

## Academic Book Review Template

Author:

Genre:

Topic:

Purpose:

Intended Audience:

One-sentence summary of the main idea or thesis:

Contribution to the field:

Main sections:

Strengths:

Weaknesses:

Overall Recommendation:

## Academic Book Reviews

Book review = short summary + evaluation (assessment of the overall value or contribution of a book or article to the academic field and specific inventory of good and bad parts or points)

Critique = critical assessment

- Focus: 2/3-3/4 summary, fair, balanced, and complete summary of most important ideas + interspersed evaluation
- Short (can't discuss every detail)
- Analyze the book reviews from several recent issues of the journal in which you intend to publish (look at length, format, language).
- Evaluation is often inserted using adjectives and adverbs interspersed throughout the summary.
- Words that constitute high praise in one discipline can reflect a poor opinion of someone's work in another.
- It's easier for students as newcomers to a field to criticize what's missing than to criticize what is addressed in a book.

### Adjectives of Praise and Blame among Historians, Sociologists, and Physicists in Britain and the United States<sup>1</sup>

	Good Work	Average Work	Poor Work
Humanities	scholarly, original	sound	thin
Social Sciences	perceptive, rigorous	scholarly	anecdotal
Physics	elegant, economical	accurate	sloppy

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<sup>1</sup> John M. Swales and Christine B. Feak, "Writing Critiques," Unit 6 in *Academic Writing for Graduate Students*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2004), 197.