

**APSU Writing Center**  
Book Review Essay

**Book Review Essay**

- A book review:
  - Summarizes, analyzes, and critiques a book.
  - Provides evaluation and connects it to other relevant literature.
  - Offers personal insights and recommendations.
  - Informs the reader about quality, purpose, and argument.
  
- A book doesn't:
  - Simply retell the plot or summarize each chapter (book report).
  - Focus on analyzing specific literary elements like symbolism or imagery (literary analysis).
  - Provide only a brief descriptive summary of a text (annotated bibliography).

**Before Reading**

- Write down and take notes on:
  - Author and writing style
  - Genre and title
  - Plot and main themes
  - Characters and relationships
  - Literary devices and key quotations
  - Argument and purpose of the book

**While Reading**

- Write down and take notes on:
  - Characters and development
  - Themes, motifs, and style
  - Key ideas and quotes
  - Author's argument and purpose

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**Book Review Structure**

• **Introduction**

- Book title and author
- General overview and main points
- Thesis statement
  - **Optional topics:** genre, representation, page count, plot summary, etc.

• **Body: Analysis and Evaluation**

- Critique characters, plot, themes, and style
- Use transition sentences between topics
- **Optional topics:** personal thoughts and rating, main selling points, favorite lines, plot strengths and weaknesses, outside research, etc.

• **Conclusion**

- Summarize key points
- Share your final opinion and recommendations

**Questions to Answer**

- What is the book's thesis? Is it interesting and convincing?
- Does the author support the thesis with clear evidence?
- Is the writing clear, engaging, and effective?
- Are examples, data, or quotes used effectively?
- Does the author analyze the evidence rather than just describe it?
- Is the book well-organized and easy to follow?
- Are there sections that are confusing, repetitive, or underdeveloped?
- What are the book's strengths and weaknesses?
- Would you recommend the book? Why or why not?

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**Example Outline**

**Introduction:** *Jane Austen: Pride & Prejudice*

- Briefly introduce the author and provide context for the novel.
- Present your overall evaluation of the book (not the author).
- **Thesis:** Elizabeth Bennet's character makes *Pride & Prejudice* both entertaining and thought-provoking, providing readers with a timeless reflection on family, society, and personal values.

**Body Paragraph 1:**

- Analyze how Elizabeth's personality contrasts with Lydia's impulsiveness, and explain how Austen uses this contrast to highlight Elizabeth's intelligence and independence.

**Body Paragraph 2:**

- Analyze how Elizabeth's differences from her mother emphasize her critical thinking and values, and evaluate how effectively the novel develops this theme.

**Conclusion:**

- Summarize your overall evaluation of the novel and offer a recommendation to readers.

**Work Cited**

- Include your citations on a separate works cited page in the required format.

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Book Review Outline

**Introduction:** Briefly introduce the author and give your opinion and evaluation of the novel.

**Body Paragraph 1:** Summarize a key event in the book and include your reaction.

**Body Paragraph 2:** Analyze character relationships or main themes and how this contributes to the book's impact.

**Body Paragraph 3:** Share your own personal joys with the book and compare it to other works.

**Conclusion:** Restate your opinion and thesis in new words, offer a possible recommendation.



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### References

Hamilton College Writing Resources. (n.d.). *Writing a book review*. Hamilton College.

<https://www.hamilton.edu/academics/centers/writing/writing-resources/book-review>

Jen. (2020, September 11). *Review: Pride and Prejudice by Jane Austen*. Books on the 7:47.

<https://booksonthe747.com/2020/09/11/review-pride-and-prejudice-by-jane-austen/>