

Writing Book Reviews



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INTRODUCTION

Welcome enthusiastic and independent learners of English!

This module aims to encourage you to read books and write book reviews. In this regard, you can do guided writing and extensive reading which will improve your English comprehension and use as you go through this module.

Book reviews are relevant. It helps you and other readers determine whether or not to read a book or whether to buy it or not. It also boosts readership and improves personal understanding of the book.

Learning to write a book review strengthens your higher order thinking skills (HOTS). This will not only give you knowledge and techniques to read and comprehend but also teach you to analyze, synthesize, and evaluate the material you read.



PREFACE

Writing Book Reviews Module is intended for 21st century Filipino students in their reading and writing skills. Every task and activity in this module presents a thorough understanding and application of the topic.

May this module help you learn how to write book reviews as easy as 1-2-3. God bless! 😊



OBJECTIVES

At the end of this module, you are expected to:

1. Differentiate a book review from a book report;
2. Choose a type of book to read;
3. Identify the parts of a book review; and
4. Write a review about your chosen book.



DISCUSSION

What is a Book Review?

A book review is a short piece of text describing what the book is about, the intentions or aims of the author in writing the book, how it is written and whether it suits a certain readership, and how does it compare to other comparable works in the same field.

What is the Difference between a Book Review and a Book Report?

Book reports focus on **summarizing** the work that you read; your goal is to explain what it says and show that you read the book with care. In contrast, a book review asks you to **analyze** a book; your goal is to identify the key arguments of the book and how the author supports these arguments as well as to evaluate the book's strengths and weaknesses.

Book reports often ask you to provide a personal opinion as to whether or not you liked a book. A book review asks you to move beyond your personal likes or dislikes and provide a reasoned argument as to the merits or problems contained in the book.

In Choosing a Book...

Different Types of Books

All books are either non-fiction or fiction. **Non-fiction books** contain factual information, such as biographies, history books, journals, news, etc. **Fiction books** contain a story which was made up by the author, like science fiction, horror, love story, fairy tale, etc. It is the most commonly read works.

Here is a list of common book genres.

Fiction

Action and Adventure
Children's Books
Crime
Fantasy
Graphic novels
Horror
Humour
Mystery
Romance
Science Ficiton
Short Story Collections
Thrillers and Suspense

Non-fiction

Biography and Memoirs
Current Affairs & Politics
History & Military
Journalism
Medical, Health, & Fitness
Religion & Spirituality
Science & Technology
Self-Help
Sports
Travel
True Crime

Note: *You may do a little research to know more about these genres.*



Activity A.

1. How many types of books can you think of? Make a list.
2. What do you like reading? Look at your list. Rank the book in order of interest. If you are very interested in this type of book, put it in the right. If you are not interested in this type of book, put it in the left.

