

The Critic's Corner: Master the Art of the Book Review

Learning objective: To craft a compelling, critical book review that evaluates plot, characterisation, and personal response using persuasive vocabulary.

Max the monkey is helping the school library, but he needs your help to write professional reviews. Using the 'Critical Thinking Framework' below, select a book you have recently finished. Complete the tasks to build a review that goes beyond a simple summary. Use the Word Bank to add sophistication to your critique.

Word bank: compelling · characterisation · climax · predictable · evocative · narrative arc · ambiguous · superfluous · pacing · perspective · captivating · thought-provoking

1. 1. Summarise the 'narrative arc' in two sentences. Explain why the author chose to start the story at this specific moment. (2 marks)

2. 2. Analyse the protagonist's development. How does their perspective shift from the beginning to the end of the story? Justify your answer with evidence. (3 marks)

3. 3. Evaluate the 'pacing'. Did the author build tension effectively leading up to the climax, or did the story feel rushed? Explain your reasoning. (2 marks)

4. 4. Compare and contrast the setting in this book with another you have read. How does the environment influence the mood of the story? (3 marks)

5. 5. What might happen if the author had written the story from a different character's point of view? How would this change the reader's opinion of the events? (3 marks)

6. 6. If you were the editor, which section of the book would you refine or expand to make the narrative more 'compelling'? Justify your choice. (3 marks)

Draw: Draw a 'mood board' for your book review. Include symbols, colours, and objects that represent the atmosphere and central themes of the story you reviewed.



Extension challenge: Write a 'blurb' for the sequel to your chosen book. Ensure you use at least four words from the Word Bank to entice a potential reader to pick up the book for £7.99.