How to write a critique

What is a critique?

A critique is a paper that gives a critical assessment of a book or article.

Steps in writing a critique

1. Begin by reading the book or article. Try to identify the writer’s main point/thesis statement.
2. Underline any familiar words as you read.
3. Divide the book/article into sections of thought and write a brief summary of each thought in your own words.

Parts of a critique

Introduction

Introduce the work by stating:

- Author
- Title
- Source
- Date of Publication

Body

Use about three to five points to support your thesis statement. The questions you answered as you read should serve as a guide to help you select your points. For example, you can discuss:

- The author’s credentials or lack of credentials
- The audience he or she aims at and the appropriateness of the vocabulary
The amount and kinds of support used to back up his or her major ideas
The use and correct identification of outside research
How the author handles any biases or opposing opinions
Logic of the argument
How the author’s ideas correlate with knowledge you already have.

**Conclusion**

Summarize the author’s purpose and main points
Restate your thesis statement
Discuss the success or failure of author to convince the reader.
Consider the following questions:
1. Is the work significant?
2. How does it impact the reader?

**Key words to use in a critique**

**Evidence**

Facts
Opinions
Examples
Statistics
Expert Opinions
Emotional Appeals

**Relevant**

Representative
Accurate
Reasonable
Logical
Fallacies
Flawed
The thesis statement declares what you believe and what you intend to prove. A good thesis statement makes the difference between a thoughtful research project and a simple retelling of facts.

A good tentative thesis will help you focus your search for information. But don’t rush! You must do a lot of background reading before you know enough about a subject to identify key or essential questions. You may not know how you stand on an issue until you have examined the evidence. You will likely begin your research with a working, preliminary or tentative theses which you will continue refine until you are certain of where the evidence leads.

The thesis statement is typically located at the end of your opening paragraph. (The opening paragraph serves to set the context for the thesis.)

Remember, your reader will be looking for your thesis. Make it clear, strong, and easy to find. Check with your instructor for his or her preference before writing your critique, there may be some variations from the pattern. Be sure to read your assignment carefully.