Not interested

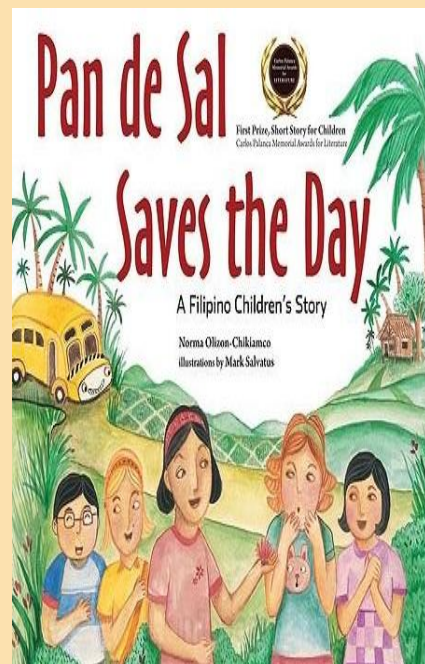
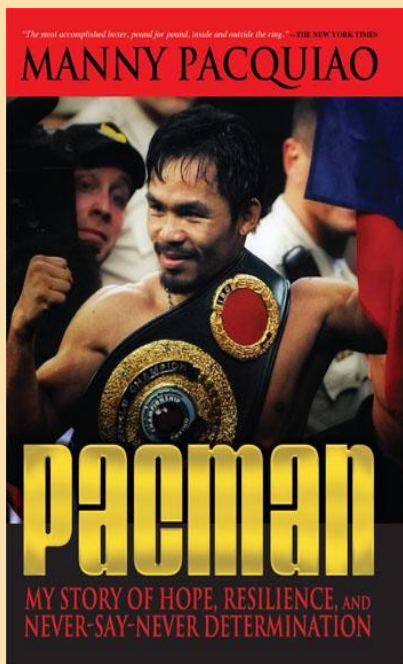
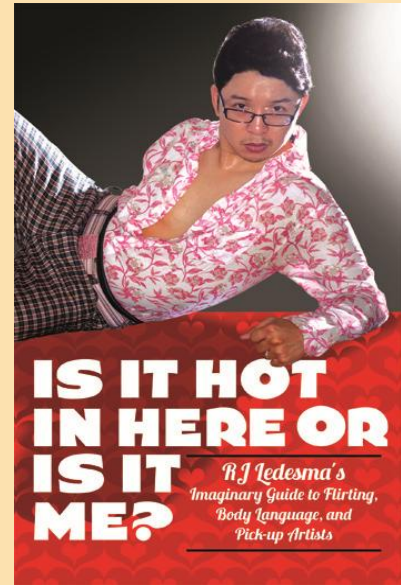
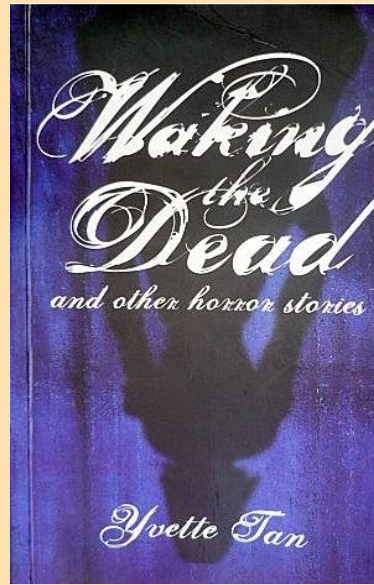
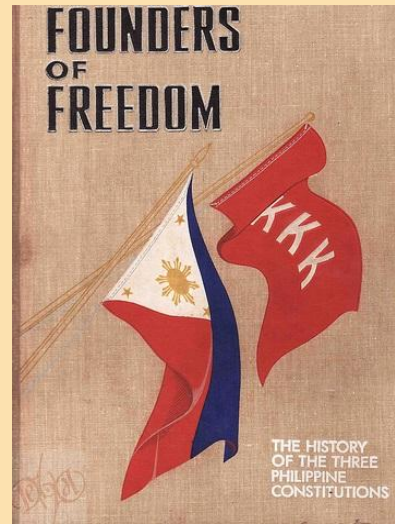
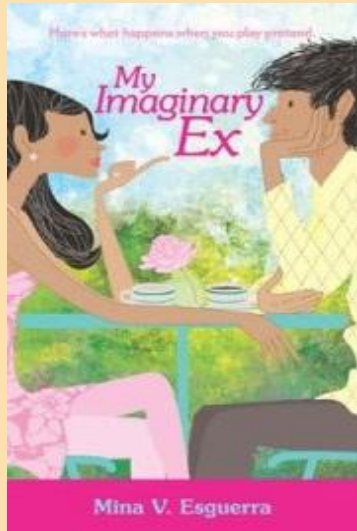
Very interested



Self-Assessment Questions A.

Match the books.

1. There are eight (8) book covers below. What are the titles of these books?
2. What type of books are these?
3. On the following pages are also the five (5) short descriptions of books. Match the books with the descriptions.
4. Which books do you want to read?



