

Writing a review

General information:

A review is a description, critical analysis, and an evaluation on the quality, meaning, and significance of a book – not *only* a report or a summary. The review concentrates on the purpose and content of the material. A critical review shows strengths and weaknesses of the material and includes a statement of what the author (here: *Urheber*) has tried to do, evaluates how well (in the opinion of the reviewer) the author has succeeded, and presents evidence to support this evaluation. (<http://www.lavc.edu/library/bookreview.htm>)

Writing tips:

Organise your thoughts in different paragraphs. If possible, use quotes from the material to back up your opinion. Put quotes in inverted commas (“...”) and give the source in brackets.

Sources: Last name, first name. Title of material. City of publication: Name of publisher, Year of publication

Three steps of a review:

1) Introduction and background information

1. What kind of material is it (book, film, game, ...). What kind of genre does it belong to?
2. What is the title? Who is the author? When was the material published?

2) Summary

1. Basic storyline (= Who takes part? What happens?) / Tense: Simple Present (!)
2. Comment on the setting (= When and where does the action take place?) and atmosphere? Climax?

3) Analysis and evaluation

1. What is the author's purpose by publishing the material?
2. Where do you see the strengths and weaknesses of the material?
3. What is your opinion about the material?
4. To whom would you recommend the material?

Useful expressions:

Summary / Structure / Topic	Analysis	Expressing your opinion
This (...) is about / deals with	The author conveys the feeling that ... (<i>vermittelt das Gefühl, dass ...</i>)	I am of the opinion / In my opinion
The subject / topic of ... is ...	The author seems to be ...	with regard to (<i>im Hinblick auf</i>)
	The author comes across as being (<i>macht den Eindruck ...</i>)	after considering, I come to the conclusion (<i>Fazit</i>) that ...
		at the beginning of ... / at the end
		on the one hand ... on the other hand
		I liked ... / I disliked (didn't like ...) ... because ...
		To sum up ... / .on the whole ... / all in all I would say that ...

Sources:

Glenn, Cheryl, et.al. Hodges' Harbrace Handbook. Fifteenth Edition. Boston: Thomson Heinle, 2004

Kliebling, Stephanie. Englisch – Textproduktion. How to write good class tests in English. Stuttgart: Manz Verlag, 2005.

<http://teacher.scholastic.com/writewit/bookrev/>