WELCOME
TO THE
CBMR
Welcome

Welcome to the CBMR! We appreciate your willingness to review for us. This packet explains the policies and procedures you will need to know when it comes to writing and submitting reviews as well as getting assignments and compensation books. If you have any questions or concerns feel free to contact us at cbmr@byu.edu.

Compensation

We want to compensate you for your time and efforts in writing reviews. For every two published reviews, we will send you a book as compensation. The book does not need to be reviewed, although you are welcome to if you would like. The book is yours to keep or give away, but please do not sell it. You can see all available books at cbmr.libib.com.

Assignments

You are required to submit four reviews per year. Your revision year starts from the month you begin as a reviewer. Two of these items will be assigned to you by the CBMR. You get to keep the books we assign you to review.

The other reviews can be from books, apps, movies, websites, or television shows. We don’t assign non-book related materials because we cannot guarantee access to anything not in our library, but anything you can access on your phone, tablet, on Netflix, through your library, etc. that is for our audience’s age range can be reviewed.

Movies that are in theaters should only be reviewed if you have received permission to do so. If you are interested in reviewing an upcoming movie, email cbmr@byu.edu with your request. These reviews will have a deadline so that they can be put on the website as soon as possible after they open in theaters. Any movie out of theaters can be reviewed by anyone.

After you have completed your four required reviews, you are welcome to continue review as many items as you would like. You will receive a compensation book for every two items you send us, or you can request a book from the collection (cbmr.libib.com) that you are interested in reviewing and keep it after you review it. It will also count towards compensation.
Writing Reviews
General Instructions and Information

- There are two parts to a review. The first part is the SUMMARY, and the second part is the ANALYSIS. These two parts should be split into two equal-length paragraphs.
- The initial sentence should capture the reader’s interest.
- End the review with a meaningful statement that reinforces your evaluation of what you reviewed.
- Limit the review to between 150 and 350 words.

Below are descriptions of each and ideas for what to include.

**Part 1: Summary**

*Brief Content Summary*
Summaries should be informative and interesting. A general guideline to follow is to write something you would be interested in, even if you believe the item itself was not all that great—leave that to the criticism paragraph.

*Summaries are not Catalogs*
Content summaries describe the complete action of the book, play, or movie, but they are not a catalog of events (i.e. he did this, she did that, then they got kidnapped, etc.). Tip: If an items has several plotlines, pick the main one and focus on that. The summary is meant to give an overview of the item, not a detailed retelling. See also Themes in Part 2.

*Summaries are not Teasers*
Teasers describe the action of the composition up to the most suspenseful part. They are meant to leave the reader hanging, to give them a taste of the item, and to tease them into reading or watching the item to see how it ends. Summaries in professional reviews are not teasers. You don’t need to give every plot detail, but do explain where the characters end up at the end.

*App and Website Summaries*
A summary of an app or website should describe what it does and what its purpose is.
Part 2: Analysis

Analysis
A review should provide critical analysis of a work. Discuss characterization, themes, methods for conveying meaning, etc., and how effective the creator was in working with these aspects of a work. The analysis portion of a review should be of an equal or greater length than the summary. It is no review if the “review” part is only one sentence. It also needs to be in good taste (the creator may read it at some point), and every statement needs to be backed up.

What to Discuss
There may be a lot you can say about a certain item, or you may not know what to say. Below are some points that you can consider for your review. You won’t be able to write about it all in one review, so pick the ones you can give the most meaningful support for. This list is meant to both help you get something to say and to narrow down what you want to say, but is not all-inclusive and some things might not apply to every media form.

Authority.
Authority is a critical evaluative element for informational material. Well-documented research, education, experience, and prior projects can validate the creator’s authority. What are the qualifications of the creator? Was the research done adequately? Was the creator’s argument logical?

Strengths and weaknesses.
Identify the strengths and weaknesses of the item. Support your evaluative statement with evidence from the work.

Comparison.
Compare the work with others of its kind or by the same creator.

Themes.
In young people’s entertainment, theme is the abstract concept that is made concrete through characters and action (examples: nature, technology, man vs. nature, man vs. himself, etc.). Identify the theme if it aids in understanding the purpose of the work. Also, identifying the theme may help narrow down a summary of an item with many plotlines. A theme can also describe the main idea of an app or a website. Tip: What was the item’s central question, and how was it answered?
**Potential uses.**
Suggest ways in which the item may be used. Who does this work appeal to? Would teachers be able to use in the classroom? Would teens relate to it? Is there educational value or is it just for fun?

**Format.**
Is the paper durable? What is the allure of the cover illustration/dust jacket? Are the images and text synchronized? Are the illustrations or images aesthetically pleasing? Does the text read smoothly? Is the website or app easy to use? Does the app or website require an account to access? Does it have family sharing abilities?

**Message.**
What is the work’s overarching message? Does it even have one?

**Characters.**
Were there any other especially interesting characters? Were the characters and their problems believable? How did the main character change during the story? How was the characterization?

