

Takes Place on a Single Day

1. Ulysses (1922) by James Joyce

- Where/When: Dublin, Ireland — June 16, 1904
- Why It's One Day: The novel famously chronicles the thoughts and wanderings of Leopold Bloom (and others) over roughly 24 hours, making "Bloomsday" legendary in literary circles.

2. Mrs. Dalloway (1925) by Virginia Woolf

- Where/When: London, after World War I — A single day in June
- Why It's One Day: Clarissa Dalloway prepares for and hosts a party, while the novel dips into the minds of various characters, capturing one day's experiences.

3. One Day in the Life of Ivan Denisovich (1962) by Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn

- Where/When: A Soviet labor camp during Stalin's era — Sunrise to lights-out
- Why It's One Day: This short but powerful novel details every aspect of a single, punishing day in the life of a gulag prisoner.

4. Seize the Day (1956) by Saul Bellow

- Where/When: New York City — One emotionally charged day
- Why It's One Day: The protagonist, Tommy Wilhelm, faces financial troubles, familial conflict, and existential doubt—all compressed into a single, desperate day.

5. The Mezzanine (1988) by Nicholson Baker

- Where/When: An office building and its surroundings — Mostly during a lunch break

- Why It's One Day: The entire novel occurs in the time it takes the narrator to ride an escalator during his lunch hour, filled with hyper-detailed digressions and observations.

6. Saturday (2005) by Ian McEwan

- Where/When: London — A single Saturday in February 2003
- Why It's One Day: Following neurosurgeon Henry Perowne from dawn to late night, it explores personal, political, and moral issues, all within 24 hours.

7. A Single Man (1964) by Christopher Isherwood

- Where/When: Southern California — One day in the early 1960s
- Why It's One Day: It portrays a day in the life of George, a middle-aged English professor grieving the loss of his partner.

8. Last Orders (1996) by Graham Swift

- Where/When: England (a road trip from London to Margate) — One day
- Why It's One Day: Four men travel to scatter a friend's ashes, with the main action unfolding in a single day, though frequent flashbacks fill in their histories.

9. Party Going (1939) by Henry Green

- Where/When: A fog-bound London train station — Over a single day
- Why It's One Day: Stranded by dense fog, a group of travelers spends the day in the station's hotel suite, revealing class tensions and personal entanglements.

10. Chronicle of a Death Foretold (1981) by Gabriel García Márquez

- Where/When: A small Colombian town — A single morning (plus retrospective accounts)
- Why It's One Day: The murder of Santiago Nasar occurs in one morning. Though the narrative uses interviews and flashbacks, the pivotal event transpires in a few hours.

11. The Dinner (2009) by Herman Koch

- Where/When: An upscale restaurant in Amsterdam — One evening/night
- Why It's One Day: Two couples meet for dinner to discuss a disturbing crime committed by their teenage sons, with the tension unfolding course by course.

12. Today Will Be Different (2016) by Maria Semple

- Where/When: Seattle — One chaotic day
- Why It's One Day: Eleanor Flood wakes up determined to be her "best self," only to confront a spiral of mishaps and surprises, all happening before the day is out.

13. Solar Bones (2016) by Mike McCormack

- Where/When: Rural Ireland — All Souls' Day
- Why It's One Day: Written as a single sentence, the novel follows Marcus Conway over the course of one day, blending memory, observation, and reflection.

14. Black Water (1992) by Joyce Carol Oates

- Where/When: A late-night drive and its aftermath — One fateful evening
- Why It's One Day: Loosely inspired by the Chappaquiddick incident, the novel covers the final hours of a woman trapped in a sinking car, told through her stream of consciousness.

15. The Hours (1998) by Michael Cunningham

- Where/When: Three different locales/eras — Each storyline unfolds in one day
- Why It's One Day: Although it follows three women (including Virginia Woolf herself) in different times and places, each of their narratives is confined to a single day, mirroring the structure of Mrs. Dalloway.