

# How to Write a Book Review



Book reviews have a really important job to do. They allow you, the reader, to share your thoughts with others after reading a novel. They can start a discussion and help others to make informed choices about which books to read- or not!

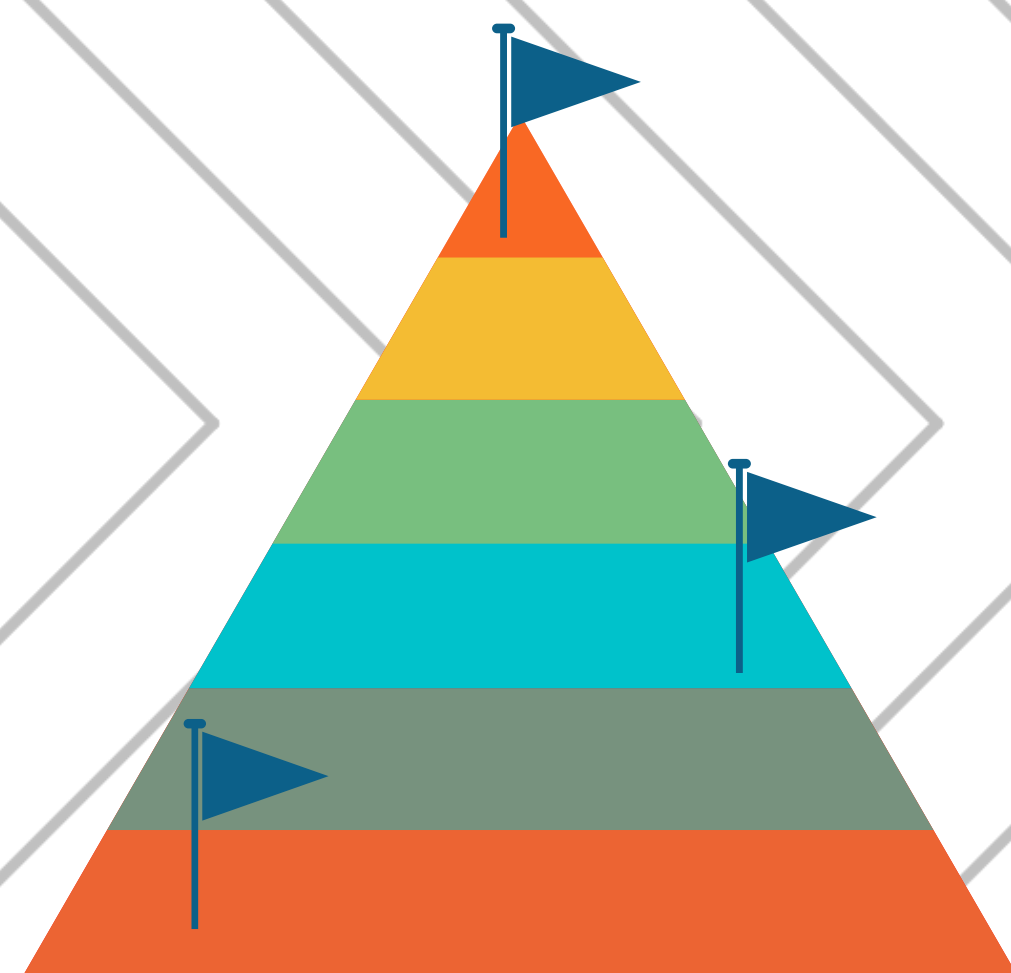
Thinking about writing one is a lot easier than actually doing it! Just like a story, it kind of has to get the reader's attention and keep it. Read the following advice and it should be of some help.

One more thing – this is only advice! Everyone has their own unique writing 'style', and it's important this comes across! There is no strictly right or wrong way to write a review.

## 1. Describe THE PLOT

Firstly. The readers will be keen to know a little bit about what's going on and what happens **HOWEVER** careful balance is needed here – **NOBODY WANTS FULL ON SPOILERS!**

You have to share enough to get them to choose the book but without revealing too much. Don't just write a descriptive essay of what is in the book. Give a brief outline of the plot and any important bits you think need mentioning. You're summarizing not re-telling the story!



## 2. CHARACTERS

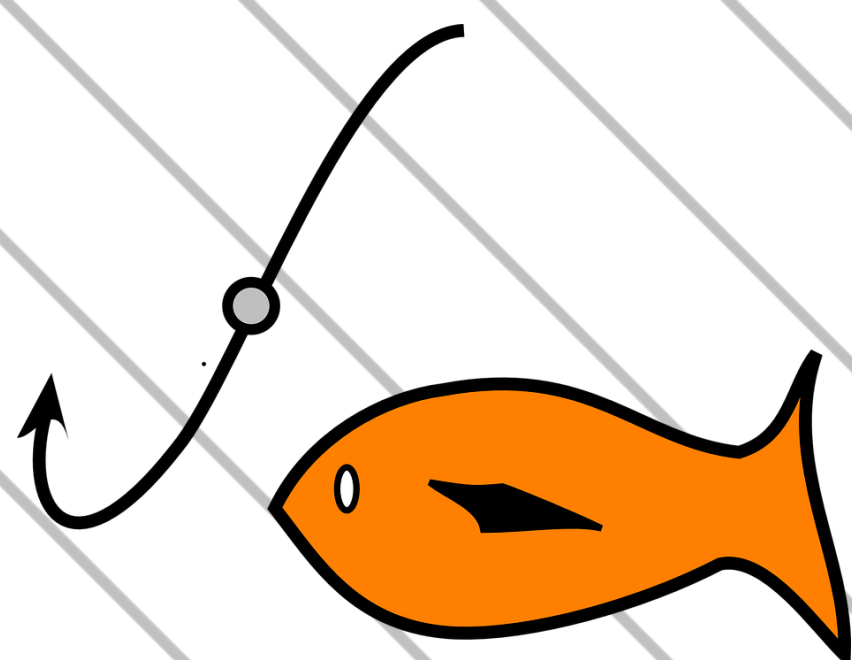
Are there any main characters worth mentioning?  
What are their personalities like?  
Do they have strengths and weaknesses?  
How do they interact with each other?  
Does their relationship change?  
Has the author developed them enough?  
Who's your favourite and why?  
If there's a baddy – mention it.

