

Kocher
WRITING A BOOK REVIEW

A book review is both a summary and a critical evaluation of the book under consideration, not a book report. The summary is necessary so that the review's reader will have an understanding of the book's topic. The evaluation is needed so that the reader will know the book's major themes and will be informed of the author's success or failure in proving those themes.

Reading the Book

Take notes while you are reading the book so that you can assess it. Note any questions that the author raises and answers or any questions that the author does not raise or are inadequately answered. You are not expected to know more about the book's topic than the author who wrote it. However, you are expected to judge whether or not the author is making a convincing argument about the subject under consideration.

Writing the Book Review

When you have finished reading the book and have taken some notes on its content, answer the following questions. What is the book about? What is its major argument? What kind of evidence (primary or secondary sources ex. newspapers, diaries, books, articles) does the author present to advance his or her arguments? Does the author take adequate account of any contrary evidence? Should there be more or less evidence or perhaps different kinds? Is the writing clear? Did the book make a contribution to your comprehension of history? Why and how? Or, why not and how not? Now write your review by stringing your answers together in sentences and paragraphs along with summarizing the book. Be sure that your review includes the following elements.

Title Page Your title page should include the book's title, the name of the author, and publication information- the publisher and the copyright date. Your name, the date, and the class should also be on the title page.

Introduction Make a general statement about what you are going to show in the review. What is the author's argument? How successful was he or she in proving that/those argument (s)? Be sure to state this in a way that allows you to have your own thesis statement in the review.

Body This is the largest part of the review. Answer the questions above that deal with evidence and writing.

Conclusion This is a concise evaluation of the book. Repeat your own thesis statement implying whether or not the author was successful in proving his or her argument. Did the book make a contribution to your understanding of history. Do not simply state that you disliked or liked the book, explain why.

Documentation If you use any quotations from the book these require documentation. It will suffice if you note the author's name and page number in parentheses after the sentence where you used the quotation. Quotes should be limited to only 3 and excessive use of quotes will result in a lower grade. Documentation is very important because you could be accused of plagiarism. If you use someone else's words or ideas in the book review you **MUST** document them.

The length of the book review **MUST** be between **3-5** pages. **The review MUST be at least 3 pages long.** If the review is shorter than three pages that will result in a lower grade. Reviews are accepted either typed or handwritten, however, the handwriting must be legible. If the review is typed please use double space and standard font sizes. If the review is handwritten on notebook paper single rule or wide rule is acceptable. Grammar and punctuation are not graded; however, **SPELLING** will be graded. Most computer programs have spell checks and dictionaries are widely available.

The book must be **NON-FICTION**. Any book review turned in on a fictitious book **WILL NOT BE** accepted. The instructor must also approve the book before the review is turned in.

NO LATE PAPERS ARE ACCEPTED FOR ANY REASON!