

Guidelines for Writing Online Book Reviews

Why Write Online Book Reviews: Synopsis

Do you get e-mails or requests to review books you've read? Do you hesitate? Did you know your single review impacts further sales and even the ability of the publisher to advertise the book? Want to know more? Would you like help to write that review? For more tips, visit..... [Why Write Online Book Reviews](#)

How to Write an Online Book Review: General Guidelines: Synopsis

Have you been asked to write a book review but didn't know where to start? Answer a few simple questions, and you'll soon have a great review. Did you like the book and why? Did it make you think? Do you love the genre? For specific questions to help you write a review more quickly, visit [How to Write an Online Book Review: General Guidelines](#)

How to Write an Online Book Review: Fiction: Synopsis

Are you writing a book review for a fiction novel? Would you like your review to be read? Think of what you find helpful when you read reviews. How did the plot keep you interested? Did you like the setting? Were you emotionally moved by the story? For specific questions to help you write a review more quickly, visit [How to Write an Online Book Review: Fiction](#)

How to Write an Online Book Review: Non-Fiction: Synopsis

Are you writing a book review for a non-fiction book? Would you like others to know how helpful the book was to you? Answer a few simple questions and you'll have a helpful review written very quickly. For instance: Did the book offer new, up-to-date information? Would you consider this more a book of essential information? Was it organized to your liking and why? For specific questions to help you write a review more quickly, visit [How to Write an Online Book Review: Non-Fiction](#)

How to Write an Online Book Review: Poetry: Synopsis

Have you read a book of poetry that inspired or impressed you? Would you like others to know about it? Write a review and have your opinion count. Need help? Answering a few simple questions will help you write a review in very little time. If this a book of poetry or an educational book about poetic forms or style? Why did you enjoy the poems? Was there one particular book that stays with you? For specific questions to help you write a review more quickly, visit [How to Write an Online Book Review: Poetry](#)

Why Write Online Book Reviews

Did you know a good review can elevate a book's success? Do you know how or why? Good reviews entice other readers to want to buy the book, of course. But there are reasons beyond that you might not have known.

- Your thoughts and ideas are important to authors, yet it's often difficult for them to ask for reviews. Many authors feel it would be an awkward imposition and value your friendship too much to ask.
- People have a tendency to vent online. Unless you post your positive comments about a book (or even a product) online, only the negative ideas are read or spread.
- Many people make their decision whether or not to buy a book based on comments. Reviews don't have to be long, but any information beyond "I loved this book" helps them make a better decision. Amazon recommends anywhere from 75 to 500 words, and it's amazing how easy it is to write 75 words about something you like.
- Many advertisers, especially for e-books, won't accept books unless they have a minimum number of reviews. I've seen the minimum as few as five and as many as ten positive reviews with at least a 4-star rating.
- In our highly technological world, both Amazon and Google are masters. Where books rank in the search process, or whether they show up in a category like "You might also like this," or "people who bought this also bought," is in part determined by positive reviews.

All authors know how precious your time is and appreciate your taking time to write reviews. Want to know how to write a good review? Read the next installment: [How to Write an Online Book Review: General Guidelines.](#)

How to Write an Online Book Review: General Guidelines

Have you been wanting to write a book review but didn't know how? Here are a few questions to help you think through what you'd like to say?

I enjoyed this book because.....

1. Did you like the book? Why?
2. Did it make you think?
3. Did you learn something new?
4. Was it a subject you always wanted to learn about but hadn't?
5. Was it a controversial subject?
6. Do you love the genre? i.e., mysteries, love stories, self-help book
7. Is it a favorite author of yours? If so, is it similar to his/her others? Is it part of a series?
8. How did this book meet or exceed your expectations?

As you think about writing a review, please remember: Although it is important to be honest, unless the book is so full of typos and grammatical errors that you can't get past it, it's best to be as positive as you can. If the book is not your kind of book or if you disagree with the opinions of the author, just be kind and don't leave a review.

If you're writing a book review for Amazon, please be aware that they allow reviews from people even if they did not purchase the book from Amazon. However, they do require that you have purchased a product from them in the past year.

It's often helpful to address the genre of the book. For questions to ask yourself about [Fiction](#), [Non-Fiction](#) and [Poetry](#), please refer to the specific guidelines for each.

How to Write an Online Book Review: Fiction

Are you writing a fiction book review but don't know where to start? In addition to my General Guidelines, you might want to be a little more specific. Listed below are a few questions to help you think about your book. Remember, it's not necessary to answer all of the questions nor to pick a question from each category. These are just guidelines to help you think what you'd like to say and make the process quicker and easier than you'd have thought possible.

