



Book Reviews

A-State Online Writing Center

What is a book review?

A book review is a critical evaluation of a text. Most importantly, a book review makes an argument. It is important to note that your review must provide more information than merely a summary of the book. You should focus on providing commentary regarding the text. Like the literature review, you are entering into a discussion with the book's author and other interested audiences. You should state your opinion of the text and offer agreements or disagreements regarding the text's knowledge or judgments. Your book review will resemble other academic writing types that you are used to, but your review may be briefer. It will often include an introduction with a thesis statement, body paragraphs, and a conclusion.

Important book review features:

1. Summary
 - Include a brief description of the text in addition to its argument or purpose for being written. It is important not to merely summarize your entire book review.
2. Critical assessment
 - Evaluate the theory, situation, or arguments that the writer is providing in the text. What seems most important to you? Was the writer's argument compelling, or did it lack effectiveness? Did the text help you better understand the topic?
3. Recommendation
 - Include a section on whether or not you would recommend this book to the intended audience.

Developing your critical assessment:

Many students feel overwhelmed and underqualified when asked to write a book review over a topic. Questions such as "How many times should I read it before reviewing it?" or "How can I review this book if I am not an expert in this topic?" often come up regarding reviews. You can rest assured knowing that no one is asking you to be an expert on this topic! As a reader, you can voice your agreements and disagreements with the book after carefully evaluating the evidence.

Questions to consider when evaluating your book:

- What was your overall impression from the text (did you find engaging, persuasive, moving?)
- What is the thesis of the book?

- What are the strengths and weaknesses of the text?
- How does the author structure the argument?
- What methods does the author use to support this argument?
- Did the author achieve the goals provided at the beginning of the text?
- Would you recommend this book to someone in this field?

Structuring your book review

Your book review should include the following:

1. Title
 1. Name of your paper followed by the full bibliography of the book
2. Introduction
 1. Background information such as the author's name, the title of the book, and the central theme
 2. Brief yet relevant details about the author as well as her standing in the field
 3. Your perspective of the book or the context that you will provide
 4. The author's thesis as well as your thesis
3. Body text
 1. Summary of the content
 2. Critical assessment
4. Conclusion
 1. Restate the thesis statement or make your final judgment of the text. Express whether readers should read the book. You should not introduce new evidence in your conclusion. Be sure that your conclusion is relevant to your thesis.

Works Consulted

<https://writingcenter.unc.edu/tips-and-tools/book-reviews/>

https://owl.purdue.edu/owl/general_writing/common_writing_assignments/book_reviews.html