DEMOGRAPHICS & CULTURE

8 book ideas for your summer reading list

Alan Wilson, Martin Jacobs, Reagan Anderson and Chris Buchbinder

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The days are long, temperatures are rising and restless children are complaining of endless boredom. That can only mean one thing: Summer has arrived, and with it the chance to trade your desk for a beach chair and a great book.

Just in time for the slow season, we have assembled a list of book recommendations from Capital Group portfolio managers, economists and political analysts. Something of a tradition for Capital Ideas, this year's list includes nonfiction titles on financial and economic history, career development and environmental science as well as a couple of novels and biographies.

Here are eight selections to help you wile away those hot summer days.

1. *1929: Inside the Greatest Crash in Wall Street History*

Drawing lessons from history and applying them to the present is a priority for Alan Wilson, a portfolio manager for CGGR – Capital Group Growth ETF. “I am looking back to look forward,” Wilson explains. One book he has found particularly enlightening is Andrew Ross Sorkin’s *1929: Inside the Greatest Crash in Wall Street History – and How It Shattered a Nation*.

Sorkin, a *New York Times* columnist and cable television host, traces the stock market boom, crash and its aftermath. Rather than writing a straight historical narrative, Sorkin weaves together vivid portrayals of key figures who lived through the period. To do so, he drew from personal diaries, newspaper articles, architectural records and even Federal Reserve Board minutes of the period. "A great teacher can make history come alive, and the author does a great job of putting the events of 1929 into context, weaving in the points of view and experiences of bankers, fund managers and politicians of the day," says Wilson.

The book also draws out similarities to today's environment. It explores income inequality and how investors were seduced by ground-breaking new technologies of the time like radio stocks. "The parallels are very striking," adds Wilson. "Ordinary citizens were speculating on these stocks as a way to 'catch up' economically, much like young people today talk about cryptocurrency as a way to get ahead."

2. *The Rise of Theodore Roosevelt*

Sticking with the theme of lessons from history, Martin Jacobs, an equity portfolio manager for CGDV – Capital Group Dividend Value ETF, recommends *The Rise of Theodore Roosevelt* by Edmund Morris.

The book, the first volume of a Pulitzer Prize-winning trilogy, traces Roosevelt's life from his early childhood in New York City through personal tragedies and his rise in politics, including his election as president in 1901. The book is part biography but also offers a portrait of American culture in the late 19th century during the Gilded Age, a period of concentrated power in political machines and corporations.

"There were big monopolies with massive power not only in markets but also in the political theater," explains Jacobs. "It was also a period of what I would call arm-to-arm conflict in politics, which may sound familiar to today's readers. The challenges were enormous, yet we survived and thrived – a refreshing reminder that our democracy is resilient."

3. *Theo of Golden*

Reagan Anderson, Capital Group Senior Vice President of Government and Regulatory Affairs, recommends *Theo of Golden* by Allen Levi. The self-published novel, which in June topped the *New York Times* bestseller list, follows a newcomer to a small town who discovers pencil portraits of local residents hanging in a coffee shop. The stranger quietly buys and returns the portraits to the people they depict in exchange for their personal story. Through these conversations and small acts of kindness, he transforms the lives of those around him.

"The book is a little different recommendation than I usually make," says Anderson. "For me, the biggest takeaway was we'd all be a little bit better off if we'd listen more and talk less." The book also covers themes such as the power of being truly seen, community and grief, loss and healing. "I think there's a lot to take from it," Anderson says.

4. *Running Down a Dream*

Few decisions shape a life more than choosing a career. Portfolio manager Chris Buchbinder, a father of four teens who will soon be choosing their initial career paths, had this in mind when he selected *Runnin' Down a Dream: How to Thrive in a Career You Actually Love* by Bill Gurley.

Gurley, a noted Silicon Valley venture capitalist, explores what it means to build a meaningful and satisfying career rather than focusing on compensation, status or other definitions of success. Beginning with his own career transformation, Gurley shares the professional journeys of entrepreneurs, sports executives, restauranteurs and other high achievers. He identifies commonalities from the most satisfied professionals, including finding work that aligns with your interests, talents and sense of purpose.

"This book provides a thoughtful framework for thinking about careers," says Buchbinder, principal investment officer for CGDV – Capital Group Dividend

Value ETF and CGVV – Capital Group U.S. Large Value ETF. "As someone worried about how my sons will navigate a world transformed by artificial intelligence, I found the book especially timely."