1. She is a shy, plain little girl, embarrassed for living in a poor thatched-roof hut for eating simple foods. She envies her richer and prettier classmates. Will she save the day after the school bus they were riding in

2. When Zack asks Jasmine to pretend to be his ex-girlfriend, she gamely agrees, thinking it would be fun. All of a sudden, things aren't so clear-cut anymore! Can Jasmine sort out her feelings (sometimes, she can't even tell real from pretend when it comes to her and Zack) before it's too late?

3. This tells the history of struggle for freedom in the Philippines, from the first massive Filipino alliance against Spain during the 16th century, to the Philippine Revolution, to the founding of the Philippine republic, and the succession of Presidents up to the time of President Marcos.

4.

Fear is only a step away...
A shadow falls. A shape in
the window. A sound at the
door. Are you ready to wake
the dead?

5.

When dusk arrives in the city of
Manila, that's when you become the
most likely prey of the criminal
underworld. Beware the criminals that
can't be bound with handcuffs nor
harmed with bullets. When crime
takes a turn for the weird, the police
call Alexandra Trese.

Parts of a Book Review

1. **Title** – the name of the book
2. **Author** – the writer of the book
3. **Main characters** – the main people in the story
4. **Setting** – where and when the story happens
5. **Plot** – what happens in the story
6. **Reader's opinion** – what you think about the book
7. **Message of the book** – the main point of the book



Activity B. Here is a book review written by Kelli Meserole about a tale from the Philippine Islands. Identify the title, author(s), main character, setting, plot, reader's opinion, and message of the book.

The Brothers Wu and the Good-Luck Eel by Fran Ng

This book is a book about two young brothers. The story is told by an old woman who is remembering a story about her family and why they like eels. The story she is telling is about the two young boys who are delivering slippers. Their mom and dad are slipper makers and they make very pretty slippers. The brothers take the slippers to be

delivered in a boat through the Pasig River, and when they are in the boat, they have some trouble. They run into a rock because one brother, Wei Li, stops rowing and fools around in the boat. Min Pu, his brother gets mad because it makes a hole in the boat, and Wei Li loses his paddle. They are scared because the boat is full of water. They scoop out the water with their hats. Under the boat, there is an Eel. The eel saves them. The eel sticks his head in the hole of the boat, because eels like holes. Then the eel plugs the hole, and the brothers are able to row home safely. The old woman is telling her family this story to remind them why they honor the eel.

This story is nice because it is a story about a family and family tradition. The family honors the eel and their cultural history. I liked the descriptions in this book, because it helped me imagine what was happening. I could picture the story happening in my mind. The pictures in the book were very nice too. They were very colourful and descriptive too. The people looked like real people, and the eel looked real too. I also liked that the pictures were nice and big so that I can see what is going on in the picture.

(Use this Answer Sheet for Activity B.)

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Fiction and non-fiction reviews

If you are reviewing a **non-fiction** book, the information might be a little different. There might not be any **main characters**, or a **plot**. Instead, you might have a **situation** or **topic**. For example, if you are reading a book on endangered eagles in the Philippines, the **topic** is endangered eagles, and the **situation** is that they are dying, and people are trying to rescue them. Also, there might not be any **message**, as some non-fiction books are just facts. However, there may be a **main point** or **main idea**, such as that we should help protect endangered eagles.

Writing a Book Review



Self-Assessment Questions B.

Below is a Palanca award-winning story entitled **A Dozen Pairs of Shoes** written by Luis P. Gatmaitan. Read it quickly and do the tasks that follow it.



My father was a shoemaker. Shoes made by him were really famous in town. A lot of people would come to us to have their shoes made. From what we heard, my father's shoes were so much better than the shoes made in Marikina. They were durable, the workmanship was really excellent, and their designs, truly creative!

"Where on earth do you get your ideas for those styles? They're sooo pretty!"

"Looks like the muse of shoes and soles comes and visits you..."

"You must have magic in your hands!"

With all these praises, my Tatay would only half smile. He was a quiet man. He rarely ever spoke.

