

Book Reviews

A book review is an opportunity to evaluate the strengths and weaknesses of a book. However, a book *review* is very different than a book *report*. The main feature of a book report is the plot summary. In a book review, the plot summary is secondary to the analysis of content and should only be incorporated when it supports the analysis, or in a brief section at the start of the review.

Note: A review is not a judgment on a book or author. It is an evaluation of an author's work, which should be educated, thoughtful, and supported by evidence and explanations.

Introduction

An introduction for a book review should include the name of the book, the name of the author, a brief summary of the book, the book's objectives, overall thoughts about the book, a thesis statement, and a mapping scheme.

Summary

Not all book reviews require a summary. If a short summary of the book is required (2-5 sentences), then the summary can go in the introduction, before the thesis statement. A longer summary (more than 5 sentences), should be written as a separate paragraph following the introduction.

However, whether the summary is included in the introduction or after it, only include information relevant to the thesis statement. In-depth details of the book are not required. The objective of the summary is to provide enough information for the reader to understand the context as it relates to the thesis statement.

Thesis statement

A book review must include a thesis statement. A book review is designed to tell readers how the reviewer interpreted the book by evaluating whether the author met their objective. The reviewer also needs to evaluate the author's claims and whether or not those claims are valid. The evaluation of the objective and the claims are the basis for the thesis statement. The evaluation also needs to be supported by evidence by using specific examples from the book, or other credible sources.

Note: A thesis statement should not be about feelings (e.g., "I really liked this book"), unless explicitly instructed otherwise.

A variety of approaches can be used in a thesis statement to evaluate a book, such as:

- ***Critique the significance of a text***
"The book provides new insights into economic theory through its consideration of Karl Marx influence."
- ***Analyze the author's purpose and whether it was achieved***
"The book does not achieve its purpose because it fails to provide sufficient evidence to support its claims."
- ***Discuss how the text relates to the author's other works***
"In this work, the author continues to explore feminism, but unlike their earlier works on liberal feminism, this text focuses on radical feminist movements."

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- ***Explain why you enjoyed reading it or would recommend to someone***
“The book is useful because it introduces new insights into behavioral psychology, and would be of interest to those interested in this topic.”
- ***Evaluate how the text fits into a larger theoretical framework***
“This text adds to contemporary understandings of early childhood development by creating links between existing theories and new theories.”

Note: These examples are only suggestions. There are several other types of thesis statements suitable for book reviews.

Body paragraphs

Each paragraph of a book review should present a claim to prove the thesis statement and incorporate examples from the text as evidence. Individual paragraphs should not be focused on describing a part of the book.

A variety of elements in a book can be considered for evaluation. The elements under consideration must relate to the thesis statement and mapping scheme. The elements under consideration can include genre/structure, author’s arguments, theme, narration, writing style, images/symbols, characters/setting, relation to other research in the same field, use of evidence, format of the book, and use of diagrams/visuals. These are only suggestions, and a variety of additional elements may be included in a book review.

Conclusion

The conclusion of a book review should restate the thesis statement, summarize the main points, and offer readers an overall evaluation of the text. The conclusion should comment on whether the text was successful at achieving its purpose as outlined in the introduction. This may also comment on whether the text is worthwhile to read and suggest who may benefit from reading it.