

## **Book Review**

### **APSU Writing Center Handout**

#### **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 review 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

## **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?

### **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.

**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.

## 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/>