**Setting.**
Was location important to the story? What does the setting add to the story?

**Audience.**
For what groups is this item especially appropriate? Why? Analysis gives information. Things such as “I read this book to my child and he loved it” are not permitted because not every reader will have the same experience with something as you do. This includes offering a fair evaluation of books that may have perspectives or content that are uncomfortable for you. If you can give evidence to the different areas described above, you’ll be able to give your supported opinion without having to resort to “I liked it” type phrases.

**Movies and TV Shows—Additional Information**
For new movie releases, we will assign reviewers. If you are particularly interested in reviewing a new release, email us. Anything out of theatres (DVDs, Netflix, etc.) can be reviewed. TV shows are reviewed by individual episodes. Additional things you could discuss: the sets and settings, the acting, the soundtrack, special effects, etc.
Apps and Websites—Additional Information
The first paragraph should describe what the purpose of the app or website is and the analysis paragraph should describe how well it accomplishes this purpose. Additional things you could discuss: how often there are updates, does the app require internet access to use it, if it requires an account to access it, if it is worth the price of the app or the subscription fee, etc.

Non-Fiction Books—Additional Information
In evaluating an informational book, note the inclusion and quality of an index, table of contents, bibliography, glossary, etc.

Plays—Additional Information
We do not review plays for a children’s audience as much as for juvenile actors. To review plays, you need to be familiar with how performance works and if the play would be good for children to perform.

Picture Books—Additional Information
Identify the style of illustration, if possible. Use precise adjectives to describe the illustrations. Avoid ambiguous terms such as pretty, beautiful, good, and wonderful that are used without explanation.
Questions to help get you on the right track
• Why are illustrations appropriate or not?
• Is the color palette appropriate to the subject or mood of the story?
Example Reviews

Bad Example

Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows is a good book. It tells the story of Harry as he prepares to defeat Lord Voldemort. To do this, he has to find all of Voldemort’s horcruxes, but first he has to say goodbye to the Dursleys and go to Bill and Fleur’s wedding. Dumbledore’s will gives Ron a Deluminator, Hermione a book on fairy tales, and Harry gets Gryffindor’s sword and the first snitch he ever caught. The three friends are on the run for a while, staying in Grimauld Place with Kreacher (who is nice now) while they get ready to go to the Ministry of Magic and get a Horcrux that Dolores Umbridge has. They accidentally reveal the location of Grimauld Place to the Death Eaters, so they stay in a forest for a long time. Ron gets tired of this and leaves them. Harry and Hermione go to Godric’s Hollow. Eventually, Ron comes back and they find Gryffindor’s sword so they can break the locket Horcrux they got from Umbridge. They visit the Lovegood’s house and learn about the Deathly Hallows that can help someone escape death. When they leave, they get caught and are taken to the Malfoy Manor. They are tortured, but manage to escape, saving Griphook, who was also a captive, but Dobby dies. With the help of Griphook, they break into Gringotts to steal another horcrux, Hufflepuff’s cup. Harry has a vision that reveals Voldemort’s last horcrux is at Hogwarts. They go talk to Dumbledore’s brother who reveals the truth about Dumbledore, then look for the final horcrux while a battle goes on around them. Voldemort and Harry have a battle and Harry dies, but he also had a horcrux inside of him so he comes back to life and defeats Voldemort. Although several characters die, most people go on to have a happy life.

Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows is a satisfying conclusion to the Harry Potter series. It is funny, but is also more serious because of the darker subject material. It is a wonderful conclusion to a story teaching about love, friendship, and courage. Harry Potter fans will be thrilled with this ending to the series.

Why was this bad?

Although the information in the analysis is a good start, this review is problematic because the summary is a catalog of everything that happens in the book, leaving little time to develop the analysis. Remember that you can tell what happens without going into so much detail. The review also needs to have an interesting first sentence, and the summary and analysis should be about the same length.
Bad Example

In the last book of the Harry Potter series, Rowling finishes off with an adventure different from the ones readers have had before. Instead of going to Hogwarts for school, Harry, Ron, and Hermione look for the rest of the Horcruxes so that they can defeat Voldemort. They go on many adventures, including infiltrating the Ministry of Magic, robbing Gringotts, and finally having an all-out battle against Voldemort and the Death Eaters at Hogwarts. Will Harry be able to find the horcruxes, defeat Voldemort, and save the wizarding world? You’ll have to read it to find out.

This book is the worst of the series. I hated this book. All of my favorite characters died. The author obviously did not care about the reader’s feelings. Plus, Harry and Hermione should have gotten together. Ron and Hermione were a terrible match and are likely to have an unhappy marriage. Ron was always mean to her so it makes no sense that they ended up together. I was also really bored in the middle because they wander around in a forest doing nothing. It was a very disappointing end to the series.

Why was this bad?
Reviews should not be teasers. This review is also not objective. Remember that personal statements should not be in reviews. Reviews can be energetic but still objective. Reviews also should not be negative. It is fine to explain why a book might not be recommended or why it should be read, but reviews should be professional with statements backed up by evidence.

