

How to write a book or film review



Book reports and book reviews are similar. Book reports tend to be a little more descriptive (What is this book about?) and book reviews are usually more persuasive (Why a reader should or shouldn't read this book). Both offer a combination of summary and commentary. They are a way to think more deeply about a book you've read and to demonstrate your understanding.

General elements of a book review are:

Introduction:

Here you want to provide basic information about the book, and a sense of what your review will be about. You should include:

- Title (underlined) and author
- Publication Information: Publisher, year, number of pages
- Genre
- A brief (1-2 sentences) introduction to the book and the review.

Body:

There are two main sections for this part. The first is an explanation of what the book is about. The second is your opinion about the book and how successful it is. Explain the author's purpose and/or the main themes of the book. Then you can summarize.

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Provide brief descriptions of the setting, the point of view (who tells the story), the protagonist, and other major characters. If there is a distinct mood or tone, discuss that as well.

Give a concise plot summary. But be careful not to give away important plot details or the ending.

Analysis and Evaluation:

In this section you analyze or critique the book. You can write about your own opinions; just be sure that you explain and support them with examples. Some questions you might want to consider:

- Did the author achieve his or her purpose?
- Is the writing effective, powerful, difficult, beautiful?
- What are the strengths and weaknesses of the book?
- What is your overall response to the book? Did you find it interesting, moving, dull?
- Would you recommend it to others? Why or why not?

Conclusion:

Briefly conclude by pulling your thoughts together. You may want to say what impression the book left you with, or emphasize what you want your reader to know about it.

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Useful expressions when writing a book review:

Title, Author / Director, Actors

The book is written by ...

The film is directed by

The film is produced by..

It is starred by...

Setting

The action takes place in ... (setting)

The action of the film is set in ...

The story takes place in...

Characters and Plot

The main characters are ...

The story is about

The novel tells the story of ...

In the course of the novel the action develops dramatically.

The novel / film begins with...

The novel has an unexpected ending.

The end of ... is ...

Reaction

I am impressed by

I think

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The book is terribly / beautifully written

The film is terrible / exciting.

What surprised me is ...

What I liked is...

What I didn't like is...

I liked the novel/film because ...

I didn't like the novel/film because...

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