



HOW TO BE A BOOK REVIEWER

Hints of what to think about whilst reading a book

You do not have to like the book but you do have to look at it fairly.

Each story should be judged by the same criteria, e.g. plot, readability, pace, characterisation and writing style (more information can be found further on).

Do not be put off by the beginning, as many books are slow starters. You can consider this when allocating marks if you feel it detracts from the overall quality of the story.

Did the ending satisfy you or did you feel disappointed?

You may have to read the stories more than once to really appreciate their good points.

A story setting has to be believable. It does not matter if the story is sci-fi or fantasy as long as you can accept the reality of the setting.

A good book allows you to identify with the characters. The characters should talk and behave in a way that is believable. Be open-minded as the characters will not necessarily talk or behave like you, your friends or your family.

Criteria for writing a good book review

PLOT: This is the basic storyline of the novel. It is generally believed that there are only seven basic plotlines and that every story falls into one of these categories.

Good versus evil
The quest
Rags to riches
Voyage and return
Comedy
Tragedy
Rebirth

PACE: This is to do with how well you felt the story progressed. A story can either go slowly and drag or catch the imagination and be hard to put down. Some stories fall in between.

CHARACTERISATION: This asks you to look at whether the characters in a book feel real to you as a reader. When reading a story you may feel that only the main characters are described sufficiently to make them seem real. You will have to decide whether this affects your enjoyment of the book.

READABILITY: This is often a personal reaction to whether you enjoyed the book or not. If reviewing a title you must try not to let your personal feelings affect your judgement.

WRITING STYLE: This is the way the author presents their story. Some writers will use short sentences to emphasise their point. Others will write in diary format, or talk to the readers as if they are part of the storyline. What you need to decide is whether the writing style matches the book.