**Book Review Guidelines**

Begin with a short summary or background of the work, but do not give too much away. Many reviews limit themselves only to the first couple of chapters or lead the reader up to the rising action of the work. Reviewers of nonfiction texts will provide the basic idea of the book’s argument without too much detailed.

The final portion of your review will detail your opinion of the work. When you are ready to begin your review, consider the following:

* **Establish a Background, Remember your Audience:**Remember that your audience has not read the work; with this in mind, be sure to introduce characters and principals carefully and deliberately. What kind of summary can you provide of the main points or main characters that will help your readers gauge their interest? Does the author’s text adequately reach the intended audience? Will some readers be lost or find the text too easy?
* **Minor principals/characters:** Deal only with the most pressing issues in the book. You will not be able to cover every character or idea. What principals/characters did you agree or disagree with? What other things might the author have researched or considered?
* **Organize:** The purpose of the review is to critically evaluate the text, not just inform the readers about it. Leave plenty room for your evaluation by ensuring that your summary is brief. Determine what kind of balance to strike between your summary information and your evaluation. If you are writing your review for a class, ask your instructor. Often the ratio is half and half.
* **Your Evaluation:** Choose one or a few points to discuss about the book. What worked well for you? How does this work compare with others by the same author or other books in the same genre? What major themes, motifs, or terms does the book introduce, and how effective are they? Did the book appeal to you on an emotional or logical way?
* **Publisher/Price:** Most book reviews include the publisher and price of the book at the end of the article. Some reviews also include the year published and ISBN.

**Revising**

When making the final touches to your review, carefully verify the following:

* Double-check the spelling of the author name(s), character names, special terms, and publisher.
* Try to read from the vantage point of your audience. Is there too much/enough summary? Does your argument about the text make sense?
* Should you include direct quotes from the reading? Do they help support your arguments? Double-check your quotes for accuracy.