

How to write a review



[Two book review templates](#)

[Writing a film review](#)

Sources:

<http://kuentolibros.blogspot.com.es/>

<http://www.skillsworkshop.org/resources/writing-film-review>

<http://portfolioeoi.blogspot.com/>

"Film review writing is not an easy job as many would think. You need patience to watch a film with a critical eye, perceive all the information about it and then write a detailed film review. A good review is not just a summary of a movie, but a critical analysis that examines why and how a movie works and whether the film succeeds in its presentation.

Credits (first page only): Title, year, genre, director, screenwriter, music or soundtrack, main actors. You might find useful to look at: <http://www.rottentomatoes.com> (overview) or <http://imdb.com/>

Synopsis or summary of the plot: Only a **brief summary** of the film. Make sure that your summary makes sense to a reader who does not know the movie. Do not refer to specific scenes and do not try to explain everything

You must also include the next items, but not as different parts (they may be included in your description of the story)

Place and time: Where does the action take place? When does the action take place? (present time, 19th century...) Is the story chronological (according to the order of time) or flash back

Background: society, country, kind of people (age, culture social class...), historical time...

Genre: horror, comedy, drama, adventure film, thriller

Main characters: physical description, psychological description, age, nationality social/personal background

Conclusion: What message is being told? (if it is any) What was the director's purpose or intention or the theme of the film? What's your opinion? Would you recommend the film or not?"

For further information, let's have a look at this guide, which was taken from this on-line wiki. (<http://chanroeun.wordpress.com/>)

A book review describes, analyzes and evaluates. The review conveys an opinion, supporting it with evidence from the **book**.

Do you know how to write a book review? I didn't. And even though I knew I didn't, that didn't stop me from firmly inserting my foot in my mouth by agreeing to conduct a book review writing workshop for my local Barnes & Noble. I blithely assured myself it would simply be a matter of picking up *Book Reviews for Dummies*, or something to that effect. Au contraire. It's easier to find information on bomb-making than book review writing.

So I did what any other resourceful writer on deadline would do; I panicked. Well, for a moment. Quickly composing myself I scoured the library and internet for every conceivable source that even hinted at the term "book review." What follows is the result of my gleaning

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, 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, 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, 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 favorite 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 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!)

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 specialty — romance, mystery, dark fantasy — cultivate it, become an expert.

Bill Asenjo, PhD, CRC ([basenjo "at" avalon.net](mailto:basenjo@avalon.net)) began writing seriously to maintain his sanity while completing his PhD dissertation. His work appears in publications ranging from *Chicken Soup for the Soul* to *SUCCEED* and the *Gale Medical Encyclopedia*. He conducts writing workshops for Barnes & Noble, Kirkwood Community College, Office Depot and teaches freelance writing at Kirkwood Community College. In a former lifetime — before multiple brain tumor surgeries — Bill had been a bartender, New York City cabdriver, college dropout, and construction worker, among other less-illustrious occupations.



Samples of Book Reviews

The Firm by John Grisham (1991)

“Nail-biting suspense... cloak and dagger tension...terrific characterizations...by a Southern lawyer who will surely be compared to Scoot Turow” *COSMOPOLITAN*”

nail-biting ['neɪlbaitɪŋ]

I	<i>adjetivo</i> tenso,-a
II	<i>nombre</i> (costumbre de) comerse las uñas

'**nail-biting**' also found in these Oxford entries:

English:

grow out of - nail