1. I found the plot.....
 - a. Did it hold your interest?
 - b. Was it a page-turner?
 - c. Was it full of action and suspense?
 - d. Did it make you feel like you were living the story?
2. I found the characters.....
 - a. Did you find the characters believable?
 - b. Did you find you learned to love or hate the characters as the story progressed?
 - c. Was there one particular character you particularly liked or hated? Why?
3. I was taken by the setting.....
 - a. Did the novel take place in a foreign country? In more than one location?
 - b. Were you particularly struck by one location? Was it well described? Did you feel like you were there?
 - c. Did you like the descriptions of scenes? Why?
 - d. Was the setting familiar in some way? Did it remind you of home? of a place you visited once?
4. I felt the emotion(s)
 - a. If the book was a love story,
 - i. Was it heart-warming?
a feel good story? tender? romantic? troubled?
 - ii. Was it a romantic mystery?
 - iii. Was there humor in it?
 - b. Did you get a feeling for the emotions involved, i.e., frightened? anxious? excited? happy? sad?
 - c. If the story was designed to invoke a particular emotion (i.e., empathy, compassion, encouragement), was there a particular instance where you were touched?
5. Sometimes fiction is based on facts: historical, scientific, etc.
 - a. Did you learn something new?
 - b. Did the book make you think? How?
 - c. Did it encourage you to dig further into a subject?
 - d. Did it change your mind on a topic or idea?
6. Were you surprised by the ending?

As a final note, I like to summarize by answering one or more of these three questions:

1. Would you reread this book?
2. What kind of reader do you think would enjoy this book?
3. Would you recommend it for a book club?

How to Write an Online Book Review: Non-Fiction

Are you writing a non-fiction book review but don't know where to start? In addition to my General Guidelines, here are some additional questions to help you think about the book. Remember, it's not necessary to answer all of the questions. These are just guidelines to help you think what you'd like to say and make the process quicker and easier than you'd have thought possible.

1. Did you learn new facts on a subject you were interested in?
2. Did the information reinforce your feelings or beliefs about the subject?
3. Was it current information? trend-setting?
4. How did the descriptions or directions add to your reading?
 - a. Did the author use lists, bulleted points, descriptive narration?
 - b. Are subjects listed in the table or contents or an index?
5. Were there illustrations to make concepts more clear?
6. How did the author qualify their self as an expert in the subject?
7. Were there references given where you could research the subject more in depth if you desired?

As a final note, I like to summarize by answering these questions:

1. What audience do I think this book would be appropriate for—beginners, those with some knowledge, those advanced in the subject?
2. Will I keep this book as a reference in my library?

How to Write an Online Book Review: Poetry

Are you writing a poetry book review but don't know where to start? In addition to my General Guidelines, here are some additional questions to help you think about the book. Remember, it's not necessary to answer all of the questions. These are just guidelines to help you think what you'd like to say and make the process quicker and easier than you'd have thought possible.

1. Is this a book of poetry to read or is it an educational tool to learn more about poetry?
2. If this is an educational tool:
 - a. How is the information presented?
 - b. Does it teach styles, craft, etc.?
 - c. Are there samples of classic or contemporary poets?
 - d. Is it a workbook format? Are there exercises for practice?
 - e. Are there links to websites for further study?
3. Why did you enjoy the poems?
 - a. Because they evoked a feeling?
 - b. Because they were well-written?
 - c. Because you like the poet or have read or followed him/her before?
4. How does the title of the book relate to the poems in the book?
 - a. Is it the title of a particular poem?
 - b. Is it a theme for the book?
5. Are the poems in formal verse, free verse, or a combination thereof? Are you able to recognize the style?
6. Do you think this book could be used to illustrate good poetry to others?
7. Did you enjoy the collection as a whole?
8. Did you have a favorite poem? Which one? Why?
9. Have you read this poet before?
10. Was there information about the poet, his/her background, his/her inspiration for writing, etc.?
11. Will you read more of this poet if he/she has a blog or website?
12. Is there a listing for a website or blog?

As a final note, I like to summarize by answering these questions:

1. What kind of reader do you think would enjoy this poet?
 - a. someone who is looking for inspiration, poems about nature, etc.?
 - b. someone who enjoys clear and concise meanings in their poems?
 - c. someone who enjoys a complex message in their poems?
 - d. someone looking to learn more about poetry in general?
