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The Prospect/FP Top 100 Public Intellectuals

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Who are the world's leading public intellectuals? **FP** and Britain's *Prospect* magazine would like to know who you think makes the cut. We've selected our top 100, and want you to vote for your top five. If you don't see a name that you think deserves top honors, include them as a write-in candidate. Voting closes October 10, and the results will be posted the following month.

Name	Occupation	Country
Chinua Achebe	Novelist	Nigeria
Jean Baudrillard	Sociologist, cultural critic	France
Gary Becker	Economist	United States
Pope Benedict XVI	Religious leader	Germany, Vatican
Jagdish Bhagwati	Economist	India, United States
Fernando Henrique Cardoso	Sociologist, former president	Brazil
Noam Chomsky	Linguist, author, activist	United States
J.M. Coetzee	Novelist	South Africa
Gordon Conway	Agricultural ecologist	Britain
Robert Cooper	Diplomat, writer	Britain
Richard Dawkins	Biologist, polemicist	Britain
Hernando de Soto	Economist	Peru
Pavol Demes	Political analyst	Slovakia
Daniel Dennett	Philosopher	United States
Kemal Dervis	Economist	Turkey
Jared Diamond	Biologist, physiologist, historian	United States
Freeman Dyson	Physicist	United States

Shirin Ebadi	Lawyer, human rights activist	Iran
Umberto Eco	Medievalist, novelist	Italy
Paul Ekman	Psychologist	United States
Fan Gang	Economist	China
Niall Ferguson	Historian	Britain
Alain Finkielkraut	Essayist, philosopher	France
Thomas Friedman	Journalist, author	United States
Francis Fukuyama	Political scientist, author	United States
Gao Xingjian	Novelist, playwright	China
Howard Gardner	Psychologist	United States
Timothy Garton Ash	Historian	Britain
Henry Louis Gates Jr.	Scholar, cultural critic	United States
Clifford Geertz	Anthropologist	United States
Neil Gershenfeld	Physicist, computer scientist	United States
Anthony Giddens	Sociologist	Britain
Germaine Greer	Writer, academic	Australia, Britain
Jürgen Habermas	Philosopher	Germany
Ha Jin	Novelist	China
Václav Havel	Playwright, statesman	Czech Republic
Ayaan Hirsi Ali	Politician	Somalia, Netherlands
Christopher Hitchens	Polemicist	United States, Britain
Eric Hobsbawm	Historian	Britain
Robert Hughes	Art critic	Australia
Samuel Huntington	Political scientist	United States
Michael Ignatieff	Writer, human rights theorist	Canada
Shintaro Ishihara	Politician, author	Japan
Robert Kagan	Author, political commentator	United States
Daniel Kahneman	Psychologist	Israel, United States
Sergei Karaganov	Foreign-policy analyst	Russia
Paul Kennedy	Historian	Britain, United States
Gilles Kepel	Scholar of Islam	France
Naomi Klein	Journalist, author	Canada
Rem Koolhaas	Architect	Netherlands
Enrique Krauze	Historian	Mexico
Julia Kristeva	Philosopher	France
Paul Krugman	Economist, columnist	United States
Hans Küng	Theologian	Switzerland
Jaron Lanier	Virtual reality pioneer	United States
Lawrence Lessig	Legal scholar	United States
Bernard Lewis	Historian	Britain, United States
Bjørn Lomborg	Environmentalist	Denmark
James Lovelock	Scientist	Britain
Kishore Mahbubani	Author, diplomat	Singapore

Ali Mazrui	Political scientist	Kenya
Sunita Narain	Environmentalist	India
Antonio Negri	Philosopher, activist	Italy
Martha Nussbaum	Philosopher	United States
Sari Nusseibeh	Diplomat, philosopher	Palestine
Kenichi Ohmae	Management theorist	Japan
Amos Oz	Novelist	Israel
Camille Paglia	Social critic, author	United States
Orhan Pamuk	Novelist	Turkey
Steven Pinker	Experimental psychologist	Canada, United States
Richard Posner	Judge, scholar, author	United States
Pramoedya Ananta Toer	Writer, dissident	Indonesia
Yusuf al-Qaradawi	Cleric	Egypt, Qatar
Robert Putnam	Political scientist	United States
Tariq Ramadan	Scholar of Islam	Switzerland
Martin Rees	Astrophysicist	Britain
Richard Rorty	Philosopher	United States
Salman Rushdie	Novelist, political commentator	Britain, India
Jeffrey Sachs	Economist	United States
Elaine Scarry	Literary theorist	United States
Amartya Sen	Economist	India
Peter Singer	Philosopher	Australia
Ali al-Sistani	Cleric	Iran, Iraq
Peter Sloterdijk	Philosopher	Germany
Abdolkarim Soroush	Religious theorist	Iran
Wole Soyinka	Playwright, activist	Nigeria
Lawrence Summers	Economist, academic	United States
Mario Vargas Llosa	Novelist, politician	Peru
Harold Varmus	Medical scientist	United States
Craig Venter	Biologist, businessman	United States
Michael Walzer	Political theorist	United States
Florence Wambugu	Plant Pathologist	Kenya
Wang Jisi	Foreign-policy analyst	China
Steven Weinberg	Physicist	United States
E.O. Wilson	Biologist	United States
James Q. Wilson	Criminologist	United States
Paul Wolfowitz	Policymaker, academic	United States
Fareed Zakaria	Journalist, author	United States
Zheng Bijian	Political scientist	China
Slavoj Zizek	Sociologist, philosopher	Slovenia

Criteria

The irony of this “thinkers” list is that it does not bear thinking about too closely. The problems of definition and judgment that it involves would discourage more rigorous souls. But some criteria must be spelled out. What is a public intellectual? Someone who has shown distinction in their own field along with the ability to communicate ideas and influence debate outside of it.

Candidates must have been alive, and still active in public life (though many on this list are past their prime). Such criteria ruled out the likes of Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn and Milton Friedman, who would have been automatic inclusions 20 or so years ago. This list is about public influence, not intrinsic achievement. And that is where things get really tricky. Judging influence is hard enough inside one’s own culture, but when you are peering across cultures and languages, the problem becomes far harder. Obviously our list of 100 has been influenced by where most of us sit, in the English-speaking West.

We tried to avoid the “box ticking” problem of having x Chinese, y economists and z under-50s. But we have also tried to give due weight to the important thinkers in all the main intellectual disciplines and centers of population. We also tried to ensure that all names on the list are influential in at least a few countries in their region, if not the entire globe. We may not have succeeded in following all these rules to the letter, but for those of you irritated by our choices, there is a small safety valve—a write-in vote that allows you to nominate a name that wasn’t included on our list. — *Prospect* and *Foreign Policy*
