

Writing a Compelling Book Review with Pip

Learning objective: To write a formal book review by summarising a plot, evaluating the author's style, and providing a reasoned recommendation.

Read Pip's sample review of a mystery story below. Use the information to identify the key features of a book review, then answer the questions to help plan your own.

Pip the bookworm recently finished reading 'The Whispering Woods', a mystery novel about a forest that changes its path every night. Pip writes: 'The author does a marvellous job of building a tense atmosphere using descriptive language that makes the trees feel alive. The plot summary follows a young explorer named Sam, who must solve the riddle of the moving oaks before sunrise. While the pacing in the middle chapters is slightly slow, the climax is breathtaking. I would highly recommend this book to any Year 6 student who enjoys puzzles and magical settings. It is a four-star read that will keep you guessing until the final page.'

Word bank: recommendation · plot summary · critique · target audience · vocabulary · atmosphere · persuasive · evaluation

1. Identify one piece of evidence from Pip's review that shows the author's writing style. Explain why this is effective. (2 marks)

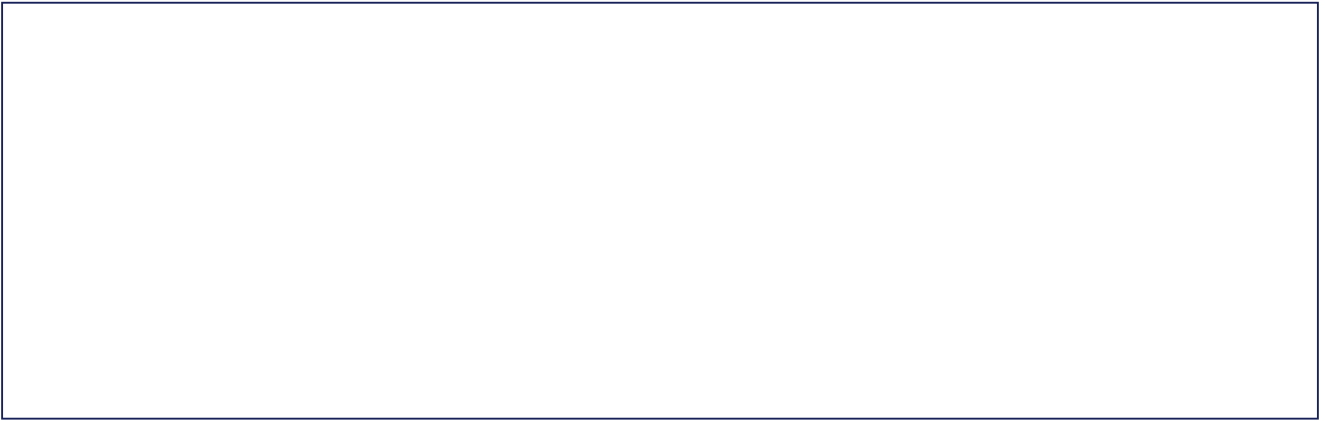
2. What is the 'target audience' for this book according to Pip, and why might they enjoy it? (2 marks)

3. Pip mentions that the pacing in the middle chapters is 'slightly slow'. Is this a positive or negative part of the review? Explain your reasoning. (2 marks)

4. Why is it important for a book review to include a summary without giving away the ending (the 'spoiler')? (2 marks)

5. Write a persuasive opening sentence for a review of your favourite book. Remember to include the title and the genre. (2 marks)

Draw: Draw a new cover for 'The Whispering Woods' that captures the mysterious atmosphere described by Pip.



Extension challenge: Choose a book you have finished recently. Write a short paragraph (50-80 words) providing your 'final verdict', explaining who you would recommend the book to and why.