

Guidelines For Writing Critiques

- **Introduction.** Introduce both the passage under analysis and the author. State the author's main argument and the point(s) you intend to make about it.
Provide background material to help your readers understand the relevance or appeal of the passage. This background material might include one or more of the following: an explanation of why the subject is of current interest; a reference to a possible controversy surrounding the subject of the passage or the passage itself; biographical information about the author; an account of the circumstances under which the passage was written; or a reference to the intended audience of the passage.
- **Summary.** Summarize the author's main points, making sure to state the author's purpose for writing.
- **Analysis of the presentation.** Evaluate the validity of the author's presentation, as distinct from your points of agreement or disagreement. Comment on the author's success in achieving his or her purpose by reviewing three or four specific points. You might base your review on one (or more) of the following criteria:

Is the information accurate?
Is the information significant?
Has the author defined terms clearly?
Has the author used and interpreted information fairly?
Has the author argued logically?
- **Your response to the presentation.** Now it is your turn to respond to the author's views. With which views do you agree? With which do you disagree? Discuss your reasons for agreement and disagreement, when possible, tying these reasons to assumptions—both the author's and your own.
- **Conclusion.** State your conclusions about the overall validity of the piece—your assessment of the author's success at achieving his or her aims and your reactions to the author's views. Remind the reader of the weaknesses and strengths of the passage.

Reference:

Behrens, L. & Rosen, L.J. (1982). *Writing and reading across the curriculum*. (8th ed). New York: Longman.

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