

Writing a Book Review

General Guidelines

- Before you begin writing, make a few notes about the points you want to get across.
- While you're writing, try thinking of your reader as a friend to whom you're telling a story. Book Reviews have a much more conversational tone than almost anything else you will write in school. However, this does not mean that you can write any way you want--the content and word choice still needs to be appropriate for school, and the writing should be clear, organized and grammatically correct.
- Hook the reader with your opening sentence. Ask a question, tell a short anecdote (story), include a relevant fact, make an interesting (and possibly controversial) statement--these are all ways to grab your reader's attention right from the start.
- Include the title and author somewhere near the beginning of the Book Review, preferably in the first paragraph.
- Use one paragraph for each point you want to make about the book.
- Give your reader a taste of the plot, but don't give the surprises away.
- Share your opinion! If this is the best book you have ever read, say so -- and why. If it's merely another nice book, say so. In other words, be honest!
- Read the author's profile at the end of the book (if there is one). If necessary, do a little internet sleuthing so that you can include information about the author that is relevant to the book or interesting in and of itself.
- Your conclusion should summarize, perhaps include a final assessment. Do not introduce new material at this point.
- When you've finished writing your Book Review, come up with a title that relates to the book and really catches your reader's attention.

Points to Ponder

- What is the story about?
- Where and when is it set?
- Who are the main characters?
- Are the characters credible (believable)?
- What do the main characters do in the story?
- Do the main characters run into any problems? Adventures?
- Who is your favorite character? Why?
- Do you learn anything about other cultures or about a particular period in history from this book? If so, what?

Your Personal Experiences

- Could you relate to any of the characters in the story?
- Have you ever done or felt some of the things that the characters did?

Your Opinion

- Did you like the book?
- What was your favorite part of the book?
- Do you have a least favorite part of the book?
- If you could change something, what would it be? (If you wish you could change the ending, don't reveal it!)

Use of Short Quotes

- Use a few short quotes from the book to illustrate your points regarding the strengths and/or weaknesses of your book. Not only can you support your opinions this way, but you also can give the reader a sense of the author's writing style.
- Be sure you introduce the quote, incorporate it into the paragraph using correct capitalization and punctuation, and explain how it supports your opinion.

Your Recommendation

- Would you recommend this book to another person?
- What type of person would like this book?

Before You Turn in Your Work

- Reread the many points listed above and make certain you addressed all the pieces: setting, plot, character development, writing style and your opinion/recommendation must be included.
- Read your Book Review out loud. If a sentence or paragraph seems awkward or unclear, it has to be rewritten — remember rewriting is what separates good writing from bad.
- Check to make sure you're not repeating yourself. (This can be easy to do when you're trying to get an important point across.)
- Share your Book Review with someone who you think will give you helpful feedback about both your ideas and your writing style. Use their comments and suggestions to make your Book Review the best it can be!