I grew up amidst all the many shoes my father made. My friends and classmates often wished they were in my shoes. They said I was lucky to have a shoemaker for a father. Why, I always had a new pair for every occasion – school opening, Christmas, my birthday, or when I was awarded class honors in school! My Tatay even made me extra pairs of shoes from left-over leather and fabric. "I wish I were you, Karina. You always have new shoes. Me? I get hand-me-downs from my Ate. I only wear the shoes that don't fit her anymore," complained one of my classmates.

I was in the second grade when my mother became pregnant again. We'd waited so long to have another baby in the family. My lola said that their prayers – for me to have a kid brother or sister – had been answered.

"Oh, pretty soon I will have someone to share my shoes with. But that's okay, I know my father will always do enough shoes for both of us."

When the baby was still in my mother's tummy, I heard my mother and my father talking.

"I just had my check-up. My doctor said our baby is going to be a girl!"

"That's great! If she's a girl, we'll have her take up ballet lessons. I'd really like to have a ballet dancer in the family! From now on, I am going to start learning how to make ballet shoes," Tatay said.

But not all of my father's dreams could come true. When we saw my baby sister for the first time, we were all so shocked. She had no feet! It was as though her feet had been cut off!

The rumors began to spread. Because my sister was sort of deformed, people were saying a lot of nasty things. Some said maybe my mother tried to get rid of her that's why her body parts were incomplete. Or my mother might have been taken some harmful pills and those pills melted my sister's feet. Or the shoe spirits cursed my father because he raised the prices for his shoes. Or maybe my mother had an unusual liking for a doll while pregnant.

"Nanay, why doesn't Susie have feet?"

"I had this infection, anak...I caught German measles while your sister was growing in my tummy. And well...the effect was that..." my mother narrated sadly.

My sister will never be a ballet dancer then. Tatay will be very disappointed. I had this thought every day, every time I'd see Susie without her feet. That's why I decided to persuade Nanay to enrol me in a ballet school even if I didn't really like ballet. But...

"Ma'am, why don't you have Karina take up piano instead, or maybe painting, or enrol her in a banduria class?" my ballet

teachers suggested to my mother.

I really felt very down. Not for myself but for my Tatay and Susie, and for all the elusive dreams that could never come true.

I felt and saw how my father and mother loved Susie. They were always ready to keep her from harm. Once while we were on a picnic at the park, there was this guy who saw Susie.

Pointing at Susie, he said, "Hey, look! That kid will make a good freak show at the carnival!"

My father turned red. He clenched his fist. That was the first time I ever saw his eyebrows meet. He almost hit the guy.

"What's your problem?"

A good thing my mother stopped him just in time.

While in bed one night, I heard Tatay talking to Susie.

"Anak, feet or no feet, your Nanay and I love you very much. You are special in the eyes of God. What's important to us is that you grow up to be a good person, believing in yourself." He kissed her warmly.

Father never stopped making shoes for me. But I could tell that each time he measured my feet, his eyes drifted towards my sister's crib.

"Too bad bunso, you have never known how it feels like to wear the beautiful shoes our Tatay makes..." I whispered to her.

Susie and I were really close as we grew up. It never mattered to me that she had no feet. That never stopped us from playing together. We found a lot of games that didn't need the use of feet, anyway. She always beat me in sungka, jackstone, scrabble and pitik-bulag. I took it upon myself to be

her defender from all teasers. Her wheelchair pusher. Her Ate assistant! That was when I realized my sister and I were alike in so many ways. We were both better with our hands than with our feet. I was good in painting. And she was good in writing stories. And oh, our Tatay was also good with his hands!

Susie once woke me up to tell me about her dream: About a most unusual pair of shoes that looked so good on her feet.

She has feet in her dream? I wondered to myself.

“Believe me, Ate, I dreamed of a beautiful pair of shoes. It’s made of yellow patent leather adorned with sunflower up front!”

