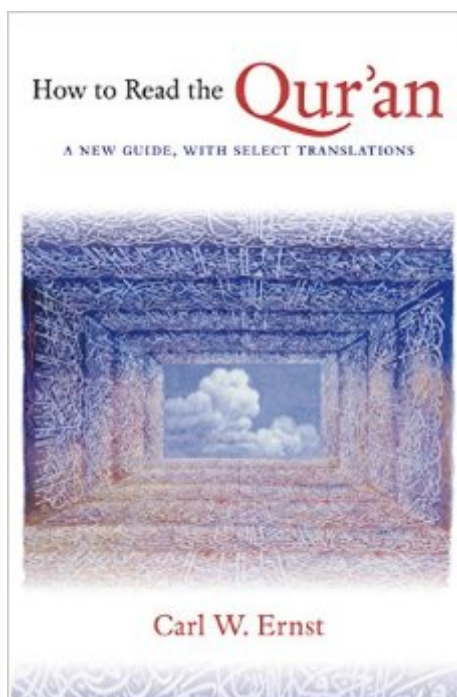


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# How To Read The Qur'an: A New Guide, With Select Translations



## Synopsis

For anyone, non-Muslim or Muslim, who wants to know how to approach, read, and understand the text of the Qur'an, *How to Read the Qur'an* offers a compact introduction and reader's guide. Using a chronological reading of the text according to the conclusions of modern scholarship, Carl W. Ernst offers a nontheological approach that treats the Qur'an as a historical text that unfolded over time, in dialogue with its audience, during the career of the Prophet Muhammad.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

After reading Michael Sells's *Approaching the Qur'an: The Early Revelations*, I wanted another book that would help me understand the Qur'an from a literary-historical perspective. Ernst, a scholar of Islam at UNC, made headlines in 2002 when (under his recommendation) the university assigned Sells's book as required reading for all freshman students. Ernst held the audacious belief that students should understand the religion of the terrorists America was fighting against — that we should learn something about Islam beyond the headlines about al Qaeda. In that spirit, he has written this book, a kind of *Qur'an as literature* • book explaining the genesis of the text and outlining what he calls a *post-Orientalist* • approach to the text. Ernst wants to use the historical and literary tools of European Enlightenment scholarship while still respecting traditional Islamic modes of reading the Qur'an. This book is an argument for that fusion and a look at some of the scholars, such as Fred Donner, Andrew Rippin, Michel Cuyppers, and Jane Dammen McAuliffe, who are doing so. Muslims believe that the Qur'an was revealed verbatim to Muhammad from 610 to 632. Yet Muslims acknowledge that the surahs (chapters) of the Qur'an can be categorized by the period in which they were revealed during the prophet's life. Generally

there are three main categories: the early Meccan surahs, the middle and later Meccan surahs, and the Medinan surahs. These three categories of surahs differ in length, structure, and main themes. The early Meccan surahs, written when Muhammad was just beginning his prophetic ministry, tend to be short and highly apocalyptic. Later surahs expanded and focused more on the revelation's legitimacy and on retellings of biblical narratives.

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