

WRITING A BOOK REPORT

Before using this handout, be sure to ask your instructor if he or she has a specific book report format for you to follow.

The first paragraph of the book report should clearly state:

1. The author's full name
2. The exact title of the book, underlined
3. The publisher and city of publication
4. The date the book was first published

Briefly acquaint the reader with the author. It is especially important in a nonfiction work to provide the author's credentials, authority, or bias. Additionally, your report should either give a very condensed version of the story or introduce the main points the author emphasizes. This summary section, however, should not be more than a third of the whole report. The other two-thirds will be your comments on what you have read.

Fiction

If the book is fiction, consider analyzing it by answering the following questions:

1. What was the author's purpose?
2. What methods, such as characterization, setting, plot, dialogue, point of view, or style, did the author use in accomplishing this purpose?
3. Was the purpose successfully accomplished? Was it worth doing?
4. What did you get from reading the book? Would you recommend it to a friend? Why or why not?

Nonfiction

If the book is nonfiction, consider answering the following questions in the report:

1. What was the author's purpose?
2. How was the material organized and presented?
3. What have you learned about the subject of this book?
4. Has this book changed any of your ideas? What ideas? In what ways?

In writing the report, select a central idea (based on your responses to the points mentioned above) and develop your report around this idea. Use specific examples and quotations from the book, but remember to give your ideas priority.