

# Academic Writing



## How to write a critical review

EXAMPLE

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## A Critical Review EXAMPLE

**Aim:** To provide students with the knowledge and practice on how to write a critical review.

**Time:** 120 minutes & homework task.

**Delivery:** This lesson can be delivered face-to-face or online. For online delivery, each worksheet could be placed in a class document on OneDrive.

Note for teacher: a 'critical review' can also be called 'a critical response', 'a critique', 'a critical commentary', 'a critical appraisal' and 'a critical analysis'.

### Lead in (20 minutes)

- Distribute **worksheet**.
- Students complete **task 1**: Read and highlight the key words in six definitions.
- Students complete **task 2**: Write their own definition of a critical review.
- Feedback: This can be done on a collaborative document (e.g. OneDrive) or students can share their definitions in groups or pairs.

### Outline (20 minutes)

- Students complete **task 3**: How to write a critical review. This focuses on a four-part structure (intro, summary, evaluation, conclusion) but could be changed to meet your needs.
- Feedback: Distribute or project **task 3 SUGGESTED ANSWERS**.

### Evaluation (20 minutes)

- Students complete **task 4**: Evaluation focus questions.
- Feedback: Distribute or project **task 4 ANSWERS**.
- Students complete **task 5**: Evaluation language.
- Feedback: Distribute or project **task 5 ANSWERS**.

### Analysis of a critical response sample (20 minutes)

- Students complete **task 6**: Analyse a critical review sample.
- Feedback: Distribute or project **Task 6 ANSWERS**.

### Writing (60 minutes)

- **Task 7**: Students write their own critical review. The choice of text can be the choice of the teacher or the student.

### Peer feedback (40 minutes)

- **Task 8**: Peer feedback form. Student swap essays and fill in the peer review form. Allow time for the students to discuss their feedback and any errors they have found.
- Teacher takes in and marks the critical reviews using the error correction code:  
[www.academic-englishuk/error-correction](http://www.academic-englishuk/error-correction)

Appendix: key materials

## Critical Review Definitions EXAMPLE

### Task 1: Definitions

- Read these definitions and highlight any key terms.

*In very simple terms, a critical review or appraisal is an academic review of an article that offers both a summary and critical comment. Book reviews, movie reviews, critical reviews and literature reviews all [redacted] or appraising how well various [redacted] achieve their goals of communicating with [redacted] audience (Charles Strut University, 2024.)*

*A critical review (sometimes called a critique, critical [redacted]) is a detailed commentary on and critical evaluation of a text. To be critical does not mean to criticise in an [redacted]. To be critical of a text means [redacted] opinions in the text, in an attempt to [redacted] overall (University of Southampton, 2024).*

*[redacted] It is an evaluation of what an author has said about a topic. It is critical in the sense that it is a thoughtful consideration [redacted] claims; [redacted] of the author's point of view; and identifies other valid points of view (Monash University, 2024).*

*A critical review usually includes the following parts: Summary (What is the text about?), a critical analysis & [redacted] evaluations, e.g. What does the text contribute to the field? What are the limitations of the writer's approach/[redacted] ([redacted], how should others view this text?) (Western Sydney University, 2024).*

*A critical review is more than just a summary of the [redacted] the author's statements without question. Ask yourself such questions as: How effective is the author's argument? [redacted]? Is it biased in any way? (University of Wisconsin-Madison, 2024).*

*In academic terms, a [redacted], it is the process of weighing up evidence and arguments within a text to make a judgment. Taking a critical approach involves [redacted] and keeping an open mind (University of Cambridge, 2024).*

### Task 2: Writing a definition

- Using the above information, write a short 50-100-word definition of your understanding of a critical review.

**Task 3: How to write a critical review EXAMPLE**

- What should be included in each section of the outline? Try to think of what should be included for each bullet point in the outline.

A critical review usually contains four parts:

- Introduction
- [REDACTED]
- Evaluation (the critique)
- Conclusion

**A Critical Review Outline EXAMPLE**

**Introduction (10%)**

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- 
- 

**Summary** [REDACTED]

- 
- 

**Evaluation** [REDACTED]

- 
- 

**Conclusion** [REDACTED]

- 
- 
- 

Please note: There are many ways to write a critical review and the above outline is just one suggested approach. Other approaches are as follows:

<b>Intro</b> [REDACTED] <b>Conclusion</b>	<b>Intro</b> <b>Summary</b> [REDACTED]
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**TASK 4: Evaluation Focus Questions**

- This is a set of critical questions to think about when reading a text. Look at the ‘Criteria’ section and try to add the eight missing sentences into the correct places in the ‘Possible focus questions’.

1. Could it be better organised?
2. [REDACTED]
3. What framework is used to discuss the results?
4. What [REDACTED] in the field?
5. Does the writing style suit the intended audience?
6. What [REDACTED] justified?
7. Are the results valid and reliable?
8. What [REDACTED] of knowledge?

Criteria	Possible focus questions <b>EXAMPLE</b>
Significance and contribution to the field	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What is the author's aim? Has this been achieved?</li> <li>•</li> <li>•</li> <li>• What is missing/not stated?</li> </ul>
Methodology or approach (this usually applies to more formal, research-based texts)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• [REDACTED] ? (e.g., quantitative or qualitative, theoretical, comparative, case study, etc...)</li> <li>• How [REDACTED] the approach?</li> <li>•</li> <li>•</li> </ul>
Argument and use of evidence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Is there a clear problem, statement or hypothesis?</li> <li>•</li> <li>• Is [REDACTED] ?</li> <li>• What kind of evidence is used? Is this evidence valid and reliable?</li> <li>• How [REDACTED] the argument?</li> <li>•</li> </ul>
Writing style and text structure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•</li> <li>• What is the organising principle of the text?</li> <li>•</li> </ul>

Adapted from University of Mary Washington (2011) [Website Link](#)

**Task 5: Evaluation Language**

- Look at these evaluative phrases and decide whether they are positive or negative.

