

Prompts for Book Reviews About Fiction

- ✓ **Was the book a page-turner? Why or why not?**
Show how the action or what happened, the character's problems and conflicts, or natural events kept the pace of the book exciting and made you want to continue to read.
- ✓ **Was it hard to concentrate on the story? Was it boring? Explain why.**
Discuss how the story contained very little action – nothing much happens in each chapter. Perhaps the plot didn't make sense – events weren't connected or events were presented that did not have much to do with the character's problems. Did too many depressing things occur?
- ✓ **Did you connect to one character or an event or conflict? Explain why.**
How was a character like you? Do you have the same feelings? Reactions? Worries? Problems? Hopes? Dreams? Have you lived through similar events? Did you react to the event the way the character in the book did? Explain.
- ✓ **What about this book or story made you enjoy or dislike the genre?**
Think about what you expect from a specific genre? Did the book meet your expectations? Show how. For example, were the clues misleading enough so that the mystery held your interest until the end, when you finally discovered the murderer?
- ✓ **Were there surprises in the story that held your interest? Explain one.**
Did the plot contain unexpected twists that you enjoyed? Did a character solve his problem in a different way from what you expected?
- ✓ **Did the chapters end with cliffhangers?**
Did each chapter leave you wanting to find out immediately what would happen next? Give one example and explain why as a reader you like or dislike this structure.
- ✓ **Was the plot believable or unbelievable?**
In all fictional genres, from realistic fiction to science fiction, the plot has to be believable enough for readers to connect to what happens. Give two examples that show the plot was believable or two that show it was far from reality.
- ✓ **What new understandings about life, people or historical period did you develop?**
Think about what the author was trying to tell you about how people behave and react, about parents, siblings, friends, teachers, or relatives. Did you learn what life for children, adults, rich, poor, soldiers, was like during a specific historical period?
- ✓ **Did you enjoy the fantasy and magic?**
Can you describe an example of fantasy or magic that made the book exciting or a page-turner? Did the fantasy elements have some reality? Can you give an example of this?

Prompts for Book Reviews About Nonfiction

- ✓ **Did you enjoy special nonfiction features?**
Discuss information learned from sidebars and captions, unusual photographs, or excerpts from diaries, letters, and newspaper articles.

- ✓ **Was the writing interesting or boring? Was it tough for you to concentrate on the reading?**
Did the author include stories that held your interest? Or was the book a list of fact after fact? Can you select a story and explain how it kept your interest or helped you understand a concept?

- ✓ **What new understandings about history or the topic did you develop?**
Discuss whether the book enlarged your knowledge of a topic such as the Everglades, drugs, the Industrial revolution, or the Civil Rights movement. Did the author change the way you viewed an historical event or a science topic such as animal communication?

- ✓ **With biography or autobiography, how did you connect to and react to the life experiences of this person? What did you find fascinating about their life and achievements?**
Explain what this person did that changed the course of history or others' lives. Are there characteristics of this person you admire? Explain why. What decisions changed this person's life? How did other people affect her life?

- ✓ **Were the photographs or illustrations effective?**
Explain why these intrigued you. Did you learn information from them? Did you see things such as distant planets that you never saw before?

Tuck Everlasting Natalie Babbitt

"That water - it stops you right where you are. If you'd had a drink of it today, you'd stay a little girl forever. You'd never grow up, not ever." If you could live forever, would you?

Tuck Everlasting by Natalie Babbitt is a fantasy story that continually forces you to think "What if?" Eleven year old Winnie Foster wants to run away from home because she does not feel appreciated by her family. But, when she meets the mysterious and ageless Tuck Family, she is faced with a life changing decision. So, will she drink from the spring and remain the same age forever? You'll need to read the book to find out!

There are many strengths to Babbitt's fantasy story. First of all, it is a great thinker book. As a reader, you are continually asking yourself, what would I do? Would I want to stay the same age forever? Should all people who commit a crime be punished? These are some of the numerous questions you will think about while reading this story. Also, this book is the gold medal winner at using great word choice. Babbitt uses describing words such as "touch me not cottage" and "great potato of a woman". She strings metaphors, similes, and personification throughout her book. As a reader, you will have a movie rolling in your head. Some weaknesses of the book include that the vocab is kind of challenging. The author uses words like "bovine", "indomitable", and "acrid". If you like a challenge, great! Your vocabulary will grow! Also, the beginning of the story is kind of slow. If you can be patient, the book does get better -- you just have to give it time. Another downside to the book is that there are large passages of descriptions. It may make you lose interest in the story because of the length.

This book is definitely a THUMBS UP! It's a great read because you will totally get caught up the story and the decisions that Winnie has to make. You will find yourself putting yourself in Winnie's place and questioning what you would do in her situation. Finally, the ending of the story is gut wrenching! You will be shocked, touched, and moved. You'll definitely be looking for the Kleenex box.