5. *Shade*

In *Shade: The Promise of a Forgotten Resource*, Sam Bloch delivers what Rob Lovelace found to be a compelling case that shade has become far too scarce in contemporary America. "This lack of shade has fallen particularly hard on people who work outside and those who live in poorer neighborhoods," notes Lovelace, a portfolio manager for New Perspective Fund®.

Drawing on history, the book shows how city planners once accounted for breezy alleys and ample shade in courtyards and open spaces. But the recognition that sunlight offers substantial health benefits led to cities with wider streets and setbacks for buildings. Today, heatwaves rank among the nation's deadliest natural disasters.

"The book also explores a range of solutions to the shade problem and the economics of implementing them," Lovelace says.

6. *Remarkably Bright Creatures*

Chitrang Purani, principal investment officer of CGCB – Capital Group Core Bond ETF, recommends *Remarkably Bright Creatures* by Shelby Van Pelt, the story of a developing friendship between a grieving widow and an octopus.

"This novel is about people, relationships and healing, which was a nice change of pace from my typical reading list of books focused on financial markets and investor psychology," Purani says.

The story is told through multiple perspectives, including that of the octopus. It explores loneliness, loss, the importance of family and the healing power of unexpected friendship. "I really enjoyed the character development," Purani adds. “And the best part is, I didn't have to glean any bond market insights from the book, so it allowed me to detach and clear my mind.”

7. *Napoleon: A Life*

Political economist Matt Miller has been doing a lot of thinking lately about world historic figures, given that President Donald Trump often likens himself to such folks. With this on his mind, Miller found *Napoleon: A Life* by the late British historian Paul Johnson to be fascinating. “I did not know much about Napoleon beforehand, and I found this book well worth reading,” Miller says.

The book traces Napoleon’s ascent from modest Corsican roots to military glory, imperial power and eventual exile on St. Helena. Rather than portraying him as a committed revolutionary, Napoleon is depicted as a shrewd opportunist — quickly shifting between the principles of republicanism and imperialism as they suited his pursuit of power.

“I'm not sure Trump is much like Napoleon, but this biography does lend some insight into people with vaunted ambitions who come to lead countries,” Miller notes.

8. *Project Hail Mary*

U.S. economist Jared Franz is reading *Project Hail Mary*, a science fiction novel by Andy Weir that is the basis for a 2026 film starring Ryan Gosling. “I’m planning to see the movie, but before I do I want to be sure to complete the novel, which blends scientific accuracy with speculation about biology and physics to create a compelling narrative,” explains Franz.

Weir, who also authored bestseller *The Martian*, tells the story of a middle school science teacher who awakens on a spacecraft with amnesia. He gradually recalls his assignment to stop a mysterious substance from destroying the sun and with it, life on Earth. On his journey he encounters a friendly alien, and together they work to solve the problem.

Read important disclosures

Alan Wilson *is an equity portfolio manager with 36 years of investment industry experience (as of 12/31/2025). He holds an MBA from Harvard and a bachelor's degree in civil engineering from Massachusetts Institute of Technology.*

Martin Jacobs *is an equity portfolio manager with 38 years of investment industry experience (as of 12/31/2025). He holds an MBA from Wharton and a bachelor's degree from the University of Southern California. He also holds the Chartered Financial Analyst® designation and is a member of the CFA Institute.*

Reagan Anderson *is a senior vice president of government and regulatory affairs. She has 25 years of investment industry experience (as of 12/31/2025). She holds a bachelor's degree in journalism from Ohio University.*

Chris Buchbinder *is an equity portfolio manager with 30 years of investment industry experience (as of 12/31/2025). He holds a bachelor's degree in economics and international relations from Brown University.*

Rob Lovelace *is an equity portfolio manager and chair of Capital International, Inc. He has 40 years of investment industry experience (as of 12/31/2025). He holds a bachelor's degree in mineral economics from Princeton. He also holds the Chartered Financial Analyst® designation.*

Chitrang Purani *is a fixed income portfolio manager with 22 years of investment industry experience (as of 12/31/2025). He holds an MBA from the University of Chicago and a bachelor's degree in finance from Northern Illinois University. He also holds the Chartered Financial Analyst® designation.*

Matt Miller *is a political economist with 35 years of experience and has been with Capital for 10 years (as of 12/31/2025). He holds a law degree from Columbia and a bachelor's from Brown University.*

Jared Franz *is an economist with 20 years of investment industry experience (as of 12/31/2025). He holds a PhD in economics from the University of Illinois at Chicago and a bachelor's degree in mathematics from Northwestern University.*
