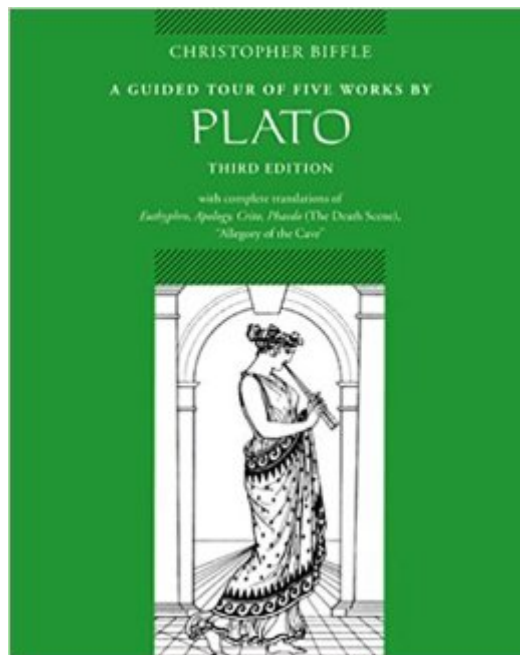


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# A Guided Tour Of Five Works By Plato: Euthyphro, Apology, Crito, Phaedo (Death Scene), Allegory Of The Cave



## Synopsis

This accessible supplement makes Plato's texts come alive for students by showing them how to read, think critically, and write about these key classic works. Engaging interactive devices draw students into an intimate philosophical encounter that they can model in later work in philosophy.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

The book is an excellent teaching tool for undergraduate and graduate level Philosophy courses. This text would be the only one I would use at the high school level (and Plato should be taught in GATE and AP type English classes, as he was back in the "good old days" when the goal of academic 'arete' had real importance in lesson planning). The book includes the dialogues surrounding the trial and death of Socrates, Euthyphro, Crito, and Apology, the Death Scene of Socrates from the Phaedo, and the "Allegory of the Cave" from the Republic. While the translations are not always the best, they are very good, come from the greatest source (Jowett) and quite sufficient for communicating all the important points in the dialogues. Best of all are the copious margins which surround the text on every page and serve the wonderful purpose of teaching students to annotate their text with marginalia. The creation of marginalia is an ancient scholarly art, quintessentially described by Edmond Bourdoux Szekeley, one of the last of the old world scholars of that grand continental tradition known as the Sorbonne Method, which he describes in his now out of print masterpiece, "The Art of Study". In that book, Szekeley details the method by which, through nearly a millinium, successive generations of Sorbonne scholars (dating back before Aquinas), parsed and analyzed arguments and extracted the hermeneutic essence of their

texts. Biffle provides cues and prompts with relevant and incisive questions (he knows Bloom's Taxonomy as well as he knows his Philosophy), which not only makes students accountable to do the reading (you can collect your students' texts to see if they're doing it), but provides the student with a time-proven, eminently productive study skill. Biffle also provides excellent background material, supplementary writing exercises, and material for quizzes, all you really need. A few points which Biffle addresses "to the teacher" in his introduction are in order: 1) "My philosophy students need a lot of practice in orderly thinking and writing. They need practice in following a logical pattern, giving reasons for assertions, clarifying points with examples, and quoting supporting material from a text. There is plenty of practice here." 2) "The truth is most students will read Plato's dialogues only once in their lives. We need to slow down that precious reading and make it as fruitful as possible. The reading and writing tasks I have incorporated in this book are designed to help students underline, write in margins, reread, paraphrase, outline, and eventually analyze philosophical classics in an orderly way."

Christopher Biffle's *A Guided Tour of Five Works by Plato* is an ideal introduction to the study of philosophy as an academic activity. While there are several introductory philosophy books that allow the reader to wander and ponder through the dreamy early stages of philosophical wonder, this book gets down to business. Biffle structures his guided tour as an interactive reader of five of Plato's most important and most accessible dialogues: *Euthyphro*, *Apology* and *Crito* complete; the "Death Scene" from *Phaedo*, and the "Allegory of the Cave" from *Republic*. Through this tour students will have an opportunity to actively engage in philosophy as they move through the text. Biffle prepares the reader for the journey by providing just enough background about Socrates, Plato and the history of Athens to satisfy a rudimentary curiosity. As the reader embarks, he will begin to encounter some of the features which make Biffle's book so valuable. This tour is an adventure in thinking, and the reader is challenged to summarize and extract important developments as the tour progresses. The reader is asked to respond to prompts such as "The main things I want to remember about Socrates and the history of Athens are..." Thus the reader himself becomes a participant in the dialogue. From this introduction Biffle guides us into the dialogues themselves, beginning with *Euthyphro*. Each selection is introduced with a series of questions designed to open up the reader's mind to some of the ideas and issues to be explored in the dialogues themselves. During the reading of the dialogue, the reader is asked to underline and annotate the text as he goes; thus the reader becomes actively and critically engaged in the text rather than passively drifting through it. By clarifying and analyzing Plato, the student begins to clarify and analyze his

own thinking. This approach to philosophy is also an ideal approach to developing reading, writing and critical thinking skills for students. Although Biffle's tour can be taken solo (in the capable hands of both Biffle and Plato), it is best taken with a group of fellow travelers who can share the journey. It is a fantastic text for use in a class or as the basis for a philosophy discussion group. There are quizzes and exercises to check understanding, but the book really encourages the reader to develop his own thinking, and ultimately to become a curious and critical questioner of the world--what Socrates or Plato would have called a philosopher.

I ordered this book as one of two books for a Philosophy class. The text is.. well.. clear, there's not much to say about that, since the translations are mostly standardized. The footnotes and questions that the book gives are useful, if not a little convoluted at times. They have a certain kind of question where you fill in the blanks to a paragraph that they write, and it's difficult to really guess what they mean sometimes... All in all, this book arrived in great condition, and was very useful in my studies of Plato.

This an outstanding text on the subject. I find myself teaching some of these works in a classical homeschool setting and would be completely lost without this resource. It contains the five works mentioned, but what is just delightful is the side margin prompts for note-taking by the student and follow-up questions and "quiz" material. This just couldn't be better for a teacher or a student. I am actually trying to teach them how to read "heavy" materials and take notes, identify what is being said/meant and the way that Biffle has broken down the material for notes, meanings, thoughts on the subject is just an answer to my prayer. I cannot recommend it highly enough. If you have to teach Plato's works(or study it yourself), you are unlikely to find a better resource to help you. The author has written some other works that I intend to check out also.

Using this book almost everyday in my class.. great to own if you are practicing your philosophic ideas. (its a work book.)

Book came with writing all over it.

Another book oreded in error. I looked at the class requirements wrong--actually I switched schools, Anyhow, book arrived in excellent condition and prompt time. all the way

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