

Book Reviews

Though the names sound similar, a book report and a book review are two very different types of writing. It may be easier to see the differences through the eyes of a reader: someone reads a book report to quickly learn the contents of a book without having to read it themselves; someone reads a book review to learn someone else's perspective on a book, add to their own understanding of a book, or determine whether a book is worth reading.

Book Report

- summarizes the contents of the book
- conveys only the information covered in the book at face value
- reveals only the ideas and thoughts of the book's author

Book Review

- analyzes the book's contents, purpose, main themes, biases, and evidence
- assesses its value or usefulness
- reveals the thoughts and ideas of the reviewer

The content of a book review depends on 3 things:

1. the nature of the book being reviewed (its subject matter and/or genre),
2. the context in which the book is being reviewed (the course in which it is assigned, and its intended audience), and
3. the exact requirements of the assignment (as presented orally or in writing by the instructor).

QUESTIONS FOR GENERATING ANALYSIS

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What is the author's thesis, hypothesis, or research question? • What is the author's purpose? • What are the author's methods? • What are the author's main arguments or research results? • What sources or kinds of evidence does the author use? • Who is the author's intended audience? • What kinds of organization and writing style does the author use? • What kinds of aids (bibliographies, illustrations, footnotes, charts, glossaries, diagrams) does the author include? | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Are the author's methods appropriate for the subject? • Are the author's conclusions based on valid assumptions? • Does the author betray a particular bias or prejudice? • What are the author's conclusions? • What are the implications of these conclusions? • Are the author's conclusions sound? Do they follow from the evidence? • Is the author's evidence sufficiently convincing? • Are there any important implications that the author fails to address? • Or what value or use is the book? |
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