**Book Review**

**Definition**

A book review both describes and evaluates a work of fiction or non-fiction. It describes a book’s overall purpose, structure, and style of narration, attempting to place the book in a larger context by comparing it to other books of its kind. If the book is fictional, the reviewer will pay primary attention to the book’s setting, plot, characters, use of language and voice. If the book is nonfiction, the reviewer will pay primary attention to the major points (the argument) the author is putting forth and to the sources, the author has drawn upon to back up his or her point of view.

A book review is a thorough description, critical analysis, and/or evaluation of the quality, meaning, and significance of a book, often written with prior research on the topic. Reviews generally range from 500-2000 words but may be longer or shorter depending on the length and complexity of the book being reviewed, the overall purpose of the review, and whether the review examines two or more books that focus on the same topic. Professors assign book reviews as practice in carefully analyzing complex scholarly texts and assessing your ability to effectively synthesize research so that you reach an informed perspective about the topic being covered.

**There are two general approaches to reviewing a book:**

**Descriptive review:** Presents the content and structure of a book as objectively as possible, describing essential information about a book's purpose and authority. This is done by stating the perceived aims and purposes of the study, often incorporating passages quoted from the text that highlight key elements of the work. Additionally, there may be some indication of the reading level and anticipated audience.

**Critical review:** Describes and evaluates the book about accepted literary and historical standards and supports this evaluation with evidence from the text and, in most cases, in contrast to and in comparison with the research of others. It should include a statement about what the author has tried to do, evaluates how well you believe the author has succeeded in meeting the objectives of the study, and present evidence to support this assessment. For course assignments, most professors will want you to write this type of review.

**Before reading, consider:**

* Title - What does it suggest?
* Preface or Introduction - Provides important information about the author's intentions or the scope of the book. Can you identify any limitations? Has the author ignored important aspects of the subject?
* Table of Contents - Shows how the book's organized -- main ideas, how they're developed (chronologically, topically, etc.)

**Points to ponder as you read the*entire* book:**

* What's the general field or genre? Does the book fit?
* From what point of view is the book written?
* Do you agree or disagree with the author's point of view?
* Make notes as you read, passages to quote in your review.
* Can you follow the author's thesis, "common thread"?
* What is the author's style? Formal? Informal? Suitable for the intended audience?
* Are concepts well defined? Is the language clear and convincing? Are the ideas developed? What areas are covered, not covered? How accurate is the information?
* Is the author's concluding chapter, the summary, convincing?
* If there are footnotes, do they provide important information? Do they clarify or extend points made in the text?
* If relevant, make note of the book's format - layout, binding, etc. Are there maps, or illustrations? Are they helpful?
* Is the index accurate? What sources did the author use -- primary, secondary? Make note of important omissions.
* What did the book accomplish? Is more work needed? Compare the book to others by this author, or books in this field by other authors. (Use the books listed in the bibliography.)

**Writing the Review:**

* Include title, author, place, publisher, publication date, edition, pages, special features (maps, etc.), price, and ISBN.
* Hook the reader with your opening sentence. Set the tone of the review. Be familiar with the guidelines -- some editors want plot summaries; others don't. Some want you to say outright if you recommend a book, but not others.
* Review the book you read -- not the book you wish the author had written.
* If this is the best book you have ever read, say so -- and why. If it's merely another nice book, say so.
* Include information about the author-- reputation, qualifications, etc. -- anything relevant to the book and the author's authority.
* Think about the person reading your review. Is this a librarian buying books for a collection? A parent who wants a good read-aloud? Is the review for readers looking for information about a particular topic, or for readers searching for a good read?
* Your conclusion should summarize, and perhaps include a final assessment. Do not introduce new material at this point.
* To gain perspective, allow time before revising.

**Writing a Fiction Book Review**

Note: You don't have to answer every question -- they're suggestions!

**Points to Ponder:**

* What was the story about?
* Who were the main characters?
* Were the characters credible?
* What did the main characters do in the story?
* Did the main characters run into any problems? Adventures?
* Who was your favourite character? Why?

**Your personal experiences**

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

**Your opinion**

* Did you like the book?
* What was your favourite part of the book?
* Do you have a least favourite 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!)

**Your recommendation**

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

**Things to Bear in Mind:**

Don't be intimidated by famous authors -- many have written mediocre books.

Don't review books by people you know, love, or hate.

Do you want to be a book reviewer? Start by doing. Write book reviews for local newspapers. If they don't have a book review section, start one.

If you have a speciality -- romance, mystery, dark fantasy -- cultivate it, and become an expert.

**Book Review Template**

The book review format includes an introduction, body, and conclusion.

**Introduction**

Describe the book cover and title.

Include any subtitles at this stage.

Include the Author’s Name.

**Thesis**

Write a brief description of the novel.

Briefly introduce the main points of the body in your book review.

Avoid mentioning any opinions at this time.

**Body**

Use about 3 quotations from the author’s novel.

Summarise the quotations in your own words.

Mention your point-of-view of the quotation.

Remember to keep every point included in its paragraph.

**Conclusion**

In brief, summarize the quotations.

In brief, summarize the explanations.

Finish with a concluding sentence.

This can include your final opinion of the book.

