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Standards and Benchmarks: 1A, 1B, 1C, 1G, 1J, 1K

Criteria for Writing a Review

Objective: The student will identify the criteria for a review and use the criteria to examine sample reviews and write an original review.

Procedure

1. Write the definition of a review on the overhead or chalkboard: A *review* contains a summary or description of the subject being reviewed. A review also includes a critique of the subject being reviewed. The goal of the writer is to provide a balanced opinion of the subject.
2. Inform the students that an editorial has the following criteria:
 - a summary or description of the subject being reviewed
 - a balanced opinion of the subject being reviewed
 - support for the opinion
 - a strong conclusion that wraps up key points
3. Have students read the “Example of a Book Review” and identify the criteria in the sample review. Use the following questions to guide your discussion: Does the writer provide a good description or summary of the subject being reviewed? What is the writer’s opinion of the subject? What support does the writer provide to back up his/her opinion? Is there a strong conclusion?
4. Use the prompts for review writing on pages 128–132 for student response.
5. Use the “Peer Response Form for a Review” on page 103 for the students to give each other feedback on their reviews.
6. Use the “Self” and “Peer” sections of the “Rubric for a Review” to allow the students an opportunity to evaluate their own reviews.

Portfolio Piece: Have students each write a reflection in which they identify the key points in the summary of their review. Have students reflect on whether or not they included all of the necessary information in their summaries.

Publishing: Have students create a TV talk show and share their reviews in front of the class as if they are professional movie or book reviewers.

Technology Connection: Have students use the Web to research background information for their reviews. Show students how to use a search engine to do a keyword search on a particular topic.

Home-School Connection: Instruct students to read a chapter from a book with a family member and summarize the key events from the chapter.

Assessment: Use the “Rubric for a Review” to evaluate the students’ reviews.

Example of a Book Review

Directions: Read the following review carefully and think about the criteria for a review. Be prepared to discuss with your teacher the criteria for a review after you read.

Imagine a cold, snowy, Sunday afternoon in late January. The sky is milky and overcast, the snow falling at a rate of about an inch an hour. An icy winter wonderland is the setting at the opening of the young adult novel *Snow in the Afternoon*. In this book, Josephine Caruthers is the main character. She lives in Baltimore, Maryland, with her mom and stepdad. Josephine's mom is recently remarried and has not been paying a lot of attention to her in recent months. To make matters worse, Josephine's mom and stepdad are planning to move to Jacksonville, Florida, within the next two months. Josephine is saddened by her parents' decision, and she knows that she will miss the beautiful winter months in the town in which she was born.

The author, Jeanine Landon, does a good job of creating the character of Josephine. Landon describes Josephine as a tall 13-year-old girl with long brown hair and dark brown eyes. The author skillfully creates a picture of a wistful girl who loves her hometown and longs for her parents to get back together. Ms. Landon writes, "Josephine stared through her bedroom window at the crystal ice showers, longing for those days when she would shovel snow with her dad, knowing that a cup of hot chocolate was waiting for her when she came inside." Such imagery appeals to readers' senses and makes them want to keep reading.



Although some parts of the book are slow-moving, overall the author captures the feelings of loneliness that children experience when their parents get divorced and they have to move from their hometowns.