

Outline for Writing a Book Report

This is a guide only. It is not meant to write the report for you. It gives you a format or template for writing your own report.

1. Introductory Paragraph

The first sentence should state for which instructor and class the book-report is being written.

The second sentence should state the title of the book and the author's name.

The third sentence should tell how many pages the book has, the name of the publisher, and what year it was published in.

The next sentence should state the reason(s) you decided to read this book. Why did you choose this particular book? Typical reasons might be:

- * You like the author.
- * You like this type of book (i.e. mystery, western, adventure or romance, etc.).
- * Someone recommended the book to you.
- * It was on a required reading list.
- * You liked the cover.

These reasons do not have to be complex. Most people choose the books they read because they like the author or somebody recommended it to them. If you chose the book because you like the author, then state why you like that author.

2. Main Character(s) Paragraph

The first sentence of this paragraph should state who the main character or characters of the book are, and why they are important. Refer to this person or these persons as the Main Character or Main Characters.

You will need at least a complex sentence for this, and probably more than one sentence.

3. Other Characters Paragraph

You should compose at least one sentence for each of the other prominent or important characters in the book. State the name of each of the other important characters, and the key role that each one plays in the book

4. Plot Summary Paragraph

This is perhaps the hardest paragraph to write in five sentences or so. If you have to write a bit more don't worry. Here are the main points you may cover:

- * State the type of book (Mystery, Western, etc.).
- * What place or country was the book set in?
- * What time period was the book set in? (19th century, the present, ancient Rome, the 23rd century).
- * Other physical locations which are important, like: ships, airplanes, houses, or buildings.
- * Other notable attributes of the book. (Was it violent, scary, fast paced, etc.).
- * What is the main character trying to do?
- * What is the outcome of the book?
- * etc.

Make sure you cover all of the major parts of the plot. You might have to go back through the book, chapter by chapter, and make a few notes.

5. Personal Impressions and Conclusions Paragraph(s)

The closing paragraphs should give your overall impressions of the book, using at least two quotations from the book to illustrate your points. These quotation should be approximately 10-30 words long.

- * Start with a sentence that states that you are now writing a conclusion. (For example: "My final thoughts on *A Fine Balance* are that it is a fascinating book but I am not entirely sure if I completely understood the thematic message of the book.")

- * Give opinions about the book, using quotes from the book to show what you mean. Identify an important theme, or discuss the use of literary techniques, such as the point of view, foreshadowing, metaphor and symbol, flashback, or something else that struck you.

- * Write two sentences that talk about the book's good points and weak points.

- * Write a sentence or two about what you learned from the book.

- * Close with a sentence that states whether you would recommend the book to others.

Don't be afraid to give your own honest impressions of the book. After all, if you've read the book thoroughly, you are entitled to your own interpretation of it.

Typically, your book report should not exceed two double-spaced pages, and it should be somewhere between 600 and 800 words in length.