

A

Blurbs

A **blurb** is a short text, usually printed on the back cover of a book, describing what the book is about and sometimes including quotes from critics. Here are some examples.

¹ /'pɔɪnjənt/ moving and sad

² description of a sequence of events

³ praised by the public

⁴ very interesting and engaging

⁵ rather dark, mournful and gloomy (**lugubrious** is often used of people too)

⁶ /mə'kʌ:brə/ often cruel or disgusting, concerned with death

⁷ causing great fear

⁸ powerful story that keeps you interested

⁹ the ability to understand what something is really like

¹⁰ so interesting or exciting that it holds your attention totally

¹¹ mysterious

¹² amazing

¹³ in the face of a bad situation

¹⁴ which arouse memories or images

¹⁵ who has the same name as the title of the book

¹⁶ main character

¹⁷ pleasant and interesting

B

Some other types of books

A **journal** is a written record of what you have done each day, e.g. a learning journal. It is also a publication containing academic articles, published at regular intervals, e.g. every three months.

Memoirs /'memwə:z/ are a written record of a person's own life, typically by a politician or military figure.

An **encyclopedia** is a book or set of books containing articles arranged in alphabetical order, dealing with the whole of human knowledge or part of it.

An **anthology** is a collection of, for example, poems or short stories by different authors.

A **manual** is usually a technical book with instructions, for example, a car manual.

A **logbook** is a book that records events, times, etc., for example, all the journeys made by a lorry or ship.

C

Other expressions for talking about books

I'm reading a book about the history of Ireland. It's **compulsive reading**. [difficult to stop once you've started; *formal*] Or It's one of those books you just **can't put down**. [*informal*] It's very **informative**. [gives a lot of useful information]

Nancy Riley's novel about mental breakdown, published in 1950, was **ahead of its time**. [contained ideas that no one else had yet thought of or discussed at that time] Her 1955 book *Exciting Careers for Women* was a **product of its time**, though the ideas seem tame and old-fashioned, even gender-biased, now. [a reflection of that time]

Bertram's latest novel is not a difficult book; in fact it's rather **lightweight**. [not complex; slightly negative connotation] It's good **bedtime reading**. [nice to read in bed] His last one was **heavy going** and I just couldn't **get into** it. [difficult to read] [become involved/engage with] Nonetheless, his books always attract a wide **readership**. [number of people who read them]

Common mistakes

An academic publication containing articles by different authors that is issued periodically (e.g. three times a year) is normally called a *journal* (NOT *magazine*).

Exercises

22.1 Which names for types of books or other reading material from B opposite would best fit these statements?

- 1 It's by General Rogers, who led the allied forces during the recent war.
- 2 It's so badly written I don't know how anyone could learn how to use the machine by reading it.
- 3 I recommend it. If you want to read a typical selection of modern poets, it's excellent.
- 4 The latest issue contains a paper by Professor Susan Frith, in which she presents a new theory of the human mind.

22.2 Rewrite these sentences using words or phrases from the opposite page to describe the experience of reading particular books.

- 1 I just could not seem to become involved in the story, so I stopped reading it.
- 2 It's not very serious, and it's easy to read.
- 3 It's dense and very difficult to read.
- 4 Take it to bed with you; it's just right when you're settling down at night. All the time I was reading it, I just couldn't wait to get to the next page.
- 5 You find yourself wanting to read more, it's so fascinating.
- 6 The book is full of useful information.
- 7 Her second novel did not attract a large number of readers.
- 8 This book contains some great moments of true understanding of how things are.
- 9 It is a pleasantly interesting tale about a boy who nurses an injured bird.
- 10 Mena Harrap's self-help book was a reflection of the time it was written, but what was true in the 1980s doesn't necessarily apply nowadays.

22.3 Fill the gaps in these sentences with appropriate adjectives from the opposite page, based on the meaning in brackets.

- 1 The story takes place against a rather background in 18th-century London. (mournful and gloomy)
- 2 It's full of comedy and satire. (humour despite a bad situation)
- 3 The book is a documentation of abuse in a prison. (frightening)
- 4 The novel is full of passages depicting life in Australia at the turn of the 19th century. (arousing memories or images)
- 5 It's a very novel; you never really know what is happening until right at the end. (mysterious, puzzling)
- 6 The novel is a portrayal of life in a coal-mining community during the last economic recession. (moving and very sad)
- 7 John Farr's latest novel is a masterpiece. (very impressive, great)
- 8 *House of the Dead* is a story of torture and death in a medieval castle. (cruel and dark)
- 9 The novel's heroine, Maria Selune, leaves home at the age of 18 and travels through Asia. (who has the same name as the book's title)
- 10 Laisha and Asoka are the in this unusual tale of rural family life. (main characters)

22.4 Match the things you might find in particular kinds of books with an appropriate type of book.

- | | | |
|---|--------------------------|----------------|
| 1 a section on 'troubleshooting' / problem-solving | <input type="checkbox"/> | a encyclopedia |
| 2 an article about waterfalls, with pictures | <input type="checkbox"/> | b journal |
| 3 a record of a recent examination or test of a lorry | <input type="checkbox"/> | c manual |
| 4 a day-to-day record of life during a war in 1776 | <input type="checkbox"/> | d logbook |

22.5 Over to you

Think of a book you read and enjoyed recently. Which words from this unit describe it best?