

# HOW TO READ A BOOK

## SCRIPT DRAFT 1

Intro: "Hello, and welcome to my new channel. My name is Jennifer and I am an avid book blogger and avid reader. I have been reviewing and blogging about books for a year now and I want to start getting more critical with my reviews. Right now, I write very short and vague reviews and I want to dive deeper into these books and review them from a critical perspective. So, to change that, I've done some research on how to get started."

\*Hold up HOW TO READ A BOOK: A CLASSIC GUIDE TO INTELLIGENT READING by Adler & Doren

How to read a book introduction: "This book right here is the best resource that I came across. It was originally published in the 40s, but the information is still relevant today. It discusses the stages of reading, approaches of reading different types of books, and the ultimate goal of reading."

\*Puts down book\*

Stages of reading breakdown: "So, how do you read a book? First let's start with the different stages of reading. According to the authors, there are four stages of reading. First there is elementary reading. This is what you learn in school. The second is inspectorial reading. This is skimming and superficial reading. There is also Syntopical reading or reading material on a certain subject and comparing them. Lastly, there is Analytical reading and that's the one we're gonna focus on today."

Analytical reading: "Okay, there are multiple steps to analytical reading. The authors have 15 steps to reading analytically, but I'm going to combine a couple to make this easier for you and for me as well. I'm going to break it into three parts 1) About the book 2) Interpreting a book's contents 3) rules of criticism"

"First, classify the book and vaguely discuss what it is about. This doesn't have to be long, just a few sentences. Next, you want to address the major parts of the book in their order and relation. This is the opportunity to define the problem or problems that the author has tried to address."

"So now that we have tackled what the book is about, let's dive into what the author is trying to say. This stage focuses on the intentions, arguments, and problems that the author is trying to bring to light. First, grasp the author's intentions by finding lines and quotes within the text. While your reading keeps some sticky notes, tabs, or a highlighter handy to make note of these passages. This also gives you the tools to highlight the author's arguments as well. Lastly, you want to determine the problems and if they were solved."

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“Lastly, there are the rules of criticism. There is a line that really stood out to me that I want to share with you. ‘Do not say you agree, disagree, or suspend judgement, until you can say, ‘I understand’. I also feel like that statement goes beyond books as well. The next point is to not disagree with a book just to be controversial and argumentative. Don’t go into a book with a mindset just to tear it apart. It is also important to note the difference between personal opinion and fact. The book states it perfectly. ‘Demonstrate that you recognize the difference between knowledge and mere personal opinion by presenting good reasons for any critical judgement you make.’ This shows that if you’re going to call an author out, make use you have something to back it up.”

“The book then points out that it’s on the reader to show where the author is uninformed, misinformed, illogical, or an incomplete analysis. This part was more toward non-fiction, but can still be applied to novels as well.”

Outro: “Okay so that’s it for today’s video! If you want to know more about reading critically or how to look at reading from a different perspective, I highly suggest checking out \*holds up book\* How To Read A Book. In the upcoming days I am going to be posting more videos about how to read books from a critical perspective. If you want to know more, click the like a subscribe button. Hope you have a great day and happy reading everyone.”

# CRITICS

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Intro: “Hello everyone and welcome to my channel. My name is Jennifer and I am an avid book blogger and avid reader. I have been reviewing and blogging about books for a year now and I want to start getting more critical with my reviews. This is a series that will focus on reading and looking at books from a deeper and more critical perspective. I am nowhere near a professional at this, and this series will highlight some of the things that I've learned over the past couple of weeks. Today's topic is Critics. Specifically why criticism is important, criticism of critics, and who to watch. I am quickly going to highlight four literary critics to watch as well as an online resource as well. So let's get to it.”

Why criticism is important: “So during my research process I found articles from Time, The Atlantic, The New York Times, indie blogs, and books all focusing on the positives and negatives of professional critical reviews. I'm going to link to all of them in the description below. Some of them range from how The NYT avoids conflict of interest, the decline of book reviewing, or how reviews don't even matter anymore, but they do matter. I found a NYT article that begins to talk about why criticism matters and links to other articles talking about the subject as well. But from a personal standpoint, reviews do matter. They might not matter for the NYT's bestseller, but for indie and local authors they absolutely matter.”

“Now, here are some of the top literary critics. The first names to come up were Michiko Kakutani and Parul Sahgal. Both worked and are currently working at the NYT. There are also James Woods and Harold Bloom. Pretty much any top editor of these online review magazines are going to have some great criticism to look out for. There are also some classic authors that you might recognize, like T.S. Eliot or Virginia Woolf.”

“Now, it's time to share my new favorite book site and it's called BookMarks.reviews. Bookmarks takes professional reviews from a bunch of different sources like the NYTs, The New Yorker, EW, Library Journal, TIME, USA Today, The Boston Globe, Kirkus, and puts them all in one place. I could spend hours on this website, and it is perfect for seeing examples of professional critical reviews. They show a diverse group of the biggest new books, articles, latest reviews, best reviewed, fiction, non-fiction, and coming soon. It's awesome.”

“So, it takes these reviews and categories them into rave, positive, mixed, and pan. There are no stars like Goodreads or Amazon, it's like that. To see a quick view of the ratings you either hover your mouse over a cover or place your finger on the cover on a mobile device. You can then click or tap the cover to see all the views. It's a really cool site and I highly recommend checking it out.”

