
4. **The Cover Judgment:** Once this year, I will judge a book entirely by its cover and buy accordingly.
5. **The Abandonment Clause:** I give myself permission to stop reading books that don't hold me, without guilt.

Andre Dubus III, "[Such Kindness](#)"

The only reading resolution I have is to read more, more, more, though I already read daily all year long. Because I teach, both undergraduates and writers in conferences here and abroad, I read a lot of unpublished work before I can get to the books that call me. But I read those every night before sleep, and on Sundays I set aside the entire morning and early afternoon to sit and read only the book I'm currently reading — no student manuscripts, no galleys (I endorse many all year long), and not even the Sunday newspaper. Finally, and if you don't mind me quoting myself, I just wrote the following for an upcoming podcast: In this time of screens, screens, and more screens, the literary arts could not be more important for they are the only “technology,” my novelist and neuroscientist friend Erik Hoel tells us, that can penetrate the consciousness of another human being and carry it back to the reader. This act of creative communion opens the heart and not only makes us feel less alone, but also — studies have shown — more tolerant of others, more compassionate, less racist and homophobic, more merciful, on and on. So read, read, read, write, write, write....!

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