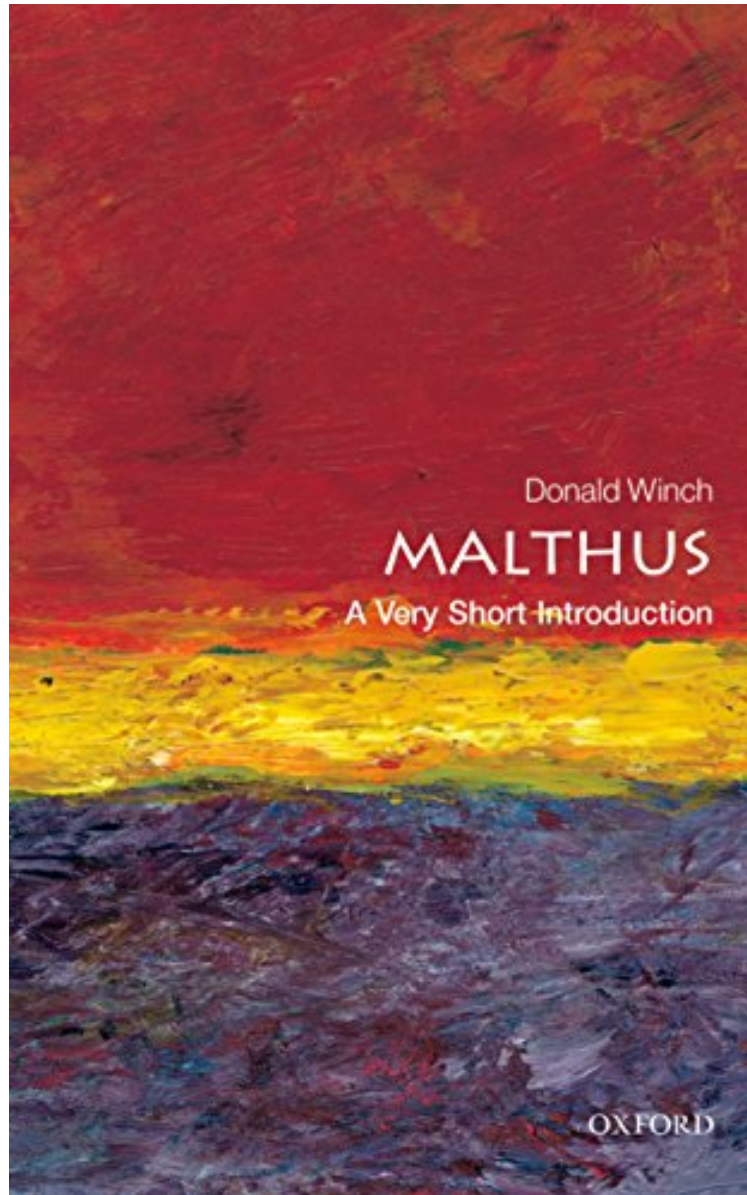


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Malthus: A Very Short Introduction (Very Short Introductions)

Donald Winch

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Donald Winch : Malthus: A Very Short Introduction (Very Short Introductions) before purchasing it in order to gauge whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Malthus: A Very Short Introduction (Very Short Introductions):

1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. This is an excellent short treatment of Malthus's work and ideasBy Jerry RichardsonThis is an excellent short treatment of Malthus's work and ideas. Malthus worked as the rector of an

Anglican church and as a Professor of History and Political Economy at the East India Company's college in Hertfordshire which still exists as a college in England. Politically, Malthus was a moderate Whig, about like a conservative Democrat in our politics today. Malthus thought the economy should be run or managed with the goal of reducing human misery (unemployment, dispossession, starvation) by managing the economy and population growth. Malthus was one of the first people to realize oversupply was a real possibility, basically rejecting Say's law "supply creates its own demand". 0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Highly recommended! By Aaron V. Garrett Elegantly written and superbly informative book on Malthus by one of the leading intellectual historians of our time. Highly recommended! 2 of 2 people found the following review helpful. A Newtonian not a Darwinian By John Carr This review is based on reading the OUP's "Past Masters" work of the same name. From a quick check - both books have the same chapter headings and the same opening and closing lines - this is one of the "Past Masters" books that have been reprinted in the "Very Short Introduction" series without significant changes other than updating the further reading list. I'm posting it here as readers are more likely to come across the VSI version than the "Past Masters" one. Should anyone be aware of any material difference between the two versions I'd be obliged if they'd post a comment to that effect so I can remove this review. Thomas Malthus is one of those few people whose name became an adjective. While his is a name many will have heard of but whose work many - myself included - will not have read. It is therefore not surprising that many - again I included - may have a somewhat caricatured view of Malthus. This may in part be caused by the fact that both Darwin and Russell got their idea for natural selection after reading Malthus's "Essay on Population" and his name may have been associated with Social Darwinism. But, as the author points out, Malthus lived in a pre-Darwinian age. Furthermore Malthus was a sincere Anglican cleric (who ranked contraception within marriage as equal to, or even above, prostitution in the scale of vices, hardly the view of a eugenicist), living within a Newtonian mental framework, who was attempting to alleviate avoidable suffering. Nor did Malthus rule out the possibility of both population increase and increased prosperity - provided population growth didn't grow faster than improvements in the means of production. Were it not for the work of the likes of Fritz Haber and Norman Borlaug we might be living today in a world more like the one Malthus envisioned. He had his both detractors (Marx though him a "shameless sycophant of the ruling class") and admirers (Keynes thought that if Malthus not Ricardo had been the parent of 19th century economics "what a much wiser and richer place the world would be today!") The author draws out the useful distinctions between Malthus the population theorist and Malthus the political economist just as he distinguishes Malthus the moralist from Malthus the social scientist. As best I can tell he has done a solid job of explaining Malthus's ideas and significance.

Thomas Robert Malthus (1766-1834) was an English cleric whose ideas, as expounded in his most famous work the *Essay on the Principle of Population*, caused a storm of controversy. In this *Very Short Introduction*, Donald Winch explains and clarifies Malthus's ideas, assessing the profound influence he has had on modern economic thought. Concentrating on his writings, Winch sheds light on the context in which he wrote and why his work has remained controversial. Looking at Malthus's early life as well as the evolution of his theories from population to political economy, Winch considers why and how Malthus's writings have been so influential in the thought of later figures such as Darwin and Keynes. ABOUT THE SERIES: The *Very Short Introductions* series from Oxford University Press contains hundreds of titles in almost every subject area. These pocket-sized books are the perfect way to get ahead in a new subject quickly. Our expert authors combine facts, analysis, perspective, new ideas, and enthusiasm to make interesting and challenging topics highly readable.

With population growth and food availability remaining major economic and social issues today, it is little wonder that Malthus ideas continue to resonate. This accessible and thorough clarification of his ideas is therefore as timely and relevant as ever. * Nicholas J. McMeniman, Australian Commonwealth Government, Political Studies * About the Author Donald Winch is Emeritus Professor of Intellectual History at the University of Sussex. His publications include *Adam Smith's Politics*, *That Noble Science of Politics* (with Stefan Collini and John Burrow), and *Riches and Poverty: An Intellectual History of Political Economy in Britain, 1750-1834*.