Book & Article Reviews

A book or article review is a combination of fact (textual content) and criticism (analysis of the content). The chief ambitions of a book/article review are:

1. to clarify the type of text being reviewed
2. to summarize the text
3. to analyze the text and weigh its merits

Clarification

Is the text fictional? Research-based? Autobiographical? If it is an article, where was it published? Make sure you state this in the introduction to your review.

Summary

A summary is a concise statement – in your own words – of the text's thesis, main points, and conclusions. It should be of appropriate length; try not to restate all the information, but make sure you cover all key points. Remember, your opinion stays out of this part of the review. Some questions to keep in mind while you summarize:

1. What are the author's main points?
2. How does s/he support these points?
3. What key words/phrases does the author use?
4. How does the author structure the text?

Critical Analysis

The analysis portion of your review is the place for you to interject your own opinions about the book or article. Keep your criticism as objective, logical, and professional as possible. Judge the book on its merits, not by your personal feelings or preferences. Make sure to back up your criticism with examples and supporting arguments. Some questions to consider:

1. Does the author make a point?
2. Does the author adequately define key terms?
3. How are main points supported?
5. Do you have any personal experience that supports/conflicts with the text?
6. Have you read other books/articles on the same topic? How do they compare?
7. Did you find the book/article generally worthwhile to read?