Good Example

For six years Hogwarts has been Harry’s sanctuary, but now Voldemort controls the school through the Ministry of Magic and no place is safe. Harry, Hermione, and Ron are on a quest to find and destroy the horcruxes so Voldemort can be defeated at last. They have to avoid being caught by the Death Eaters, infiltrate the Ministry of Magic, rob Gringotts, and escape from the Malfoy mansion when they are captured. Their friendship is tested as they deal with the effects of the horcrux and being on the run. Along the way, they learn about the Deathly Hallows and their connection to Voldemort and Harry’s parents. To get the last horcrux they must return to Hogwarts, and their return results in an all-out battle between the Death Eaters and Harry’s supporters. Many lives are lost and important sacrifices are made, but in the end good triumphs over evil. The epilogue reveals that, at last, “all was well”.

Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows is a satisfying conclusion to the Harry Potter series. It has funny parts like in the previous books, but is also more
serious because of the darker subject material. It might not be suitable for sensitive readers because of a scene involving torture and several deaths of characters throughout the book. It is a good analogy of World War II, and the ending shows Harry's desire to help promote a world free of segregation and prejudice when he speaks to his son. Although it is darker than the other books, it is a story of sacrifice, bravery, friendship, and love that completes the lessons taught in the previous six books. Harry Potter fans will be thrilled with this ending to the series as it reinforces all the themes and lessons learned from the previous books.

**Why was this good?**
This review starts with an interesting first sentence and ends with a sentence that reinforces the reviewer’s opinion of the book. It says what happened without revealing too many spoilers. The summary and analysis are about the same length as well.

For more examples, see [byucbmr.com](http://byucbmr.com)

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**Submitting Reviews**

Submitting reviews is simple. The review process could take up to two weeks. If there are any problems with your review, we will contact you about how to fix them. If you are not contacted, look for it on the website.

1. Go to [www.byucbmr.com](http://www.byucbmr.com)
2. Click on “Submit Reviews”
3. Enter the password (please do not give out the password to anyone): reviews@byu
4. Click the type of item that you are going to be reviewing
5. Enter all the required information into the fields
6. Submit the review

**Keywords**

Keywords describe the subject material and themes of the book. They are search terms that people would think of when they want to look at similar items.

Example: Twilight keywords might be Vampires; Paranormal Romance; Werewolves; Teen Romance
Reading/Interest Level
Many times books can relate to multiple audiences. When filling out the form, please select all the audiences that would enjoy the book.

Toddler. Ages 1-3  
Preschool. Ages 3-5  
Primary. Ages 6-10  
Intermediate. Ages 10-12  
Young Adult. Ages 13+

Ratings
Select the rating you would give the book. It should be clear from your review why you gave the book the rating.

Outstanding. Exceptional quality or merit. Book deserves special recognition.
Excellent. Book will add strength to a library and should find wide acceptance among readers.
Dependable. A reliable but not outstanding work. Recommended for libraries that need additional books in a specific genre or subject.
Significant Shortcomings. Limited appeal. Book will have appeal for some readers/audiences despite significant shortcomings.
Cannot Recommend. Book includes poor literary content, inaccurate information, presentation of a topic and content not appropriate for intended audience.

Sensitive Material
In this box, please make a note of anything in the book that might be offensive or off-putting to some readers. This section applies mostly to Young Adult novels. If there is language, violence, sexual content, substance abuse, etc. please note the severity of it in this box. What you write in this box will not be included in the review. We will add a notice to the bottom of the page based on what is written. We have included some guidelines to help you determine what we consider severe. If you are not sure how to classify content, describe the situation in the box and we will take care of the rest.

Language
Mild: A few swear words, but no vulgar swear words.
Moderate: Uses multiple swear words and/or 1 vulgar word once.
Severe: Uses multiple vulgar, swear words.
Sexual Content

**Mild:** Sexual and/or homosexual relationships implied but not discussed. (i.e. sexual/homosexual relationships are not plot points, etc.).

**Moderate:** Sexual/homosexual relationships are discussed. (i.e. fade to black sex scenes, homosexual relationships are a plot point, etc.)

**Severe:** Sexual/homosexual relationships are described. (i.e. explicit sex scenes)

Violence

**Mild:** Fights, battles, wars, etc. occur but are not described in detail.

**Moderate:** Fights, battles, wars, etc. and the injuries, feelings, emotions from those events are described in detail.

**Severe:** Graphic descriptions of fights, battles, wars, injuries and feelings are given.

Please note that as a reviewer, there may be times when you have received an assignment or request a book that has content in it that you are not comfortable with. Unfortunately, this is part of being a reviewer. If you do get a book that has content you dislike, you still need to review it and do your best to be fair about the quality of the book overall. Try to figure out if the sensitive material has a purpose in the book and look at the overall message the book is trying to convey. If you need to, you can skim the book enough to still be able to review it fairly. If there is content that you are sensitive about, be sure to carefully look into books before you request them. If you would rather not have to deal with the possibility of sensitive content, we recommend that you don’t request YA books.

Thank You!

Thank you for your willingness to help children find new worlds to discover in books, plays, movies, TV shows, and apps. If you have any questions, please email us at cbmr@byu.edu.