

Guidelines for Writing a Review

These guidelines will help reviewers prepare a well-written review and will make the editorial process efficient. Anyone interested in writing a review may contact the review editor at nicole.bernshaw@comcast.net. Indicating personal interests and expertise will help in assigning appropriate material for review. Readers are also encouraged to notify the review editor to suggest titles for potential review.

When you receive a review assignment, please read these guidelines carefully and refer to them as you write the review. Reviewers will receive a copy of the material to review along with a deadline, which is usually about 1 to 2 months after the assignment. If you are unable to meet that deadline, please inform the editor immediately. Reviewers may keep the books, software, and videotapes they review, with our thanks.

For the sake of impartiality, and to avoid any conflicts of interest, reviewers may have no contact with the authors or editors of the material, nor should they have contributed (advisory, financial, research, review, etc) to the work. If this applies to you, please inform the editor and decline to review the work.

Purpose of the review

The main purpose of the book or multimedia product review is to inform the reader of the merits of the item. Read the entire book or view the entire multimedia product. If you wish to make notes during this time, you may use the *Note-taking Suggestions* provided at the end of these guidelines. By the end of the review, the reader should know whether the product is worth reading or viewing. The review should discuss the content; analyze the content, format, argument and context; and express the reviewers' reaction to the product. You may find it useful to read through other reviews before you begin writing.

Writing the review

Reviews should be fair and balanced, while still offering a clear opinion. Please be objective, succinct and precise, adding your personal touch and creativity to make your review interesting for the reader. A *Chart of Descriptors* is provided with terms and comments that may help you in writing your review. Use your judgment in deciding which of the elements are relevant to a particular book or product. End the review with an overall summary and recommendation. Your observations will lead the reader to decide if the product is worth purchasing.

Maximum length for reviews is 350 words for a full-length review and 150 words for Briefly Noted. This does not include the heading information (see next column). If you are using a word processor, the Word Count feature will help you to remain within the word limit. Reviews that exceed the word limit will be shortened during the editorial process. Multi-authored or lengthy materials may require greater length, in which case the review editor will assign a specific limit.

Please spell out numbers from one to ten and use numerals for numbers 11 or greater. Punctuation is included “inside the quotation marks.”

Heading

Identify the material as shown in the example below. Provide all elements that can help the reader to obtain the book, including the publisher’s address, telephone, toll free (800) and/or fax numbers, and e-mail address/URL if available. You can refer to publicity material, the outside of the material, or packaging for this information.

- **Example of a header for a book review:**

The Breastfeeding Atlas

Barbara Wilson-Clay and Kay Hoover

LactNews Press, 1999

72 pages; illustrated; (US)\$39.00; softcover

Orders: Barbara Wilson-Clay, 12710 Burson Drive, Manchaca, TX 78652 USA

Tel: 512.292.7227; Fax: 512.292.7228

E-mail: bwc@jumpnet.net

URL: www.lactnews.com

- **Example of a header for a video review:**

A Guide to Skin-to-Skin

Mark-It TV; 2004

VHS, 7 minutes, £56.40 + VAT

Orders: Mark-It Television, 7 Quarry Way, Stapleton, Bristol BS 16 1UP, UK

Tel: +44 117 939 1117 ; Fax: +44 117 939 1118

E-mail: sales@markittelevision.com

URL: <http://www.markittelevision.co.uk/>

- **Example of a header for a website review:**

International Baby Food Action Network (IBFAN), Malaysia

URL: www.ibfan.org/

Language: English

Content

- Begin with one or more general statements about the purpose or theme of the material, and your overall impression. Indicate the audience to whom the book will appeal. For example, if a book is about encouraging teenage mothers to breastfeed, is it directed to the young mothers or to their counselors? This section should be straightforward, brief and introductory.

- Summarize the contents and significant points of the work, including the points the author emphasizes. Do not feel obliged to summarize the contents of each chapter or section of the book, or to give each part equal emphasis in your review.

