

## BOOK & ARTICLE REVIEWS

A book or article review is a combination of **fact** (textual content) and **criticism** (analysis of the content).

A book/article review has three aims:

- to clarify the type of text being reviewed
- to summarize the text
- to analyze the text and weigh its merits

The following questions will help you determine whether your review has met those aims.

### Clarification

- Is the text fictional? Research-based? Autobiographical?
- If it is an article, when and where was it published? Make sure you state this in the introduction to your review.
- Is there a significant biographical or historical context to this book/article? Was the text produced as a response to a specific event or situation?

### Summary

A summary is a concise statement – in your own words – of the text's thesis, main points, and conclusions. It should be of appropriate length; try not to restate all the information, but make sure you cover all key points. **Remember**, your opinion stays out of this part of the review. Here are some questions to keep in mind while you summarize.

- What are the author's main points?
- How does s/he support these points?
- What key words/phrases does the author use?
- How does the author structure the text?
- What is the general tone of the text?
- What is the perspective that the author adopts?

### Critical Analysis

The analysis portion of your review is the place for you to interject your own opinions about the book or article. Keep your criticism as objective, logical, and professional as possible. Judge the book on its merits, not by your personal feelings or preferences. Make sure to back up your criticism with examples and supporting arguments.

Here are some questions to consider:

- Does the author make a point?
- Does the author adequately define key terms?
- How are main points supported?
- Is supporting evidence weak? Strong? Appropriate?

- Do the author's arguments depend on specific facts? Are these facts solid?
- What are the assumptions implicit in the author's reasoning? Are these assumptions true?
- Do you have any personal experience that supports/conflicts with the text?
- Have you read other books/articles on the same topic? How do they compare?
- Did you find the book/article generally worthwhile to read?