

Mastering the Art of the Book Review

Learning objective: To analyse the structure and purpose of a book review, identifying how authors persuade readers through opinion and evidence.

Read the passage carefully and answer the questions below. Use full sentences and refer back to the text to support your points.

Pip the caterpillar recently penned a review of 'The Great Oak Mystery'. Pip writes, 'This adventure story is absolutely spellbinding! The plot follows a young squirrel searching for the Golden Acorn, and the suspense kept me hooked until the final page.' Pip's review does more than just recount the plot; it invites the reader into the world of the story. A well-constructed review balances a brief summary with an honest critique of the writing style. Pip notes, 'The author uses vivid imagery, making the forest feel like a character itself, though the pacing in the middle chapter felt slightly sluggish.' By providing both praise and constructive feedback, the reader gains a trustworthy perspective. Ultimately, a review acts as a bridge between the book and a potential reader. Whether you are writing for a school blog or a literary journal, your goal is to share your enthusiasm while justifying your stance with clear evidence. Pip concludes with a firm recommendation: 'For those who enjoy mysteries and woodland lore, this is an essential read.' A great review doesn't just tell us what happens; it explains why it matters.

Word bank: critique · persuasive · recommendation · structure · summary · evidence · captivating · perspective

1. According to the text, what are the two main components that make up a well-constructed book review? (2 marks)

2. What specific genre and setting does Pip identify in the book 'The Great Oak Mystery'? (2 marks)

3. Why does the author of the passage suggest that including both praise and constructive feedback makes a reviewer more 'trustworthy'? (2 marks)

4. Explain why the author describes the review as a 'bridge between the book and a potential reader'. (2 marks)

5. Do you agree with Pip that a review should include a critique of the pacing? Justify your answer using evidence from the text or your own experience as a reader. (3 marks)

Draw: Draw a creative 'Reviewer's Desk' for Pip. Include a magnifying glass, a notebook filled with star ratings, and a stack of books with colourful, imaginative titles.



Extension challenge: Imagine you are writing a review for your favourite book. Compose a paragraph using sophisticated vocabulary that persuades a peer to read it. Then, justify your opinion by explaining how the author's use of language impacts the reader's emotions. What might happen if a review only contained positive comments without any critique?