BRIDGES EDITION

GENRE readers' & writers' WORKSHOP™

Book Reviews



Stay Under the Sea!

Different Isn't Ugly

Oh, My Aching Back!





by Cynthia Swain

Benchmark EDUCATION

Genre: Book Reviews
Level: K/20*

GENRE readers' & writers' WORKSHOP™

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LITERARY ANALYSIS
- Respond to and interpret text
- Make text-to-text connections
- Analyze the genre

READING SKILLS
Comprehension
- Make judgments

Word Study
- Adjectives that describe character or plot

Tier Two Vocabulary (see Glossary)

WRITING SKILLS
Writer's Tools
- Strong verbs

Writer's Craft
- How to write a book review

THEME CONNECTIONS
- **Arts and Culture**

*The reading level assigned to this text is based on the genre examples only. "Focus on the Genre," "Reread," and "Writer's Craft" features were not leveled. These sections are intended for read-aloud or shared reading.

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The Readers' & Writers' Genre Workshop series includes eleven fiction and nonfiction genres. There are two titles with multiple stories for each genre.

How to use this book

1. Learn about the genre by reading pages 2–3. Get background information about the reviews on pages 4–5.
2. Read the book reviews for enjoyment.
3. Reread the book reviews and answer the questions on pages 11, 15, and 21.
4. Reread the last book review. Pay attention to the comments in the margins. See how a critic writes a book review.
5. Follow the steps on pages 22–23 to write your own book review.
6. Complete the activity on the inside back cover. Answer the follow-up questions.

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Different Isn't Ugly



Oh, My Aching Back!

Three Book Reviews

by Cynthia Swain

Table of Contents

Focus on the Genre: Book Reviews 2

The Power of Reviews 4

Stay Under the Sea! 6

Different Isn't Ugly 12

Oh, My Aching Back! 16

The Writer's Craft: Book Reviews 22

Glossary 24

Make Connections Across Texts . . . . . Inside Back Cover

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BOOK REVIEWS

What is a book review?

A book review is a composition that evaluates a book. In a book review, the reviewer, or critic, describes what happens in the book, and shares opinions about the book. The critic discusses what is good about the book, and what is bad about it. The critic uses details from the book to support his or her opinions.

What is the purpose of a book review?

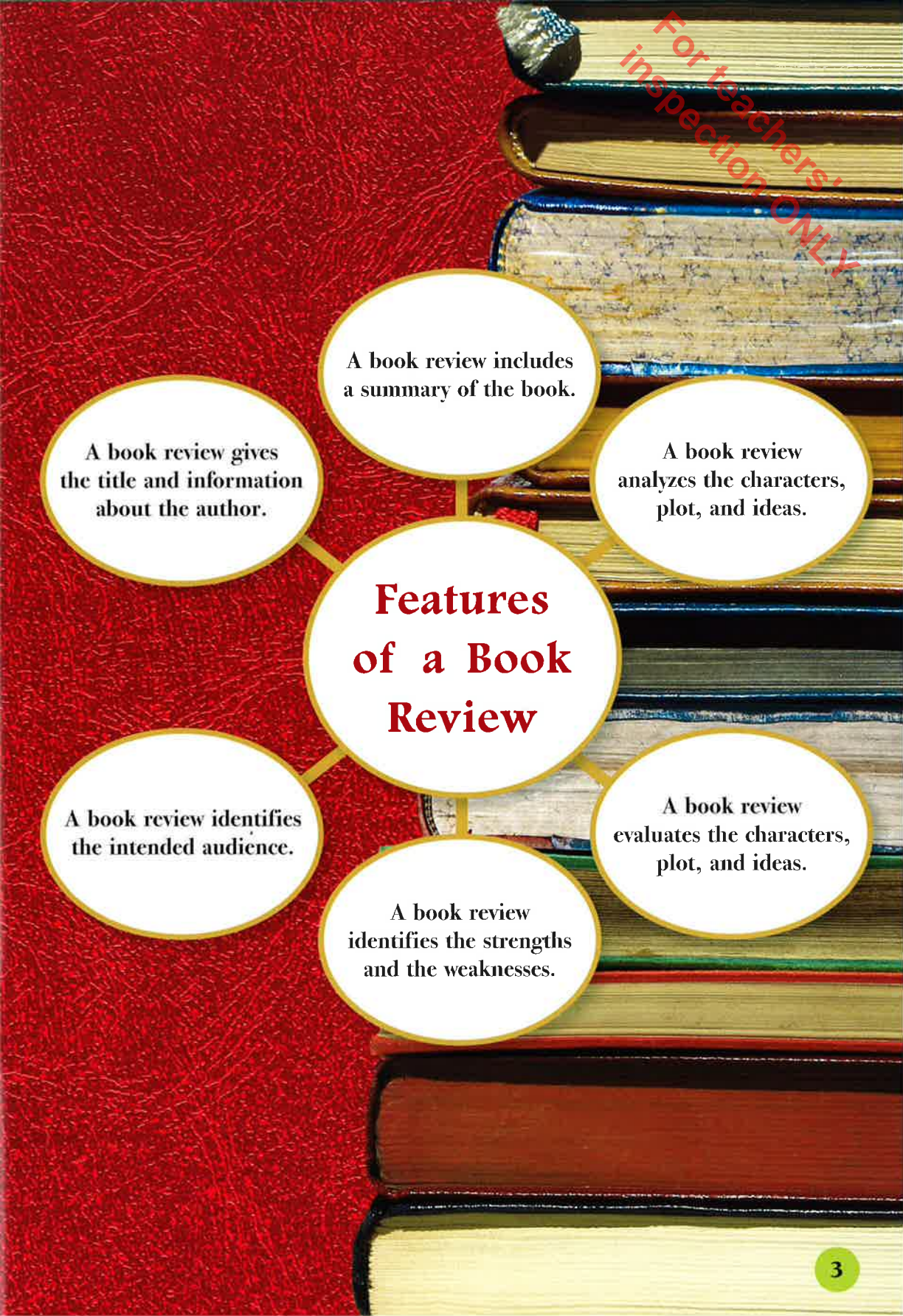
Many people want to know about a book before they read it. They want to know what the book is about and if it is the "right" book for them. A book review helps readers decide whether to read a book.

