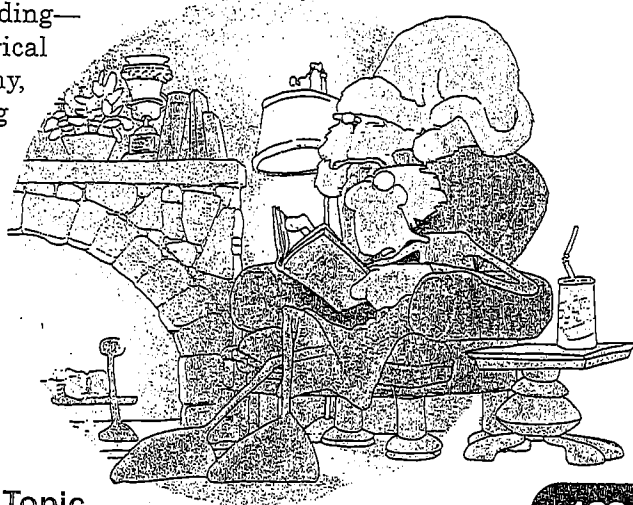


The Book Review

A book review is a special type of writing. In a book review, you state your reaction or your opinion about a book (or part of a book) you have read. You then support that opinion with specific facts and details taken from the book. The subject for a book review usually comes from one or more of the four main parts of a book—the *plot*, the *characters*, the *setting*, or the *theme*.

Reading and Understanding Your Book

To write a good book review, you need to read a book very carefully. And, you will need to reread those parts of the book you plan to use in your review. Also, you will need to know what kind of book you are reading—modern romance novel, historical novel, science fiction, biography, and so on. It would be wrong to criticize a biography because it lacks action and suspense. A biographer attempts to write about the life of an important person in a special way, a way that helps the reader understand that person better. A biographer isn't trying to write an action-packed story.



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Selecting: Choosing a Topic

Also keep in mind that a review is a type of persuasive writing, writing which includes an opinion supported by facts and details; therefore, you must select an idea which is a statement of opinion for your review.

**Helpful
HINT**

Use the list of ideas on the next page to help you choose a specific subject for your review. If you are asked to write a one-paragraph review, begin by choosing one of the basic parts of a story (*plot*, *characters*, *theme*, or *setting*) to write about. If you are assigned a longer book review, choose related ideas (*theme* and *character*, for example, or two strong characters).

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Finding an Idea for Your Review

Plot (The action of the story)

- The story includes *a number* (2, 3, 4 . . .) of suspenseful and surprising events.
- The story includes *some*/*many* predictable events.
- Certain parts of the story are *confusing*/*hard to believe*.
- The climax (the most important event) changes the story *in an interesting way . . . in a believable way . . . in an unbelievable way*.
- There are *a number* (2, 3, 4 . . .) of important events which lead to the outcome or ending of the story.
- The ending is *surprising . . . predictable . . . unbelievable*.

Characters (The people—and sometimes animals—in the story)

- The main character changes from _____ to _____ by the end of the story.
- Certain forces or circumstances—people, setting, events, or ideas—make the main character or characters act as they do.
- A certain character acts *believably/unbelievably* when . . .
- _____ is the main character's outstanding personality trait. (You may choose to point out more than one outstanding trait.)
- The main character does the right thing when . . .
- I can identify with the main character when . . .

Setting (The time and place of the story)

- The setting helps make the story exciting.
- The setting has an important effect on the main character.
- The setting (in a historical novel) increased my knowledge of a certain time in history.
- The setting (in a science fiction novel) creates a new and exciting world.
- The setting in this book offers nothing new and exciting.
- The setting could have played a more important role in this story.

Theme (The author's statement of lesson about life)

- Ambition . . . courage . . . greed . . . happiness . . . jealousy . . .* is clearly a theme in (title of book).
- The moral, "Don't judge a book by its cover" . . . "Haste makes waste" . . . "Hard work pays off" is developed in (title of book).
- This book showed me what it is like to be . . .