

Homework NYC

Writing a Book Report

Picking out a book

The key to a great book report is to choose a book you like! You may have to look at a few books to find one that interests you but it is time well spent. It will make the difference between making this a fun and rewarding experience or just another chore. How you feel about the book is sure to come through in your report as well. If you like the book then writing the report is so much easier. Here are some ideas for finding a good book:

- Visit your library and browse the shelves. Read a page or two of books that look interesting.
- Ask your librarian for recommendations. Librarians help students pick books all the time and they are usually pretty good at picking ones they like.
- Look for awards on the books like the Newbery or Caldecott Medals.
- Read book reviews on the back cover.
- Ask your friends or family what books they liked reading.
- Look for lists of recommended books in your library and on library web sites.

Of course, your teacher may have assigned you a book to read. It may be about something you don't think is interesting. Give it a chance. You may be surprised at how good it is. If you still don't like it that's OK, too. Nobody is going to like every single book.

Reading Your Book

- Start reading early. You may be able to speed-read a book just before your report is due but it isn't much fun.

- Find a quiet place to read. Sometimes this isn't easy if you have noisy brothers or sisters around but do your best. Perhaps a grown-up at your house can arrange a quiet time for you.
- If you like you can take notes as you read. Or you can wait until your done and skim the book again looking for the parts you want to discuss in your report.

Writing Your Report

There are lots of different ways of writing a book report. Your teacher may have given you instructions about how to do it. They may have told you how long they want it to be or what topics you are supposed to include. If so, then follow their instructions.

If not, here are some things to consider when writing a book report:

- *Where does the story take place?*

The setting could be a real place like New York City or a farming village in Siberia. Or it could be an imaginary one like a spaceship on an interplanetary voyage. Sometimes an author doesn't actually tell you where the story takes place. Can you find any clues in the story that would help you make a guess?

- *Who are the main characters?*

Tell about the characters in the story. Was there a hero or a villain? Was it a story about a family and their feelings about each other? Introduce your readers to the characters of your story.

- *What is the plot?*

What happened to your characters? Why did they do the things they did? Was there a surprise ending? Just remember not to make your report a detailed retelling of the whole story. If your teachers wanted to know everything that happened in the story they could just go and read the book themselves.

- *What did you think of the book?*

Did you like it? What was your favorite part? Did you like some parts and not others? Why? This is your chance to put your own thoughts down about the author's work.

- *Who is the author?*

Do you know anything about their life? Can you see how something that happened to the author in real life is included in the book? Many authors have their own web sites. Take a look and see what you can find out.

Good luck with your report!