

# How to Write a Book Review, Film Review, or Other Critique

The key to writing a good review or critique, whether it is for books, films, music, or another medium – is knowing **what** you think and **why**. There is no way to have a wrong opinion, but in order to have a useful one, you must be able to explain your opinion clearly.

Students may often feel shy about expressing their opinions because they're afraid they're not educated or sophisticated enough to "know what they're talking about." If this is the case for you, remember that the point of a review or critique is *to discover and examine* your thoughts on the subject you are reviewing. In other words, the point of a review is *to learn* "what you're talking about." The best way to have confidence in your opinion and convince others to take it seriously is to develop principles. You probably already have principles—you just don't use that particular word. A good way to discover your principles is to ask yourself relentlessly *why?* For example, let's say you read a book (or watch a movie) and don't enjoy it very much. Someone asks you, "Why?" You say you "don't like stories with happy endings" (or "I don't like stories with happy endings").

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