That was when she was about to celebrate her birthday. What I noticed was, whenever her birthday was drawing near, she would always dream of shoes.

“Ate, I dreamed of another pair of shoes. It’s made of red velvet with a big side buckle!”

She also told me about the open-toed blue shoes with her own toes peeping through. The white shoes with tiny heels and red bow. The denim shoes embroidered with the moon and stars. The sandals that looked like a fishnet. The purple shoes with a round crystal attached near the toe. It never ceased to amaze me at how she could remember even the tiniest detail for the shoes in her dreams – the flowers, ribbons, buttons, sequins, beads, or buckles. And she thought of these shoes like they were her very own.

“Ate, when I grow up, I am going to write a story about all the shoes in my dreams. And you’ll draw them for me, okay?”

After a few years, my father retired from making shoes, except for the orders from the suki he simply couldn’t refuse.

When he celebrated his birthday, my gift to him was one of my paintings – a pair of heavily veined hands making shoes. Susie gave him a small music box with a ballerina.

“You made your father very happy,” Nanay said.

Shortly after that, Tatay became sickly. Susie was twelve when finally he left us all for good.

One day, I happened to wander to the bodega, looking for old shoes that could donate to the orphanage. While searching, I found a box that looked as though it hadn't been touched for some time. Opening it, I found several small shoe boxes neatly piled on top of each other!

Who owns these shoes? Are they undelivered orders? I asked myself. But when I looked closely at all the shoes, I was startled. They were my father's best creations in wonderful designs. And they came in different sizes. There was a pair of baby shoes. Baptismal shoes. Leisure shoes. School shoes. Church shoes. Party shoes. I was even more startled when I read the dedication written on a small tag.

*For my dearest Susie,
On her first birthday*

I peered inside the boxes one at a time. Every single pair of shoes was for Susie. My father had been making shoes for Susie all this time!

*For Susie, joy of my life,
As she celebrates her seventh birthday*

Year after year, my father never missed making a pair of shoes for Susie on her birthday. One dozen shoes all in all!

*Especially for my dearest bunso,
On the occasion of her twelfth birthday.*

I burst out crying when I saw the shoes. I hadn't realized till then how deep Tatay's love was. I brought the twelve pairs of shoes to my mother and Susie.

"I had no idea that your father had been making shoes for you, Susie." Tears formed in my mother's eyes. "He kept it a secret from me..."

"A-Ate, these are the shoes I dreamed about..." Susie couldn't believe her eyes as she caressed each shoe.

"Oh?!"

Suddenly, I remembered all the shoes that Susie had described to me in the past. Yellow patent leather shoes with sunflower up front. Red velvet shoes with a bid side buckle. Blue open-toed shoes with her own toes peeping through. White shoes with tiny heels and a red bow. Denim shoes embroidered with the moon and stars. Sandals that looked like a fish net. Purple shoes with a round crystal near the toe.

In my mind I thought did my father's love cross over, reaching out to Susie's dreams so she could wear the shoes he made for her? I am not sure. What I am sure about is that life isn't perfect. Just look at the way my sister was created. But there are perfect moments. Like the moments when my father created the most beautiful shoes for Susie.

1. Write the information about this story.

Title	
Author	
Main characters	
Setting	
Plot	
Your opinion	
Message of this story	

2. Write a review of this story.



Name: _____ Title of Book: _____

Book Review Rubric

Written Book Review

Excellent
5 points for each

- Your book review includes the main events of the story in a concise summary.
- You have organized the book review in a way that is appropriate and makes sense. The ideas flow nicely together.
- You have written with strong voice by creating a catchy beginning, making a text-to-self connection, and using active or interesting words.
- Your book review shows strong fluency with varied sentence beginnings and sentences with varied length.
- Your book review has been edited and completely corrected for grammar, mechanics, and spelling.