BOOK REVIEW GUIDELINES

Heading

- Center title of book, skip a line, write author's name

Paragraph One (Introduction)

Write a lead sentence that includes one or two of these elements

- Short quote from the book
- A statement that gives the book a thumbs up or thumbs down
- A brief description of a character
- A brief description of a great part of the book

Paragraph Two

- Identify the genre of the book
- Write a summary of the book using "Somebody-Wanted-But-So" for fiction

Paragraph Three

- Share specific strengths *and* weaknesses of the book
(Page turner? Interesting? Could you connect? End with cliff hanger? Difficult vocabulary?)
- Give support by providing specific examples

Paragraph Four

- Explain why you would or would not recommend this book to others
- Give one or two reasons that made this book a great read or one that did not interest you.



SWBS

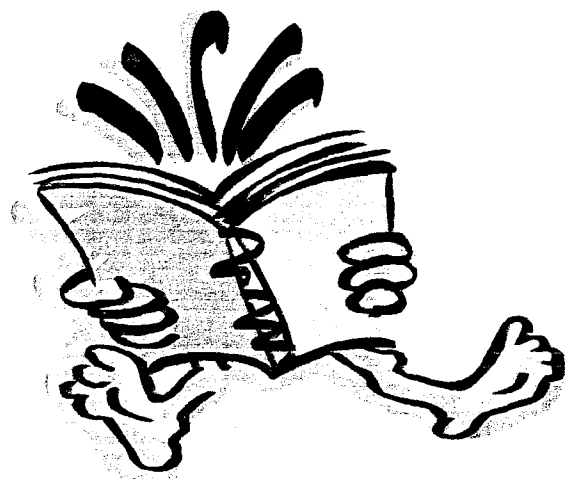
SOMEBODY-WANTED-BUT-SO

SOMEBODY - the main character, the protagonist

WANTED - what is the main problem the character faced

BUT - what is the conflict, what antagonistic forces created the conflict

SO - define how the problem was resolved – without giving away the ending of the story



TFLC

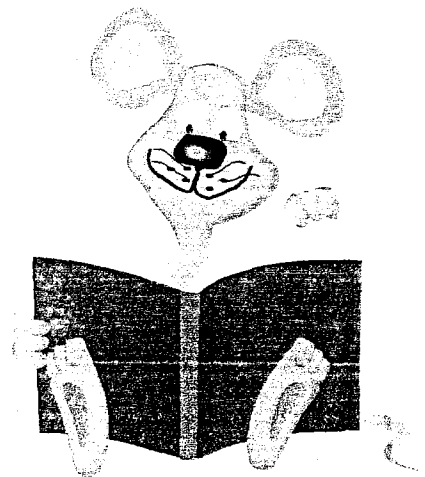
TOPIC-FACTS-LEARNED-CHANGED

TOPIC - note the subject of the book

FACTS - record one or two incredible things that relate to the topic

LEARNED - jot down one or two new things learned or understood better by reading the book

CHANGED - consider any ways the book altered your thinking about the topic



Tuck Everlasting

Natalie Babbitt

"That water - it stops you right where you are. If you'd had a drink of it today, you'd stay a little girl forever. You'd never grow up, not ever." If you could live forever, would you? Think about it.....would you?

If you like fantasy stories, you have to read Tuck! Even if you don't like fantasy, you will like it - no, I mean love it! It's not your normal fantasy story with talking animals or flying people, but it is fantasy because the unimaginable happens.....Eleven year old Winnie Foster wants to run away from home because she feels that her parents just don't understand her. You know that feeling, right? But, when she meets the mysterious and ageless Tuck Family, she is faced with a life changing decision. So, will she drink from the spring and remain the same age forever? You'll be biting your nails to find out!

I love this story! I really do. I love it because it makes you think and think and think. And like Miss Hauser always says, "Reading is Cogitating". Throughout the book you are constantly asking yourself, what would I do? Would I want to stay the same age forever? What age would I want to freeze myself? You begin to think of all the possibilities of a world where none of us ever changed. Crazy, huh? Also, Natalie Babbitt is a Van Gogh with her words! She knows how to write descriptions that paint pictures in your mind! Some of my favorite lines are "touch me not cottage" and "great potato of a woman". BEWARE, some people don't like this book because it has some tough vocab like "bovine", "indomitable", and "acrid". If you like a challenge, great! Otherwise, you may want to stay away. Also, I will tell you that the beginning of the story is kind of sloooooooooooooow and some may call it boring because there are long passages of descriptions. But, be patient, please! This book does get better - I promise! You just have to give it time.

I'll tell you once, twice, or a hundred times, this book is a definite THUMBS UP, and you should read it! Believe me when I tell you that you will totally get caught up in the story and the decisions that Winnie has to make. You will find yourself putting yourself in Winnie's place and questioning what you would do in her situation. Finally, the ending of the story is gut wrenching! You will be shocked, touched, moved, and on the edge of your seat. You may even shed a tear! Don't pass this book up!