



Book Report Presentation Assignment Description

What is a Review?

A Review is an essay that is written for a specific audience and purpose. The presumed reader is someone who has not yet read the article but might want to, and the Review's purpose is to advise her/him whether to do so by explaining its merits. A Review, therefore, must accomplish two tasks - **synopsis** and **examination**. Some Reviews first synopsis then examine, while others weave the two together.

Reviews appear in periodicals also called "Reviews," like *The New York Times Book Review* or *The New York Review of Books*, as well as in subject or field-specific publications like *Science* or *The Chronicle of Higher Education*. Reviews for the first type of publication generally summarize then focus on the *quality* of the book in the examination section. Reviews for subject-specific publications are more selective and directed in their summary, and in the examination they focus on what the book offers the field or subject. For example, a book review of a novel in a Cultural Studies journal might summarize the plot focusing on details about race and gender, then evaluate the book's usefulness to understanding a particular concept or perspective.

The Assignment:

For this assignment, you'll be preparing a Review of the latter type described above: one that is directed at an educated audience (your classmates) and offers an original analysis (rather than merely a recommendation or critique). Since your audience will be familiar with the book from which the article(s) that you are reviewing come, you will not need to sum up the book. You can focus directly in on your chosen chapter(s).

Your Review should include both synopsis and examination – first one then the other, or woven together. Focus both your synopsis and examination parts by choosing a particular insight that you gathered from the chapter(s) you read that you would like to get across. Then, rather than a "blow-by-blow" summary, focus your synopsis on elements relevant to that insight. Include only the details that are both relevant and necessary to prepare for your analysis.

Infuse your presentation – both synopsis and examination parts – with specific references to the book. These references can be direct quotes, paraphrases, observations* or combinations thereof. Interpret these details and finally tie together your strands of reference-and-interpretation into a larger point – your conclusion.

Resources:

"Writing a Book Review" - <http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/704/01/>

"Quoting, Paraphrasing & Summarizing" <http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/563/01/>