### 3. More about SPOILERS!

Sorry to go on about this but it's important!

Books can have really dramatic or emotional bits. You can have a shocking 'twist' in the story, a big revelation or even a death!

Don't spoil this for the reader. You can give clues of course, but nothing that will ruin the story.



### 4. Get them HOOKED

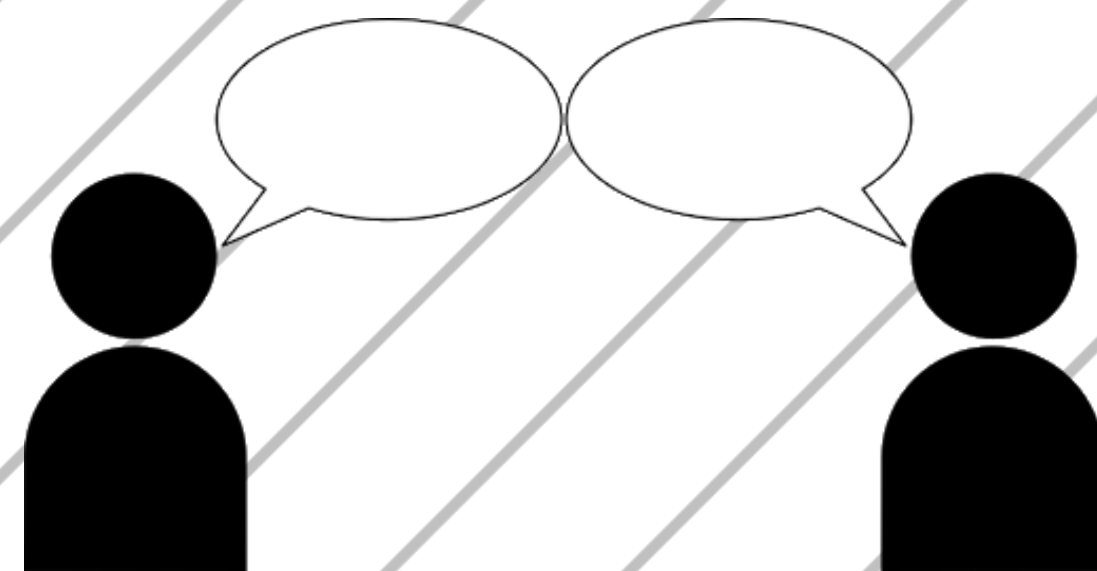
Just like an author tries with a book, you need to get them gripped from the start.

A catchy start or short sentence for impact? What made you pick up the book?

### 5. Give your OPINION

This is your chance to have your say. Sometimes we forget this.

Do this by discussing different aspects of the book. You need to say why you liked it or disliked it and why someone should read it (or not of course).



### 6. Use your VOICE

People actually enjoy reading reviews because of the style of the person who wrote it. They like to know what you think.

It's possible your style will be a bit 'stiff' to begin with but the more you write, you'll develop your own style.

Bringing a bit of humour in is a good way to bring across your personality.

## 7. Give a VERDICT

These help the reader to get a simple and visual idea of what you thought of it.

The easiest is stars out of five. You could even use half stars or rate it out of ten.



## 8. Read OTHER PEOPLE'S reviews.

A good way to learn is see how others do it. There are plenty of reviews online – and not just about books! You can get them about cars, food, phones.... Literally anything!

## 9. Maintain BALANCE

The point of our website is to promote Welsh books and get more people into shops and libraries. We love books that encourage people to do this, but we realise that some books are just better than others!

You need to be honest, but try and be balanced and fair. If you say something critical first, how about balancing that out with something positive? Make sure you explain yourself fully and say WHY you think something.

Being critical is a good skill and it certainly starts a debate. Not everyone agrees on everything – that's what makes it interesting!





## 10. Who's the AUDIENCE?

Every book isn't suitable for all audiences. There's a huge difference in children's books in terms of content and reading difficulty level. A book for an 11-year-old will be totally different than a 7-year-old's book.

Be clear who the book would be best suited for and explain why. Are there difficult words? Is there swearing? Dark or scary themes? Best for boys or girls or both?

## 11. Check your SPELLING!

We'll be doing this too before it goes on the website but please, take a few minutes to check over your own writing before sending – at least to make sure if it makes sense. You may have forgotten an important bit.



Finally, ENJOY reading your books and writing your reviews and THANKS for taking the time to contribute to the site.