Who is the audience for a book review?

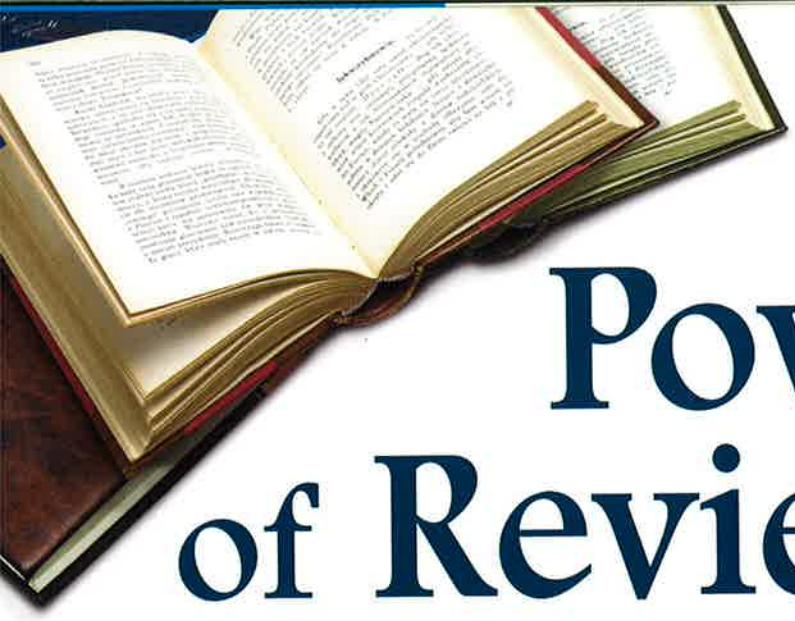
When an author writes a book, he or she has an audience in mind. The audience is all of the people interested in the subject. When a critic writes a book review, he or she has an audience in mind, too. The critic writes to all of the people who might want to read the book that he or she is reviewing.

How do you read a book review?

Pay attention to the plot, characters, and subject matter. Ask yourself, "Would this book interest me? Did it interest the reviewer? How can I tell?" Think about how the reviewer rated the book. What did the critic like? What did he or she not like? Did he or she give good reasons for his or her opinions? After you read a review, ask yourself, "Do I want to read the book now?"



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The Power of Reviews

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Hans Christian Andersen was a famous writer. He was born in Odense, Denmark, in 1805. He died in Copenhagen in 1875. He wrote more than 150 fairy tales during his lifetime. Some of his tales had happy endings. Others were very sad. Andersen heard many of these tales when he was a child. His most famous tales are "The Little Mermaid," "The Ugly Duckling," and "The Princess and the Pea."

