

Book Review/Report



Level 8

Introduction

This assignment is another exercise in summary writing. You read a book and write either a **review** (where you critique the book) or a **report** (where you tell what the book was about). For either a review or a report, here are some general instructions.

Prewriting

Determine whether you will be reviewing or reporting in the week's assignment. In either case, you should start by summarizing the book.

- * Your teacher will show you some books. Take a look at the summaries on the outside covers (back) or inside fly leaves. These will give you an idea of how an entire book can be summed up quickly, in a short passage.
- * Next, outline or cluster your ideas of what should be included in your summary.
 - Briefly outline the main themes of the book.
 - You might use our Story Map supplement to outline the plot as well.
 - If you are writing a review, jot down notes about your opinion of the strengths and weaknesses of the book, as well as one or two lines about why others might find it a good read.
- * Now make a plan for putting it all together.
 - **Reviews** have a more conversational feel, since you are giving your opinion of the book to the reader, as well as informing him of the book's content.
 - Thus, if you think of a five-paragraph paper, the *introduction* should give the book's title and author, clearly set out the criteria by which you judged the book, and contain your overall impression of the book.
 - Your three *body* paragraphs explain the content (or story) of the book and perhaps discuss writing style and characterization.
 - The *conclusion* returns to the theme of why or why not you recommend the book.
 - **Reports** are a little simpler and more straightforward.
 - The *introduction* simply introduces the book in an interesting way. It gives the reader the title and author of the book and introduces three supporting categories. For instance, the introduction may state that the report will discuss the plot, characters, and theme of the book.
 - In three paragraphs of the *body*, you will summarize the book's contents, according to your three supportive categories.
 - The *conclusion* of a report contains your opinion of the book, and whether or not you recommend it to others.

Drafting the Book Report or Book Review

Once the prewriting is done, drafting should be fairly straightforward.

- * Think about using clear and interesting words to convey your message.
- * Because we are Christians, your words should be gracious and kind, even if you did not like the book you are showcasing.

Editing

As always, you should self proof your work, then hand it to your teacher for her input. Ask yourself these questions when you are proofing your paper:

- * Did you capture the themes and the plot of the book?
- * If your paper is a report, does your account flow well from paragraph to paragraph, leading the reader clearly from idea to idea?
- * If your paper is a review, by what criteria did you judge this book? Were these valid criteria? Did you make your criteria clear in your introduction?



- * How clearly and graciously did you convey your opinion of the book?
- * Transition words are important. Be sure to look for these and smooth out any rough areas.

Polishing and Presenting

Once the review or report is edited, you should enter changes and print a final copy. Think about ways that your review or report can find a wider audience.

- * Would you like to form a book club? Perhaps you could team up with other students and meet once a quarter to read your book reviews or reports aloud?
- * Don't forget the *Tapestry of Grace* Gallery pages on the Internet. They make a great place to mount your writing.