
Checklist for Book, Film, & Play Reviews

☐ Does the first paragraph include the title and other important information such as the author and/or director’s name?

☐ Does the introduction give readers an idea of the nature and scope of the work? Does it establish criteria for evaluation?

☐ Does the initial paragraph briefly summarize the plot or contents?

☐ Are evaluative terms or phrases, such as “good action” or “like a soap opera” defined? (What are the characteristics of “good action” or “soap opera”? How does the work embody those characteristics?)

☐ Does the review make reasonable assertions and present convincing evidence (quotes, examples, and specific references) to support those assertions?

☐ Is the tone appropriate? Does it suggest that the reviewer is being fair? Does it indicate respect for the reader?

☐ Does the reviewer avoid overuse of phrases like “I think” and “In my opinion”? (Such qualifiers can weaken assertions.)

☐ Is the review critically evaluated, not just informative? Leave plenty of room for your evaluation by ensuring that your summary is brief. Determine what kind of balance you strike between your summary information and your evaluation. Ask your instructor; often the ratio is half and half.

Checklist for Analysis & Literature Papers

☐ Is the thesis stated? Is the organization logical and easy to follow?

☐ Does the writer use examples from the text to convincingly support his or her interpretations or analysis?

☐ Has the writer avoided giving a simple plot summary?

☐ Are parts of a work clearly and accurately indicated? Students need to refer to parts specifically, saying, for example, “The scene in which...” or “at the end of Chapter 3.”

☐ Does the writer use the present tense when describing events in a work of literature, as is convention? (This practice often confuses the students. You might explain that the author is communicating to a present reader in a present time.)

☐ Are titles properly punctuated or italicized? Title of short stories, essays, and most poems appear in quotation marks; titles of books, plays, epics, or other long poems are italicized.

☐ Has the writer referred to the author properly, using the full name initially and the last name in subsequent references?

☐ Is quoted material properly punctuated, indented (if longer than four typed lines of prose or three lines of verse), and documented according to the format specified by the teacher?