

Book Review

Hook

Summary

Recommendation

First evaluation statement (content)

Evidence (examples)

Evidence (quotation)

Cleopatra: The Woman Behind the Legend

Her name means “glory to her race,” but was she really “the serpent of the Nile,” as her Roman enemies called her? For more than two thousand years, Cleopatra has been the subject of numerous myths and legends. In *Cleopatra: Goddess of Egypt, Enemy of Rome*, Polly Schoyer Brooks puts the myths aside and traces the life and times of the “real” Cleopatra as she grows from a young, headstrong princess into a powerful Egyptian warrior queen. While Brooks sometimes seems to pay more attention to the military woes and triumphs of Cleopatra’s Roman contemporaries, Julius Caesar and Mark Antony, her book is an excellent source of information about this famous queen of the ancient Egyptian and Roman world.

The book paints a clear, balanced portrait of Cleopatra. It begins with helpful background information about the dynasty that ended with Cleopatra. Then, it describes the plots and political upheavals that created the queen’s fierce desire to restore Egypt to its former glory and to protect its independence. Cleopatra was revered by her people as the goddess Isis, but Brooks shows her as remarkably human—intelligent, ambitious, and emotional. In one passage, Brooks describes Cleopatra’s feelings on the death of Julius Caesar: “...Queen Cleopatra was devastated at the news of his murder. She had lost her lover, the father of her son, and her protector. All her hopes were dashed, the future murky and uncertain.”

Book Review *continued*

Second evaluation statement (voice)

Evidence (example)

Evidence (quotation)

Third evaluation statement (audience)

Evidence (example)

Evidence (fact)

Restatement of recommendation

Cleopatra is not only full of information; it is also exciting and fast paced. In fact, it is so engaging that it sometimes reads more like a novel than a scholarly biography. Rather than simply listing historical events, Brooks portrays the people behind the events, and uses vivid personal details to bring these figures to life. In one description of Cleopatra she writes, "...[S]ome thought her nose too large for her delicate little body." Brooks also tells the reader that the handsome Julius Caesar "had one worry—baldness" and that Mark Antony loved "feasting, drinking, gambling, and bawdy jokes."

Cleopatra: Goddess of Egypt, Enemy of Rome is written for young adult readers who don't mind a few unfamiliar words. Names such as Ptolemy and Parthia may not be well-known to many. However, the author is always careful to give readers all the information they need to understand the significance of the people, places, and events she describes. Illustrations, photographs, and maps help readers see through Cleopatra's eyes. In addition, the notes at the end of the book will be very helpful to readers interested in understanding the ancient world.

Readers will enjoy Cleopatra: Goddess of Egypt, Enemy of Rome. It is a well-written introduction not only to the legendary queen but also to the early Roman Empire. Best of all, it strips away the myths and legends to reveal the intelligent, fascinating woman Cleopatra really was.

Book Review

Definition

A **book review** lets a writer communicate his or her ideas about a particular book. An effective review evaluates a book based on clear standards and gives readers the information they need to make their own decisions about the book.

Many book reviews use the structure illustrated in the framework below. Print this framework and use it as a guide when you write your own book review.

Framework

Directions and Explanations

Introduction

- Hook
- Summary
- Recommendation

Hook your readers Make readers want to read your book review; begin with an interesting statement or piece of information.

Summarize the book Provide a summary that identifies the book's author, title, and subject.

Write a recommendation Let your readers know whether they should read the book. Also, tell your readers which evaluation standard (audience, voice, or content) is most important to you.



Body

- First evaluation statement and supporting evidence
- Second evaluation statement and supporting evidence
- Third evaluation statement and supporting evidence

Write at least one paragraph for each evaluation standard Arrange the paragraphs in order of importance. Begin with the most important standard and continue with the second and third most important standards.

Support each evaluation statement with evidence Evidence may include facts, examples, and direct quotations from the book.



Conclusion

- Restatement of recommendation

Repeat your point Finish by restating the recommendation you made in the introduction of your review.