Most people know what the classics are, but most people have only read a few. Below are some of my favorites - whether or not you've read any of them, stop by your nearest library and check some out.

**To Kill a Mockingbird** by Harper Lee

Voted America’s Best-Loved Novel in PBS’s *The Great American Read*

Harper Lee’s Pulitzer Prize-winning masterwork of honor and injustice in the deep South—and the heroism of one man in the face of blind and violent hatred.

One of the most cherished stories of all time, *To Kill a Mockingbird* has been translated into more than forty languages, sold more than forty million copies worldwide, served as the basis for an enormously popular motion picture, and was voted one of the best novels of the twentieth century by librarians across the country. A gripping, heart-wrenching, and wholly remarkable tale of coming-of-age in a South poisoned by virulent prejudice, it views a world of great beauty and savage inequities through the eyes of a young girl, as her father—a crusading local lawyer—risks everything to defend a black man unjustly accused of a terrible crime.

**Wuthering Heights** by Emily Brontë

Emily Brontë’s only novel endures as a work of tremendous and far-reaching influence.

Lockwood, the new tenant of Thrushcross Grange, situated on the bleak Yorkshire moors, is forced to seek shelter one night at Wuthering Heights, the home of his landlord. There he discovers the history of the tempestuous events that took place years before. What unfolds is the tale of the intense love between the gypsy foundling Heathcliff and Catherine Earnshaw. Catherine, forced to choose between passionate, tortured Heathcliff and gentle, well-bred Edgar Linton, surrendered to the expectations of her class. As Heathcliff’s bitterness and vengeance at his betrayal is visited upon the next generation, their innocent heirs must struggle to escape the legacy of the past.

**Great Expectations** by Charles Dickens

First published as a serial in Dickens’s weekly periodical *All the Year Round*, from 1 December 1860 to August 1861. Dickens felt Great Expectations was his best work, calling it “a very fine, new and grotesque idea”.

Set among marshes in Kent, and in London, in the early to mid-1800s, *Great Expectations* tells the story of a poor orphan being raised by a cruel sister. Pip does not have much in the way of great expectations between his terrifying experience in a graveyard with a convict named Magwitch and his humiliating visits with the eccentric Miss Havisham’s beautiful but manipulative niece, Estella, who torments him until he is elevated to wealth by an anonymous benefactor. Full of unforgettable characters, *Great Expectations* is a tale of intrigue, unattainable love, and all of the happiness money can’t buy.

**Jane Eyre** by Charlotte Brontë

Charlotte Brontë’s most beloved novel describes the passionate love between the courageous orphan Jane Eyre and the brilliant, brooding, and domineering Rochester.

The loneliness and cruelty of Jane’s childhood strengthens her natural independence and spirit, which prove invaluable when she takes a position as a governess at Thornfield Hall. But after she falls in love with her sardonic employer, her discovery of his terrible secret forces her to make a heart-wrenching choice. Ever since its publication in 1847, *Jane Eyre* has enthralled every kind of reader, from the most critical and cultivated to the youngest and most unabashedly romantic. It lives as one of the great triumphs of storytelling and as a moving and unforgettable portrayal of a woman’s quest for self-respect.

**The Grapes Of Wrath** by John Steinbeck

First published in 1939, Steinbeck’s Pulitzer Prize-winning epic of the Great Depression chronicles the Dust Bowl migration of the 1930s and tells the story of one Oklahoma farm family, the Joads—driven from their homestead and forced to travel west to the promised land of California. Out of their trials and their repeated collisions against the hard realities of an America divided into Haves and Have-Nots evolves a drama that is intensely human yet majestic in its scale and moral vision, elemental yet plain-spoken, tragic but ultimately stirring in its human dignity. A portrait of the conflict between the powerful and the powerless, of one man’s fierce reaction to injustice, and of one woman’s stoical strength, the novel captures the horrors of the Great Depression and probes into the very nature of equality and justice in America.

**Frankenstein** by Mary Shelley

*Frankenstein* tells the story of gifted scientist Victor Frankenstein who succeeds in giving life to a being of his own creation. However, this is not the perfect specimen he imagines that it will be, but rather a hideous creature who is rejected by Victor and mankind in general. The Monster seeks its revenge through murder and terror.

The novel was first published in 1818. It was written originally by Mary Shelley as a short story when the poet Lord Byron suggested that each member of a group of friends write a ghostly tale to keep themselves entertained. Mary’s story was the undoubted winner.
The Bell Jar by Sylvia Plath

I was supposed to be having the time of my life. When Esther Greenwood wins an internship on a New York fashion magazine in 1953, she is elated, believing she will finally realise her dream to become a writer. But in between the cocktail parties and piles of manuscripts, Esther’s life begins to slide out of control. She finds herself spiralling into depression and eventually a suicide attempt, as she grapples with difficult relationships and a society which refuses to take women’s aspirations seriously. The Bell Jar, Sylvia Plath’s only novel, was originally published in 1963 under the pseudonym Victoria Lucas. The novel is partially based on Plath’s own life and has become a modern classic. The Bell Jar has been celebrated for its darkly funny and razor sharp portrait of 1950s society and has sold millions of copies worldwide.

The Great Gatsby by F. Scott Fitzgerald

In 1922, F. Scott Fitzgerald announced his decision to write “something new--something extraordinary and beautiful and simple + intricately patterned.” That extraordinary, beautiful, intricately patterned, and above all, simple novel became The Great Gatsby, arguably Fitzgerald’s finest work and certainly the book for which he is best known. A portrait of the Jazz Age in all of its decadence and excess, Gatsby captured the spirit of the author’s generation and earned itself a permanent place in American mythology. Self-made, self-invented millionaire Jay Gatsby embodies some of Fitzgerald’s—and his country’s—most abiding obsessions: money, ambition, greed, and the promise of new beginnings. “Gatsby believed in the green light, the orgiastic future that year by year recedes before us. It eluded us then, but that’s no matter--tomorrow we will run faster, stretch out our arms farther.... And one fine morning--” Gatsby’s rise to glory and eventual fall from grace becomes a kind of cautionary tale about the American Dream.

Ariadne GPS

Ariadne GPS allows the blind to navigate their surroundings using an interface like no other. While most navigation apps require the user to use their sight to anticipate directions, Ariadne GPS has talking maps that can even signal crossing the street through vibrating. Another feature called “favorites” announces stops on public transportation, which can be helpful to those who ride the bus or train. This app works anywhere that Google Maps is available and is accessible in multiple languages.

https://www.ariadnegps.eu/

The Talking Calculator

The Talking Calculator is an app that speaks button names, numbers and answers aloud. Users can also use voice commands to record their own voice and make calculations. The app features display modes such as low and high contrast, allowing the visually impaired to adjust the settings to their preference.

MediSafe Medication Reminder

Making life simpler is a good thing. MediSafe Medication Reminder does just that, is easy to use, performs a plethora of functions, and is highly regarded by healthcare professionals. Besides reminding you when to take specific medications, or that you need to refill a prescription, this app can help you keep track of your blood glucose levels, blood pressure, weight, pulse, and temperature. This data can be saved and sent on to your doctor. Among the many other functions is the family notification option where, if the user’s alarm goes off but the user fails to record they have taken their meds, whoever that user chose beforehand will be informed, and can then check-in with the user to see if everything’s okay.

Helpful Links for Seniors

Help At Home

https://www.helpathome.com/

Senior Services of Central Illinois

https://www.centralilseniors.org/index.html

The Friendly Visitor Program

https://www.cyfsolutions.org/services/seniors/friendly-visitor-program/