Good
3 points for each

- Your book review includes some of the main events of the story.
- You have some organization to your book review, but it is lacking a sense of flow and transition from one idea to the next.
- You show some effort with voice, but most of the writing is predictable with simple sentences and few interesting words.
- Your book review shows some fluency with varied sentence beginnings and sentences with varied length.
- Your book review has been proofread, but not completely corrected for grammar, mechanics, and spelling.

Weak
1 point for each

- Your book review does not cover the main events of the story. It is hard to tell what the story is about.
- Your book review lacks organization and structure. There is little or no flow or transition from one idea to the next. The organization does not make sense to the reader.
- You have written with little or no voice. Most or all of the sentences are simple and the word choices are predictable.
- Your book review shows little or no fluency with repeated sentence beginnings and sentences of the same length.
- Your book review has not been edited for grammar, mechanics, and spelling.

Continuation...

	Quality of Effort	Shows Comprehension of Novel	Creativity
Excellent 5	Shows real effort and investment of time. Finished product is neat, clear, and easily understood.	Goes well beyond plot summary. Shows you understood much about the novel.	Very Creative, thought outside the box. Project sticks out for its uniqueness.
Good 3	Mostly clear and understandable but more effort needed to create a high-quality product.	Project clearly relates to your understanding of the novel.	Pretty Creative. Similar to some things we've seen, yet we can tell you really thought about your project.
Weak 1	Poor effort. Project seems quickly thrown together or is unclear.	Project shows little understanding of the novel.	Project is too similar to others seen before; take some time to think about what you could have done to make it more unique.

Additional Comments:

Points Earned _____ /30

Grade Earned _____



Special Task

Read a fiction book that interests you. Write a review about the book read. When done, show it to your adviser or facilitator of your school. Your output serves as your summative evaluation. Refer to the rubric above to guide you in doing the task. God bless! 😊



ANSWERS TO ACTIVITIES AND SAQS



Activity A

1. Here is a list of common book genres.

Fiction

Action and Adventure
Children's Books
Crime
Fantasy
Graphic novels
Horror
Humour

Non-fiction

Biography and Memoirs
Current Affairs & Politics
History & Military
Journalism
Medical, Health, & Fitness
Religion & Spirituality
Science & Technology

Mystery

Romance

Science Fiction

Short Story Collections

Thrillers and Suspense

Self-Help

Sports

Travel

True Crime

2. Answers vary.



Self-Assessment Questions A

1-2.

Title

- The Filipino Heroes League
- My Imaginary Ex
- Founders of Freedom
- Trese: Unreported Murders
- Is it Hot In Here Or Is It Me?
- Waking the Dead
- Manny Pacquiao Pacman
- Pandesal Saves the Day

Type

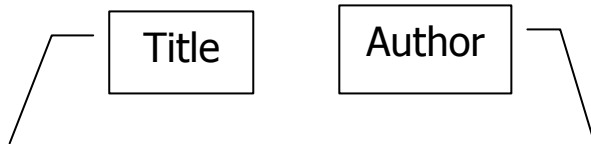
Graphic Novel
Romance
History
True Crime
Humor
Horror
Biography
Children's Book

3. Description 1	Pandesal Saves the Day
Description 2	My Imaginary Ex
Description 3	Founders of Freedom
Description 4	Waking the Dead
Description 5	Trese: Unreported Murders

4. Answer varies.



Activity B



The Brothers Wu and the Good-Luck Eel by **Fran Ng**

This book is a book about two young brothers. The story is told by an old woman who is remembering a story about her family and why they like eels. The story she is telling is about the two young boys who are delivering slippers. Their mom and dad are slipper makers and they make very pretty slippers. The brothers take the slippers to be delivered in a boat through the Pasig River, and when they are in the boat, they have some trouble. They run into a rock because one brother, **Wei Li**, stops rowing and fools around in the boat. **Min Pu**, his brother gets mad because it makes a hole in the boat, and Wei Li loses

Setting



Plot

Main Characters

Plot

his paddle. They are scared because the boat is full of water. They scoop out the water with their hats.
Under the boat, there is an Eel. The eel saves them.
The eel sticks his head in the hole of the boat, because eels like holes. Then the eel plugs the hole, and the brothers are able to row home safely. The old woman is telling her family this story to remind them why they honor the eel.

