

ARTICLE REVIEWS AND ANNOTATED BIBLIOGRAPHIES

NOTE: For those writing a literature review, see the separate SLC brochure entitled 'Writing a Literature Review'. Article reviews are reviews of a particular article, whereas literature reviews examine a range of readings on a particular theme.

The purpose of an **article review** is twofold:

- ◆ to let others know of the existence of an article; and
- ◆ to provide a relatively short summary and critique of an article to allow others to judge whether to read it in full or not.

ARTICLE REVIEWS ARE SIMILAR TO MOVIE REVIEWS:

It is useful to think about the information you want to know about a movie that you are considering seeing. Most people want to know something about what to expect:

- ◆ is it an action movie, a thriller or some other genre?
- ◆ which actors are in it and what is it about?
- ◆ was it well made?
- ◆ what have other people who have seen it felt about it?

If it has had good reviews, you will probably wish to see it. If others have said it wasn't worth seeing, you might ask why, and then decide yourself whether to see it. Just as a movie review reports on a movie for a potential audience, an article review reports to others the value of an article. You must provide enough information to help the potential reader get a clear idea of an article's worth. It may be useful to have a look at some article or book reviews in journals in your field before you start writing.

Article reviews are composed of two main components, a summary and a critique. You must first tell your audience details of the article and what it covers (i.e. provide a summary) before critiquing it.

THE SUMMARY

In the first few lines:

- ◆ Provide enough information about the article to enable readers to find it. Make sure that you include the author, title and when and where the article was published.
- ◆ Mention the author's credentials or expertise in the field. This helps to establish credibility.
- ◆ State what the author was trying to achieve in the article. Was the purpose to inform, persuade, compare two views, argue a point, publicise a piece of research or something else? Here, it is useful to consider the publication that the article appeared in and the readership of that publication.
- ◆ Provide an objective overview of the topic and the main points the article covers, in the order that the author made them.
- ◆ Keep the summary to no more than half of the total length of your review.

THE CRITIQUE

The critique is where you can give your view of the text, considering some or all of the following factors:

- ◆ What was the purpose of the article and where was it published?
- ◆ Did the author achieve his/her aim?
- ◆ Was it written in an appropriate style?
- ◆ Is it clearly organised and easy to understand?
- ◆ Have views or claims been supported with evidence?
- ◆ Does the reasoning seem logical?
- ◆ In a research article, does the sample size and methodology seem appropriate? Are the findings justified? Have all factors been taken into account in the research design?
- ◆ Has the topic been dealt with in sufficient depth?
- ◆ How does the text contribute to the body of work in the field?

Finally, make your position on the article's merit clear to the potential reader.

e.g. 'This article provides a useful background to...' or 'In this article, the author adds a new perspective to the debate on...'

ANNOTATED BIBLIOGRAPHIES

An annotated bibliography is a list of books, articles, and other reference materials, providing author, date and other referencing information (the bibliographic details), plus a short review of each item. An annotated bibliography is generally set out in alphabetical order by authors' surnames.

Following is an example of a brief annotated bibliography entry:

Crotty, M 1998, *The foundations of social research*, Allen & Unwin Pty Ltd, St Leonards.

This book provides new and experienced social researchers with a means to make sense of the major epistemological stances and theoretical perspectives that shape social research, covering positivism, constructionism, interpretivism, critical inquiry, feminism and postmodernism. It is essential reading for beginning researchers.

REFERENCES

Student Learning Centre brochure 'Writing a literature review'.

Hay, I, Bochner, D & Bungey, C 2002, *Making the grade*, 2nd edition, Oxford University Press, Melbourne.

YOUR NOTES:

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