Evaluative Phrase <b>EXAMPLE</b>	Positive	Negative
The main limitation is that ...		✓
One of the strengths of the text is that...	✓	
This [redacted] due to...		
The author fails to acknowledge / consider the significance of ...		
The author [redacted] for...		
The author provides conflicting / inadequate / limited evidence on...		
The text is a [redacted] account of...		
The author overlooks the fact that ...		
Nonetheless, other [redacted] this possible assumption...		
The author rightly concludes that if...		
The author [redacted] / persuasive / substantial / evidence on...		
Several [redacted], such as...		
On this well researched / documented basis the author emphasises / proposes that...		
This argument [redacted] as...		
The author provides a range of illustrative / specific / useful / examples to support...		
The author [redacted] that...		
The author fails to fully define ...		
When [redacted] clear that...		
The author provides a persuasive argument on...		
The main [redacted] to address...		
The author identifies a number of key...		
The study / research [redacted] / relevant if...		

### Task 6: Analysis of a critical review sample EXAMPLE

- Read this critical review sample and **highlight** the key language phrases, verbs and linking devices in each paragraph that help to create the critical review. One phrase or verb has been highlighted in each paragraph as an example.

#### Introduction

A TED talk given by Amane Dannouni in 2019 entitled 'How online marketplaces can help local economies, not hurt them' **argues that** online marketplaces [redacted] to [redacted] divided into three main parts. Firstly, it presents the concerns that people may have about online marketplaces. The second part evaluates the advantages.... This paper [redacted] are ...

#### Summary

Dannouni **puts forward the idea that** there exists [redacted] and disadvantages on online marketplaces. In order to explore this issue, he proposes that the fundamental [redacted] buyers and sellers.... The speaker provides illustrative examples of various platforms in different countries, [redacted] and Gojek to show that this connection of ... The second point of the lecture focuses on 'negative externality', [redacted] not only have internal but also... Overall, the speaker states that it does not have to be a sub-zero game if [redacted] are focused on...

#### Evaluation

**One of the strengths** of the lecture is that Dannouni points out that while there exists concern [redacted] of online marketplaces on employment, wages and local businesses, online marketplaces have also exhibited [redacted] discrimination... The main limitation of the lecture is that the speaker argues the emergence of online [redacted] economist; however, most of his propositions are based on his own position and experience, lacking sufficient [redacted]. He fails [redacted] data to demonstrate... In addition, there are several crucial questions left unanswered such as when Dannouni claims "they [online marketplaces] can [redacted] and ultimately, unlock more value for everyone". This unfounded assumption is biased and falls short in [redacted] benefits, because...

#### Conclusion

In conclusion, the lecture **makes a significant contribution** to the understanding of how online markets can make strategic trade-offs to... The speaker provides a [redacted] [redacted] markets such as Jumia, Gojek and Grab that provide credible evidence of... However, less convincing are [redacted] new markets [redacted] ... It is therefore recommended that more qualitative data should have been collected from economic participators, [redacted] authorities to provide...

\*This review is based on a TED Talk 'How online marketplaces can help local economies, not hurt them' (Dannouni, 2019). Go [here](#) for lecture.

**Task 7: Writing**

- Choose [redacted] write a critical review about.
- Make a plan using the outline plan.
- Write [redacted] critical response.

<b>A Critical Review Outline EXAMPLE</b>	
<b>Introduction</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>•</li><li>•</li><li>•</li></ul>
<b>Summary</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>•</li><li>•</li></ul>
<b>Evaluation</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>•</li><li>•</li></ul>
<b>Conclusion</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>•</li><li>•</li><li>•</li></ul>

**Write the Critical review here:**





**Task 8: Peer Review Checklist EXAMPLE**

- Look at another student’s critical review and complete this peer review checklist. Add notes on the information you find.

Questions	Notes
<b>CONTENT</b>	
Is there information about the text, author and title?	
Is there a [redacted] article?	
SUMMARY: How many main points has the writer identified?	
EVALUATION: How [redacted] have been evaluated?	
What are the writer's main conclusions?	
Is there a [redacted] ? What is it?	
<b>TEXT ORGANISATION</b>	
How is the text organised ( <i>e.g. introduction/main body/conclusion, paragraphs/sections/headings/general-to-specific</i> )?	
How does [redacted] ? What language is used to link [redacted] together?	
<b>EVALUATION</b>	
What [redacted] been identified?	
What [redacted] have been identified?	
<b>THE AUTHOR'S STANCE</b>	
What [redacted] author?	
Highlight the evaluation language <b>in pink</b>	
<b>GRAMMAR &amp; VOCABULARY</b>	
Highlight any <b>grammar</b> mistakes	
Highlight any <b>vocabulary</b> mistakes	
Highlight any <b>academic style</b> mistakes	
Anything [redacted] not clear – <u>underline and add a question mark?</u>	

## **ANSWERS**

### **TASK 3: How to write a critical review SUGGESTED ANSWERS**

A critical review contains usually contains four parts:

- **Introduction**
- **Summary of main ideas**
- **Evaluation (the critique)**
- **Con....**

**ALL ANSWERS ARE PROVIDED IN PAID VERSION...**