Message

This story is nice because it is a story about a family and family tradition. The family honors the eel and their cultural history. I liked the descriptions in this book, because it helped me imagine what was happening. I could picture the story happening in my mind. The pictures in the book were very nice too. They were very colourful and descriptive too. The people looked like real people, and the eel looked real too. I also liked that the pictures were nice and big so that I can see what is going on in the picture.

Reader's
Opinion



Self-Assessment Questions B

1.

Title	A Dozen Pairs of Shoes
Author	Luis P. Gatmaitan
Main characters	Tatay, Nanay, Karina, and Susie
Setting	Town
Plot	<i>Answers may vary.</i> Karina and Susie are sisters whose father is the best shoemaker in town. Karina has lots of pretty shoes made by her father but Susie's twelve pairs of shoes are without compare. And for a special reason, this story tells a father's great love for a disabled daughter.
Your opinion	<i>Answers may vary.</i>
Message of the book	<i>Answers may vary.</i> The great love of a parent to his/her family.

2. Answers vary.

Here is a review of the book written by a Filipino playwright who made a musical theatre version of the book.

The story was written by Luis P. Gatmaitan, M.D., who received the Don Carlos Palanca Memorial Awards for Literature for this Children's book. Dr. Gatmaitan got the inspiration to write this story after reading and getting fascinated by Japanese children's books while he was in Tokyo, Japan on a training course in writing non-fiction books for young people under the sponsorship of the Asia/Pacific Cultural Centre for UNESCO. Several of these Japanese children's books depicted stories on love, caring for, and showing respect for the disabled people in Japan.

The story revolves around a middle class family in the Philippines, with a father who is an excellent shoemaker, his loving wife, and their two beautiful daughters. The father's long time dream is for their younger daughter to become a ballerina someday. He vows to make the best ballerina shoes for her. But his dream gets shattered when they find out that the baby's feet are not and will not be developed as normal limbs. Hoping to help realize his father's dream, the older daughter enrolls in a ballet class but fails to make it good in the art form. The father remains hopeful that someday he will have a ballerina for a daughter.

As the physically-challenged younger child grows, she suffers from unfair and rude treatment from other children. Her entire family tries to protect and defend her from the unkindness of the people who make fun of her. The elder sister patiently and lovingly takes on the role of her only playmate and her constant protector. The entire family showers the younger girl with unconditional love, affection, and special care.

Every time her birthday draws near, she tells her older sister that she always dreams about certain pair of shoes. Then, bad luck strikes the family. The father dies after the younger daughter's twelfth birthday. After the burial of the good father, while arranging the personal items of the deceased, the older sister discovers an unopened box filled with the best shoes crafted by their father. The two sisters and their mother are surprised to see that the twelve pairs of shoes in the boxes look exactly the same as the shoes that the younger girl saw in her dreams.

This is undoubtedly a tale of love in the family, specifically, a father's love for his daughter, and an inspiring story on how to care for members of one's family, especially those who have special needs for love, affection, care, and attention.

~Playwright Layete Bucoy



SUMMARY



In this module, you learned that...

- ✓ A book review is a short piece of text that analyzes a book. It is different from a book report such that it only focuses on summarizing a book read.
- ✓ Title, author, main characters, setting, plot, reader's opinion, and message of the book are the parts of a book review.
- ✓ In choosing a book to review, a reader must have interest with the book.
- ✓ There are two kinds of books: non-fiction and fiction. Non-fiction books contain factual information. Fiction books contain a story which was made up by the author.
- ✓ Action, children's books, crime, fantasy, graphic novels, horror, humor, mystery, romance, science fiction, suspense are common examples of fiction.
- ✓ Biography, memoirs, journals/diaries, history, politics, journalism are common examples of non-fiction.



REFERENCES

Supplementary Readings

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