



## QUICK TIPS FOR WRITING BOOK REVIEWS

Although a book review, like a book report, spends some time discussing the content of the book, its main purpose is not informational, but analytic and persuasive. The writer, in analyzing the content, format, argument and context within which the book was written, argues that the book is worth reading or not.

1. Summary of contents: how much and how?
  - Avoid summarizing the book chapter-by-chapter, instead describe only those themes that that you will analyze directly (However, note point #4 below)
2. Analysis of contents
  - Who is the author and why is he/she writing this book?
  - Who is the book aimed at?
  - What organizational method is used?
  - What are the main themes of the book?
  - What kind of evidence has been collected to support the writer's thesis?
  - Where, how and why was the evidence collected?
  - Are there other aspects of the problem that the author may not have considered?
  - How applicable are the solutions presented in the book?
3. Evaluation of the book
  - What are the main strengths and weaknesses of the book?
  - Has the book fulfilled its mandate?
  - What can be learned from the book?
  - Who should read the book?
  - Did you like or dislike it? Why?
    - Try to avoid commentary such as "This book was slow to read" or "I found some of the chapters confusing." Instead, say something such as "Owing to its poor organization, the text failed to provide a coherent narrative."
4. Try to include comments about every part of the book in your review
5. If you want to put in quotes from the text, you must put them into quotation marks, and indicate the page(s) on which they appear.

6. Don't let the author make a point for you. You must always tell the reader what you got out of the quote, and how it relates to your analysis of the book.
7. Be sure to craft a conclusion to your review: a synthesis of highlights and what they have helped you to understand.
8. Look at what other critics in a scholarly journal have said about the book. Don't use the ideas of the other critics unless you cite and document your source.