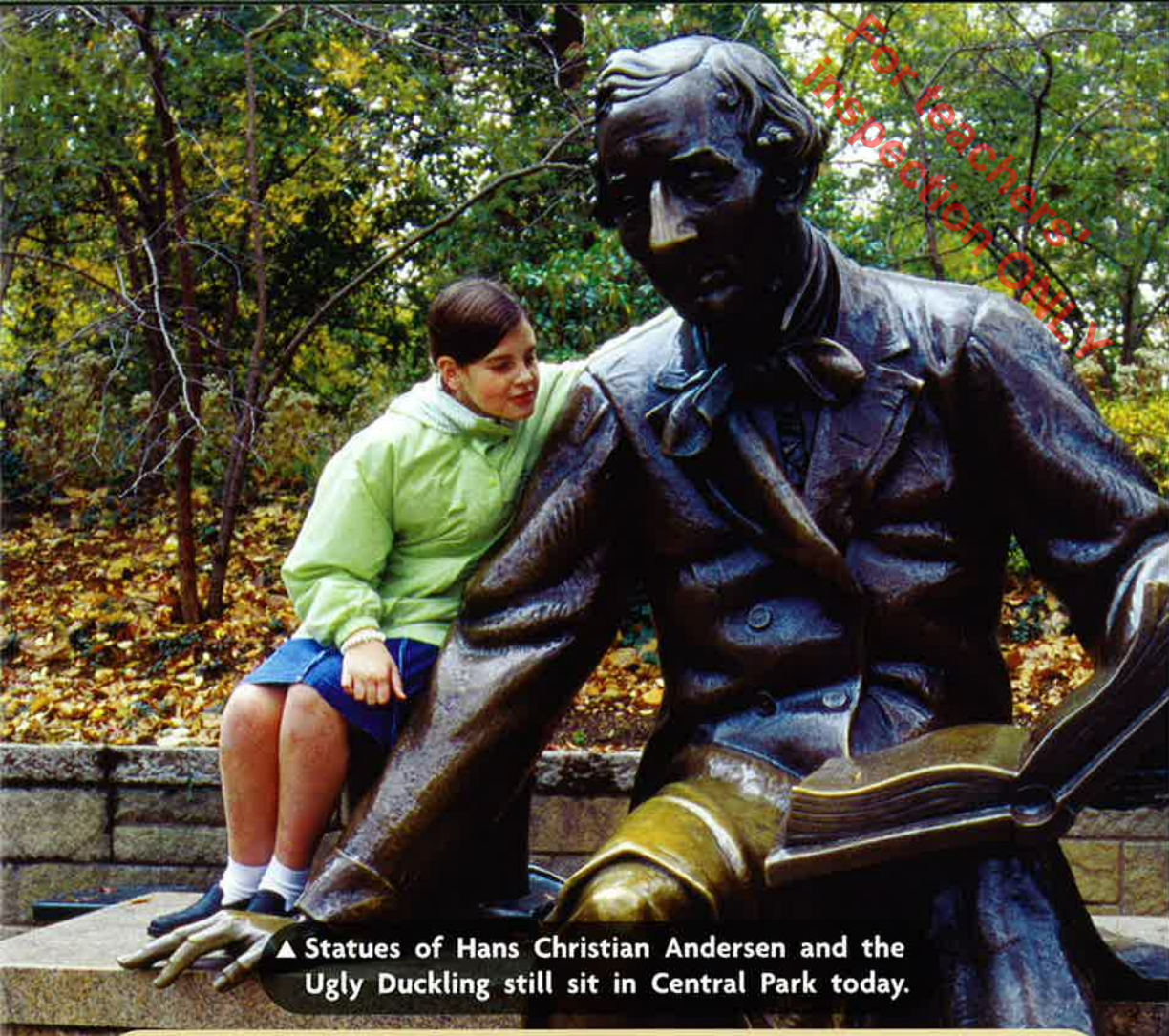
When Andersen's tales were first published, not everyone liked them. Book reviewers in Denmark thought that his writing was childish. People who read the book reviews didn't buy many of Andersen's books.

Andersen was angry and hurt. He said that the reviewers were being unfair. They didn't understand that his stories were meant for everyone. The stories were written for adults and children alike to appreciate.

In 1836, a reviewer from France visited Andersen in Denmark. This reviewer liked Andersen's stories. He published a review that praised the stories. The review made readers want to buy Andersen's books.

Today, more than 150 years later, Andersen's fairy tales are still popular all over the world. There are even statues of him and the Ugly Duckling in Central Park in New York City.

