



HMSA Reads Book Review Criteria

A complete review must:

1. Contain a minimum of 150 words
2. Identify genre (fiction/novel, non-fiction, poetry)
3. Give a brief overview of the book while avoiding “spoiling” the book for others
4. State your personal opinion of the book
5. State whether or not you recommend this book

Optional:

1. Identify the sub-genre (i.e. Fantasy, Historical Fiction, Manga)
2. Tell why you read the book.
3. Make connections to other books you’ve read.
4. If the book has been made into a movie, comment on the adaptation.
5. Identify who you think might like this book.

Good Examples of Reviews:

Review of *Insomnia* by Gemma (240 words)

Insomnia by Stephen King is a novel about horror and fantasy. When I first picked up this novel I thought it would be about someone not being able to sleep. As I read, I learned that it was much more than that. The protagonist, Ralph Roberts begins to suffer from insomnia to the point where even an hour of sleep is a lot. As his insomnia starts to worsen, he starts to see things that are intangible. Lois Chasse, Ralph's significant other is also an insomnia sufferer with a daughter named Natalie Deepneau. Natalie is the daughter of Ed Deepneau, Ralph's neighbor. As Ralph ventures to find out what really is happening with him, he discovers that insomnia is the least of his problems. Now, all I can really say without spoiling anything is that there are "little bold doctors", Greek mythology, *The Dark Tower* references and undesignated beings.

This novel follows some ideas from the series "*The Dark Tower*" by Stephen King which you do not have to read in order to love and/or understand *Insomnia*, but some things will make a lot more sense if you do. Stephen King ends *Insomnia* with my favorite type of endings, sad but happy. I totally recommend this book to anyone who loves a great King novel and is into horror/fantasy. Honestly, I loved it. Stephen King is the king at making people stay at the edge of their seats.

Review of *A Clockwork Orange* by Walter (291 words)

A Clockwork Orange written by Anthony Burgess covers profound philosophical questions through the story of a teenager named Alex. From the very beginning, the novel contains a violent, action-packed exposition as it introduces the chaotic nature of the novel's setting. Alex and other teenagers rule the night by committing horrific crimes that stretch from minor fights to sexual assaults. The novel makes it evident that violence is prominent. Alongside these demonstrations of violence, the novel features conflict among the members of gangs, illustrating that no place is safe from chaos. The novel, separated into three parts, covers not only the teenagers' crimes but also the governmental attempts to reform these criminals. Through the teenagers' violence and the government's response, the novel examines moral values and implications of the actions that result from the conflicting relationship between the teenagers and the State.

Certainly, one of the highlights of the novel is its linguistic aspect. The novel is written partially in Nadsat, the language of the novel's teenagers composed of a mixture of Russian and English words. At times, it is difficult to understand what the characters say or what the novel describes. Although a dictionary could be used, there's a certain satisfaction that comes from piecing together the meaning of the words and gradually becoming accustomed to the language of the characters. It's a rare and enjoyable experience that allows for a strange and unique connection

between the reader and the characters. The language also serves to amplify the mental behavior of the protagonists, making the novel's actions, especially the violence, seem more chaotic. *A Clockwork Orange* is definitely a novel to read for its unique storytelling and its examination of important subjects. Although be forewarned, it surely has its unsettling parts.

Review of *Howl's Moving Castle* by Isabella (174 words)

Sophie Hatter has the unfortunate luck of being the eldest of three sisters, which means she was prophesized from birth to be a failure. After Sophie is left stuck working in her step-mother's old hat shop, she is visited by the wicked Witch of the Waste who casts a spell that turns Sophie into an old lady. Sophie ends up having to seek help from the Wizard Howl, but soon finds that he's sarcastic, rude, and very immature. Sophie, Howl, Calcifer the demon who lives in the fireplace, and Howl's apprentice Michael then continue to have many adventures together.

This novel is wonderful with its fantasy world of magic and spells. The author writes with such eloquence and detail that it creates vivid images in your mind. It has a somewhat sarcastic humor which I love, and the characters are all so different with colorful and entertaining personalities. I would really recommend this to someone who likes fantasy and magic or anyone who just wants to sink their teeth into a really good book.