Book Report Template

* The following is a recommended template for book reports for inclusion in meritorious packages. While there is no official format the purpose of the book report is to demonstrate a Marine has read a book from the Commandant’s Professional Reading Program (CPRP) to the meritorious board. This also provides the Marine an opportunity to hone their writing and correspondence skills which are essential as they increase in rank and responsibility.
* Book reports should conform to a 5 paragraph format and not exceed 2 pages in length.
* While book reports are generally just summaries of the work, it is encouraged for the Marines to try and discuss what themes or lessons they took away from the book.
* Of note, the expectation for Marines is to read 5 books from the CPRP a year and is at command discretion to track and validate.
* Formatting below is standard for most papers and provides ideas of what to right and how your report should look. Marines may deviate from the provided formatting and modify as desired.
* Utilize the United States Marine Corps Commandant’s Professional Reading List Discussion Guide to assist with formulating your thoughts for your book report. <https://usmcu.usmc.afpims.mil/Portals/218/CPRL-Book-Discussion-Guide.pdf>

Rank I.M. Marine

Unit

Date

Book Title, (Titles are always underlined)

Author’s Name

The introductory paragraph should introduce the general themes or content of the book. This paragraph should be a general overview of what was covered. As we are conforming to a five paragraph format, the Marine should choose three themes they wish to discuss. For example, The White Donkey, a Marine could discuss leadership, training, and post-traumatic stress. This establishes what each paragraph will be discussing. There is not a set number of sentences per paragraph, but three to five will achieve at least a page long document.

The second paragraph will start with our leadership theme as discussed above. The Marine can address different segments of the White Donkey and provide examples from the text of good and bad leadership. This is one way to discuss leadership but not the only way. If the Marine references parts of the text, such as a direct quote, ensure you include where it came from at the end of the sentence. (Author Last Name, p. ##) This is an informal method of a citation but a good place for Marines to start developing professional writing skills. There are plenty of online resources on how to properly cite information in a paper but for the purposes of the book report this is acceptable.

Paragraph three will now address the theme of training. The Marine is encouraged to use different examples than used previously. The Marine is to demonstrate with the book report they have read the entire work. As you are demonstrating what you took way from the title there are no wrong answers.

Our fourth paragraph will be the final theme of post-traumatic stress from our example. While the Marine can discuss how it was portrayed in the book, they can also discuss how Abe copes with it. Rather than just a synopsis the Marine could discuss what better ways Abe could have dealt with post-traumatic stress, programs available through the Marine Corps, or how maybe they in a leadership position would have assisted Abe overcome his challenges. When writing your book report try to go beyond summarizing. This is an opportunity to show critical thought.

The conclusion paragraph should be the Marine’s overall thoughts and feelings of the book. Marines will summarize the themes they have discussed and how the book has benefitted the Marine professionally or personally for reading it. Do not feel restricted to write your paper as outlined above. This is one way to write a report and there are many different styles to crafting a synopsis. Ultimately this is your work. Be creative and use this as an opportunity to grow professionally in your writing abilities to convey information.