

HISTORY OF VIETNAM

GUIDELINES FOR BOOK REVIEWS

O'BRIEN TIM: THE LAKE IN THE WOODS

The use of outside reading is intended to furnish in palatable form information not available or less pleasantly accessible in your texts or in the school library. Acquaintance with the great mass of historical and/or political literature can be and should be an enjoyable experience.

READING THE ACCOUNT

As you read, take notes on what impresses you, favorably or unfavorably, as well as on material that confirms or challenges previously held prejudices. As you finish the interpretation ask yourself, " What is my reaction to this account?" It would be considered trivial merely to state, "The book was interesting?"

PREPARING THE REVIEW

In general there are three functions of a book review.

- 1. To describe content.***
- 2. To evaluate the book.***
- 3. To offer subjective reflections on the book.***

A good review is not a recitation of content word for word or chapter by chapter. Regurgitation of that type requires no special mental skills. The review should be informative, analytical, and critical. It is not advisable to separate content from criticism; they should be interwoven. The following are questions you might consider when reviewing your book:

- 1. What was the writer's purpose in preparing the work? Did he achieve this goal?***
- 2. Is the book convincing? Is it comprehensive? Does it neglect important phases of the topic?***
- 3. Does the author show biases?***
- 4. What intellectual questions has the author raised in your mind?***
- 5. What seem to be some of the unique aspects of the account?***
- 6. Is the writing style popular or scholarly?***
- 7. Does the author use primary or secondary sources? Are the sources carefully cited?***

You should attempt to be fair in your review. Criticisms should not be made in vague and general statements; they should be grounded in specific evidence from the content of the work. Give page numbers. Prepare your review to answer favorably the questions you raise.

The review must be **5** pages in length. Double-spaced, with a cover-page containing an original title.

PROOF READ

DATE DUE: 7 January, 2003 NO EXTENSIONS