Evaluation

- Present your critical evaluation, commenting on format, writing style, reading style, thoroughness, factual accuracy, understandability, persuasiveness, overall quality of writing, and the purpose/message of the book.
- Comment on supplemental features. If illustrations are used, evaluate their contribution to the text. Do they support, detract, contradict, enrich? Are the references adequate and up to date?
- You may wish to comment on the author's background (often found in the preface, foreword, or introduction), noting authorship of previous relevant works if these factors strongly contribute to the material's quality or suggest the author's authority or bias. Keep in mind that you are commenting on the author's work, and not on the author as a person.
- Discuss both commendable and noteworthy aspects of the resource as well as its shortcomings. Criticisms and negative comments should be tactful. Identify specific items that were objectionable or deficient. Suggest how these affected the material's overall quality and what could improve the material.
- Indicate whether all or part of the material is pertinent for lactation consultants. Reviews are designed to help readers determine whether to purchase the product. Therefore, reviews may include negative as well as positive statements about the book. If the book is not worth buying, you may say so as well as why you feel this way.

Reviewer identification

- For publication, list your full name with a maximum of two identifying credentials after your name. List your city, state/province (spelled out), and country. Provide your e-mail address.
- For editorial purposes, provide your e-mail address, phone and fax number(s) and the time of day/ weekend you can be reached. These will not appear in the published review.

Submitting the review

Format

In order of preference, reviewers may send submissions by e-mail (placed in the body of the message), on 3-inch computer diskette accompanied with a hard copy, or typed on an 8 1/2" x 11" paper, double-spaced (to allow for editorial changes on paper). Be sure to

retain a copy of the review for your files. Reviewers are responsible for the accuracy of statements included.

Editing

Editors will review the submission and edit for grammar, style, and length. If substantial revisions occur, the submission will be sent to the reviewer for comment. Reviews that do not adequately address the contents and educational value of the assigned material will be returned to the reviewer, with suggestions for revising the review prior to resubmission.

Confidentiality

The content of your review is confidential until the review is published. If anyone asks to see what you have written, or asks for your opinion about reviewed materials, please refer that person to the editor. Reviewers may not share the content of their reviews with anyone other than the review editor until publication.

For additional information contact the editor Nicole Bernshaw at nicole.bernshaw@comcast.net

Note-Taking Suggestions

Author(s)	
Background, academic achievements	
Style of writing or filming	
Viewpoint taken	
Sources used	
Format	
Special features (index, illustrations, graphs, etc.)	
Introduction	
Chapters/sections	
Content	
Goal of the material Did it fulfill its stated purpose?	
What are the main points?	
Is the material unique? Does it add new information?	
Would any quotes help to illustrate a point?	
Who would find the material useful?	

Descriptors for Writing a Review

Style		
Clarity	Clear, lucid, simple, easy-to-read, understandable,	Confusing, obscure, laden with jargon
Concise	Brief, succinct	Lengthy, redundant, repetitive, wordy, overlapping
Consistent	Uniform, integrated	Highly variable
Interesting	Enjoyable, fascinating, pleasurable, exciting, engaging, refreshing, stimulating	
Readability	Well written, good style	
Organization	Contents organized, organized in outline fashion, collection of cases, divided into sections and subsections, scenarios	
Contents		
Topics	Comprehensive, complete, thorough, detailed, extensive, in-depth	Incomplete, major omissions, sketchy, superficial
Accuracy	Scholarly, authoritative, up-to-date, recent, new, state-of-the-art	Simplistic, in error
Balance	Space allocated in proportion to topic's importance, shows both sides of controversial issues	Dwells on esoteric at the expense of common, assumes a dogmatic position, emphasizes basic science at the expense of clinical applications
Purpose	Aim, objective, goal, design, intent, geared toward, meant to be used, , gives the tools to,	
Utility	Useful, practical, pragmatic, helpful, relevant, helps with common or day-to-day problems, straightforward, common-sense tips	
Specifics	Single out chapters or sections that are especially strong, weak, or otherwise noteworthy, highlights	
Comparisons	Compare with competing books or prior editions, unique, best in its field, incorporates hard-to-come-by information	
Ancillary	Tables, illustrations, appendices, glossaries, bibliography, table of contents, index, other supplementary material	Are the illustrations appropriate and well executed? What's missing from the book? Would it benefit from illustrations, a better index, a final chapter on practical applications
Audience	Who should read it, as reference, in personal library	
Author	Background, expertise, affiliation	
Physical attributes	Size, binding, layout, attractiveness, readability of type, errors in grammar and spelling	
Cost	Worth the price	Expensive