



## Other types of writing

# Book reviews

First year university students are sometimes given a book review assignment due not long after session starts. The rationale for this is often as follows:

- a book review in this context is a relatively small task, so you receive practice writing at university before you hand in a major piece of written work
- lecturers can detect any stylistic problems and provide feedback which should be taken into account before you embark on a longer assignment
- you can become familiar with the library resources gradually without having the pressure of a major assignment
- book reviews require you to distill the argument or issues dealt with in the book, in other words, writing book reviews helps you to improve your skills of critical analysis.

When writing your review you should include full bibliographic details of the book you are reviewing. That is, include author, title, and publication details, then give a brief overview of the book's contents and arguments. Your lecturer also wants you to discuss and evaluate the book's arguments, and to provide evidence in the form of examples to support your claims. Finally, you should conclude by evaluating the book on the whole, its strengths and weaknesses, and its contribution to your understanding of the area of study.