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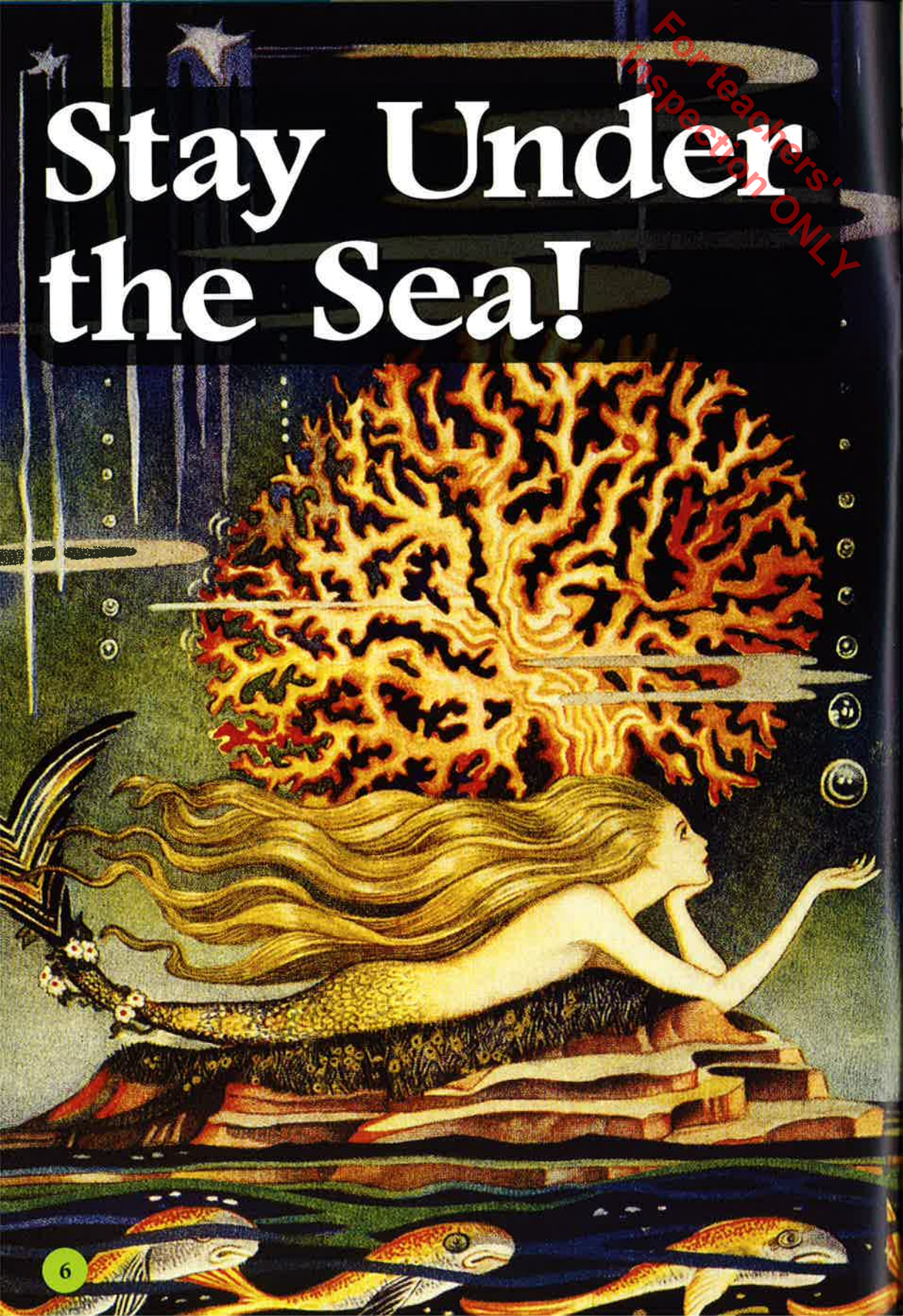
▲ Statues of Hans Christian Andersen and the Ugly Duckling still sit in Central Park today.

Tools Writers Use

Strong Verbs

Which sounds better: "I talked loudly" or "I shouted"? Yes, **shouted** is a stronger verb, or action word. **Shouted** doesn't need an adverb, such as **loudly**, to make it better. We already know that **shouting** is loud. Another way to use strong verbs is to choose synonyms that specifically describe an action. These words help show, rather than tell, what happened. For example, do you **walk** to class, or do you **stride**, **amble**, **shuffle**, or **saunter**? Finally, authors use strong verbs to shorten, or tighten sentences. Example: "I **designed** the poster" (verb: **designed**) rather than "I **was** the designer of the poster" (verb: **was**).

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