



BOOK REVIEW GUIDELINES:

Read the book, taking notes. Look for the following points: (1) The author's purpose and viewpoint; (2) the author's main points; (3) the evidence or reasoning the author offers to support their main points; (4) the book's place in its field (what it adds, who its audience is). Note these points as you read.

Structure of the Book Review

Book Title at the top, according to this form:

Author. *Title*. Place of publication: Publisher, date of publication. Number of pages.

Example: Cone, James H. *Black Theology and Black Power*. Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 2019. 208 pages. (Check your own book for correct publisher and year, as they may be different.)

Summary

The summary explains the content in your own words, covering the **author's viewpoint** (what they think about the issue addressed), the **author's purpose** (why they wrote the book – to address a problem or challenge, to correct an error in this area, etc.), the **author's thesis or main argument** (this part may include the author's solution or proposal for the challenge, problem, or error stated), and the **author's support** for the thesis (the support may include evidence or reasoning or other analysis – religious, spiritual, cultural, historical, etc.). You do not need to have headings for those elements, however.

Clues to writing the summary: The summary should be your brief and precise explanation of the book's content, not a string of quotations from the book (although you may quote a few key points). You may find the purpose and main thesis in the introduction and/or first chapter, but you should review the entire book. **Focus on the content here, not on your response.** You can respond in the evaluation section.

Evaluation/Appraisal

The evaluation appraises the content in your own words. Describe how the author stated their case, and how effective they were. Was the book well written? Did the author fulfill the purpose set forth? Is the thesis/main argument well developed? Did the evidence/support convince you of the main argument? From a larger perspective, has the author made a good contribution to the field? In the case of religious/spiritual writing, can the book change and/or help a specific religious community or spiritual lives in general? Depending on the assignment, you can include your personal response– for your life, and/or the life of the relevant community.



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Clues to writing the evaluation: Be precise and fair, using the book to explain your opinion.

Conclusion: A conclusion briefly repeats your main points and your general evaluation of the book. The conclusion is clear and strong, so the reader knows exactly what you think.