

Book Review Instructions and Due Dates 2017-18

October 16 - Autobiography

(You may not use Anne Frank's Autobiography or Night by Elie Wiesel)

November 13 - History

(A book about a real life event, or historical period, not about a person.)

December 11 – Book of Short Stories

January 16 - Historical Fiction

February 12 – Nonfiction

March 12 – Book of Poetry

April 9 – Drama (Play)

May 7 – Science Fiction

Writing a Book Review

Students are required to write one book review per month. You must read a book on your grade/reading level. You may not read a book assigned in a previous year. Many of the book reviews will be shared online, on our ELA website (<http://msmela.com>). Thus, reviews must be typed and submitted by **email** (msmela@msmela.com). (Students without computer access may use the school library at lunchtime.) You may type your review directly into the email, so we are not involved in what program to use or access to other storage. Book reviews are to be written using proper language (no slang), proper paragraphs and full sentences (**no lists**). Students are to read books on their level or above: no comic books, no graphic novels, no “Diary of a Wimpy Kid” or similar books. All book reviews *must* use the following format:

(Do not double-space or center anything, please! I will just have to change it to put it online.)

Student’s Name and Class (First Name and Last Name Initial)

Book Title

Book Author

Illustrator (if there is one)

Publisher and Copyright

Date

Paragraph One - Introduction:

Introduce the story with a brief summary. Do not tell the entire story and do not give away the ending or any surprises in the story. Remember, summaries do not include details from the story!

Paragraph 2 - Write about the book, and include the following information:

1. **Genre** (What type of book is it? If it is fiction, what type of fiction?)
2. **Point of View** (Who is telling the story?)
3. **Characters** – Fiction (Who are the important characters and why are they important?) *or*
People or Animals - Nonfiction
4. **Setting** (Where and in what time period does the story take place?)
5. **Plot** – Fiction (What are the important plot points?) *or*
Supporting Details - Nonfiction
6. **Theme** – Fiction (What is the overall theme of the book?) *or*
Central Idea and Author’s Purpose – Nonfiction

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Paragraph 3 - Your recommendation: Write what you liked about the book and *WHY* you liked it (or write about why you didn't like the book). Write to whom you would recommend the book (e.g., If you like____, you will love this book or I recommend this book to anyone who likes _____.)¹.

Do not use any number or star reviews! Your recommendation must be written in sentence form.

Special Instructions for reviews on books with multiple stories or parts, such as reviews on short stories, drama and poetry (changes are in red).

Student's Name and Class (First Name and Last Name Initial)

Book Title

Book Author

Illustrator (if there is one)

Publisher and Copyright Date

Paragraph 1 - Introduction:

Introduce the story with a brief summary. Do not tell the entire story and do not give away the ending or any surprises in the story. **Write an overall summary about the book and the types of stories, poems or plays in the book. The summary will necessarily be quite general.**

Paragraph 2 - Write about one of the stories, poems or plays in the book, and include the following information:

1. **Genre** (What type of book is it? If it is fiction, what type of fiction?)
2. **Point of View** (Who is telling the story?)
3. **Characters** – Fiction (Who are the important characters and why are they important?)
4. **Setting** (Where does the story take place?)
5. **Plot** – Fiction (What are the important plot points?)
6. **Theme** – Fiction (What is the overall theme of the book?)

Paragraph 3 -Your recommendation:

You will write the same type of recommendation, but you may say you enjoyed some stories and not others, but explain why this was the case.

Write what you liked about the book and *WHY* you liked it (or write about why you didn't like the book). Write to whom you would recommend the book (e.g., If you like____, you will love this book or I recommend this book to anyone who likes _____.)².

Book reviews with grades of 3 and 4 will be posted on the class website as soon as they are graded. Grades will be emailed to students. I tell the class when all the reviews are graded; be sure to tell me if you did not receive a grade!

Read the following article by Kirsten McCulloch for more pointers.

How to Write a Book Review For Kids (edited for space considerations)

February 28, 2012

By [Kirsten McCulloch](#)

Your book review should include basic information like the title, author and illustrator (if there is one) of the book, a short plot summary that doesn't give away the ending (this may be as short as a couple of sentences, depending on the length of your review), some comments on what you see as strengths and weaknesses of the book, and your personal response to the book.

Quick steps to writing a book review.

1. Before you read the book, make some notes about it. Start with the title, author and illustrator. Then consider some of these questions: What kinds of book is it? Is it a picture book? Novel? Poetry? Fiction or non-fiction? What genre does it belong to – fantasy, autobiography, science fiction, romance, fairy tale, or something else?
2. Make notes while you read the book, especially of anything you particularly like or don't like, anything that strikes you as odd, and anything you think you would have liked to know before deciding whether to read the book.

Now that you've read the book

1. Write a two-three sentence summary of the book's plot, without giving away the ending, or any important "surprise" elements – you don't want to spoil the book for your readers. This should not be the main part of your book review, so keep it short. Really.
2. If the book is fiction, consider some of the following questions:

mf What is the setting? Is it important to the story?

mf Who are the main characters? Were they believable? Did you like them? Do you think the author meant you to like them?

mf Whose point of view is the story told from? Does that affect how you see the other characters?

mf Was the plot believable? If it is the sort of story that asks you to "suspend disbelief" (like a fantasy novel), did it work? Or were there places where you thought "that just wouldn't happen"? This can happen in a "realist" story too.

mf If there are pictures, how did they support the story? If it is a picture book, this is especially important. Consider whether the pictures match the story, tell the story, or distract from the story.

mf Did you like the book? Use examples from the book to explain why, or why not. You may need to describe a scene or use quotes from the book. You might consider the plot, or story, separately to the style of writing here.

mf Who would like this book? Who would not?

If the book is non-fiction, consider

mf Does it do what it sets out to do? Another way of putting this is, does it cover the information you expected it to when you read the title and any subtitle?

mf If the book is making an argument, or trying to convince you of a point, does it do so effectively? If not, how does it fail?

mf Is this book as good as other books about the same subject? Why or why not?

mf What makes this book different to other books about the same subject?

In writing your review, make sure you support any statements you make about how the book does or doesn't work, or why you do or don't like the book, with concrete examples from the book. You can't just say "It's a great book" – you have to say *why*.

For more ideas for kids about how to write a book review see [The Book Chook](#), by Australian writer Susan Stephenson, or for older children and teens (and even adults) see [this article on Writing World](#) by Bill Asenjo. (<http://www.mybookbag.net.au/how-to-write-a-book-review-for-kids/>)³

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