“And that's it for today's episode. Thank you for watching. If you want to see more videos about literary criticism and looking at books from a deeper perspective, don't forget to subscribe. Have a great day and happy reading everyone.”

# HOW TO WRITE A REVIEW

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Intro: "Hello everyone and welcome to my channel. My name is Jennifer and I am an avid book blogger and avid reader. I have been reviewing and blogging about books for a year now and I want to start getting more critical with my reviews. This is a series that will focus on reading and looking at books from a deeper and more critical perspective. I am nowhere near a professional at this, and this series will highlight some of the things that I've learned over the past couple of weeks. Today's topic is how to write a critical review. This has the set up of an outline or template for how to write a review. It is based on my research that I have conducted over the past couple of weeks and it will always be a work in process. I also will be going over a couple of tips and tricks while reading to prep for the review."

"Before I get started, I wanted to point out that most of my inspiration for this list came from How To Read A Book and looking at professional reviews on BookMarks.reviews."

"So, this outline reminds me of the 5 paragraph essay system from high school but first were going to start with the introduction with classifying the book and defining what the book is about. This obviously gives the reader an idea of what type of book you are talking about."

"Next, the meat of the review will be stating the major parts/ or problems that the book is addressing. Within each problem or part you'll want to address the authors interpretations and give examples. And then, if there are problems, were they solved? And address those issues. Now, if you see an issue with this problem/part, then you'll want to address it after you talk about if it was solved. But something that I never thought of, How To Read A Book brought to my attention that we should understand the perspective of the author before we criticize their work. I thought that was very important because authors put so much time and effort into these book that its only fair to try and see it from their perspective. It is also important to note when the author is projecting their personal opinion and stating facts. That would be the time to point out of the author is uninformed, misinformed, illogical, or incomplete with their analysis. After you do that, then you're going to do the same thing for each important point or problem the author addresses."

"Lastly, you'll want to wrap up your final thoughts and add who you would recommend the book to or offer other books like it."

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"Before you go I also wanted to add some tips with you're reading to make your life easier when you go to write the review. I've learned this through my own personal experiences, plus resources that I have found on the Internet. 1) definitely takes notes while reading and annotate and highlight within the pages if you are comfortable with that. If you don't feel comfortable writing in your books or if they are library books, you can always use sticky notes to mark the pages as well. My biggest recommendation, and it took me a full year of review books to realize this, but when something big happens, stop and start writing down your thoughts. Because something you thought at the beginning might completely change by the end and it is really cool to see the progression by the end. Plus, you can add these insights into your review as well.

"And that's it for today's episode. Thank you for watching. If you want to see more videos about literary criticism and looking at books from a deeper perspective, don't forget to subscribe. Have a great day and happy reading everyone."

# REVIEW EXAMPLE

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The Amazing Adventures of Waldo is a unique book perfect for any YA lover. Our main character, Waldo, tells his story of his junior year in high school, as he and his friends get revenge on the school bullies. Waldo quickly goes from nerd to king of the school as he stands up to the nastiest kids in South Hill.

We see Waldo open up, meet new people, and get out of his comfort zone. But something that stayed the same throughout the book is his love for comic books. Actually, we see Waldo start to write his own comic book. He frequently uses his personal experiences as inspiration, but with a fantasy twist. Instead of a high school, it's a tall, evil Tower. And instead of bullies, it's menacing robots called Machines. It was refreshing to see the events play out from a new perspective. These parts never seemed redundant or unnecessary. In fact, they were critical to witness because even though we were reading from the first-person narrative, they gave us an even more in-depth look into how Waldo was thinking and feeling. This comic book fantasy is his escape from reality, where he can safely assess what is going on. "I drift into my fantasy world, and reality disappears from around me." Overall, the mirroring of events is the perfect irony to what was really happening in his life. Even though he pictured himself and a powerful Extraordinary in his comic book, he was actually extraordinary for standing up for his fellow classmates.

Another major part of The Amazing Adventures of Waldo is the theme of friendship. At the beginning of the story, Waldo doesn't have many friends until he unexpectedly meets May and Josh, our other two main characters. Upon their first meeting, May and Josh ask Waldo about his previous friendships at other schools. The trio immediately becomes closer after May declares, "we are your friends now. We are your first friends, which automatically makes us your best friends." Then, later in the story, we meet Madison, Edward, Darwin, Thomas, who also become good friends with Waldo. As Waldo maintains more friendships, we see him grow and gain more confidence. Without the help and support of his friends, Waldo would not have found the courage to stand up to the school bullies.

The last significant symbol in the book is first love. We see Waldo crush on a few different girls during the story, but as he grows and develops as a young man, he finds himself falling for one beautiful young lady. In the end, with the big reveal, Waldo finally expresses how he feels. He thanks her for the support, love, and for "seeing him when no one else did." This moment completed his character development and his maturity. Instead of crushing on the popular mean girl, he fell for the one that mattered most to him.

The Amazing Adventures of Waldo is 244 pages of a wonderful journey of a shy, nerdy main character breaking out of his comfort zone, makes new friends, and find the love of his young life. I highly recommend this book to any YA fiction lover, but especially to those that love high school dramas, comic books, and revenge of the nerds. I can't think of any other YA books like it, so you'll have to try it for yourself.