**Star-Rating (Optional).**

**How to Write a Book Review: Step-By-Step**

Writing a book review is something that can be done with every novel. Book reviews can apply to all novels, no matter the genre. Some genres may be harder than others. On the other hand, the book review format remains the same. Take a look at these step-by-step instructions from our professional writers to learn how to write a book review in-depth.

**Step 1: Planning**

Create an essay outline which includes all of the main points you wish to summarise in your book analysis. Include information about the characters, details of the plot, and some other important parts of your chosen novel. Reserve a body paragraph for each point you wish to talk about.

Consider these points before writing:

What is the plot of the book? Understanding the plot enables you to write an effective review.

Is the plot gripping? Does the plot make you want to continue reading the novel? Did you enjoy the plot? Does it manage to grab a reader’s attention?

Are the writing techniques used by the author effective? Does the writer imply factors between the lines? What are they?

Are the characters believable? Are the characters logical? Does the book make the characters real while reading?

Would you recommend the book to anyone? The most important thing: would you tell others to read this book? Is it good enough? Is it bad?

What could be better? Keep in mind the quotes that could have been presented better. Criticize the writer.

**Step 2: Introduction**

Presumably, you have chosen your book. To begin, mention the book title and author’s name. Talk about the cover of the book. Write a thesis statement regarding the fictitious story or non-fictional novel. Which briefly describes the quoted material in the book review.

**Step 3: Body**

Choose a specific chapter or scenario to summarise. Include about 3 quotes in the body. Create summaries of each quote in your own words. It is also encouraged to include your point of view and the way you interpret the quote. It is highly important to have one quote per paragraph.

**Step 4: Conclusion**

Write a summary of the summarised quotations and explanations, included in the body paragraphs. After doing so, finish the book analysis with a concluding sentence to show the bigger picture of the book. Think to yourself, “Is it worth reading?”, and answer the question in black and white. However, write between the lines. Avoid stating “I like/dislike this book.”

**Step 5: Rate the Book (Optional)**

After writing a book review, you may want to include a rating. Including a star rating provides further insight into the quality of the book, to your readers. Book reviews with star ratings can be more effective, compared to those which don’t. Though, this is entirely optional.

**Some Language for Evaluating Texts**

It can be challenging to find the proper vocabulary from which to discuss and evaluate a book. Here is a list of some active verbs for referring to texts and ideas that you might find useful:

account for, analyze, argue, assess, assert, assume, claim, clarify, compare, conclude, criticize, defend, define, demonstrate, describe, depict, determine, distinguish, evaluate, emphasize, examine, exemplify, exhibit, explain, frame, identify, illustrate, imply, indicate, investigate, judge, justify, narrate, persuade, propose, question, recognize, reflect, refer to, report, review, suggest ……..

**Sample Book Review**

**Michael Doane's The Crossing on Reedsy Discovery (Fiction)**

In Doane’s debut novel, a young man embarks on a journey of self-discovery with surprising results.

An unnamed protagonist (The Narrator) is dealing with heartbreak. His love, determined to see the world, sets out for Portland, Oregon. But he’s a small-town boy who hasn’t travelled much. So, the Narrator mourns her loss and hides from life, throwing himself into rehabbing an old motorcycle. One day, he leaps; he packs his bike and a few belongings and heads out to find the Girl.

Following in the footsteps of Jack Kerouac and William Least Heat-Moon, Doane offers a coming-of-age story about a man finding himself in the backroads of America. Doane’s a gifted writer with fluid prose and insightful observations, using The Narrator’s interactions to illuminate the diversity of the United States.

The Narrator initially sticks to the highways, trying to make it to the West Coast as quickly as possible. But a hitchhiker named Duke convinces him to get off the beaten path and enjoy the ride. “There’s not a place that’s like any other,” [39] Dukes contends, and The Narrator realizes he’s right. Suddenly, the trip is about the journey, not just the destination. The Narrator ditches his truck and traverses the deserts and mountains on his bike. He destroys his phone, cutting off ties with his past and living only in the moment.

As he crosses the country, The Narrator connects with several unique personalities whose experiences and views deeply impact his own. Duke, the complicated cowboy and drifter, opens The Narrator’s eyes to a larger world. Zooey, the waitress in Colorado opens his heart and reminds him that love can be found in this big world. And Rosie, The Narrator’s sweet landlady in Portland, helps piece him back together both physically and emotionally.

This supporting cast of characters is excellent. Duke, in particular, is wonderfully nuanced and complicated. He’s a throwback to another time, a man without a cell phone who reads Sartre and sleeps under the stars. Yet he’s also a grifter with a “love ‘em and leave ‘em” attitude that harms those around him. It’s fascinating to watch The Narrator wrestle with Duke’s behaviour, trying to determine which to model and which to discard.

Doane creates a relatable protagonist in The Narrator, whose personal growth doesn’t erase his faults. His willingness to hit the road with few resources is admirable, and he’s prescient enough to recognize the jealousy of those who cannot or will not leap. His encounters with new foods, places, and people broaden his horizons. Yet his immaturity and selfishness persist. He tells Rosie she’s been a good mother to him but chooses to ignore the continuing concern from his parents as he effectively disappears from his old life.

Despite his flaws, it’s a pleasure to accompany The Narrator on his physical and emotional journey. The unexpected ending is a fitting denouement to an epic and memorable road trip.

Source : Internet