

Writing a Book Review for Publication: A concise format to follow in writing a book review of an ESL textbook ¹

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Begin with this information:

Title and subtitle

Author

Publisher

Year of publication

Number of pages

Reviewed by (= your name, your professional affiliation)

Paragraph 1: Summarize the level, purpose, and audience for the book. For example, “This intermediate level reading textbook is intended for a high school audience.” State the ways in which the author or authors believe it is unique, e. g. “The text uses a storyline with themes common to the experience of today’s secondary school students to connect the lessons and keep the students interested...” Add commentary about the elements that make the book special for the audience. For example, “The many clear and focused reading exercises not only lead the students to better understanding of the storyline, but the variety of exercises also help the students develop...”

Paragraph 2: State what you see as particular strengths in the textbook. For instance, “(*Title*) fills a need for a developmental reading skills text in the multicultural classroom for the following reasons:...” Add any weaknesses or problems that you see (if any) and how the weaknesses might be dealt with, e. g. “The high school audience, of course, is likely to want to read the whole story without doing the exercises because of the high interest level of the story, However,...”

Paragraph 3: Apply the text to your own experience with books, comparing it to other texts or expectations for kinds of textbooks, e. g. “Unlike the traditional intermediate textbook, ...”

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Paragraph 4: Give your own opinion of the book, whether you think you would enjoy using it in your classroom; whether you think the students would find it useful, engaging, motivating, etc.; and whether you recommend the textbook to other teachers. Add any other commentary that seems appropriate to you at this point. You don't always have to give a positive review. State your honest, personal opinions.