

Thousand Oaks Computer Club

Software Review Instructions

1. **DO NOT REGISTER** this software until your review is accepted. You are responsible for its return if the review is not completed satisfactorily. We suggest, that after your review is accepted, you do not register it. We may give you the next update for review, and you can return the earlier version for a club door prize.
2. **You must complete and submit your review no later than 30 days after software receipt**, unless otherwise arranged. If you can't meet the 30-day deadline, do not take the software. If you experience **problems** with the software, **notify the review coordinator within 5 days after receipt (review @ topcc.org - 805 492-3522)**. If you fail to comply, you may not be granted further review privileges. If you do not do the review and do not return the software in a reasonable time, you will be billed for the software. ***Please!!! Do not make us chase you or you will not be granted further review privileges.***
3. If you plan to write an unfavorable review, check with the Software Review Coordinator first.

How To Write A Review

1. Install and use the product.
2. Read the documentation.
3. Organize your material. Make outlines, & notes.
4. Develop a writing style. Write in the first person the way you would say it. Read it aloud. Reread. Revise it.
5. Common writing errors, and how to avoid them.
 - Run-on sentences - the most common error. Too many thoughts in one sentence. When in doubt make a long sentence into two or more shorter ones. Your writing style will be improved.
 - Incomplete sentences - a sentence must contain a complete thought.
 - Rambling, disjointed, awkward sentences - Be concise. Use definite, specific, concrete language. Omit needless words. Keep related words together. Use shorter sentences. Make long sentences into two or more shorter ones.
 - Repeating the same words too frequently, especially in the same paragraph. Use synonyms.
 - Beginning sentences with prepositions like "With", "From", "For" or "To", etc., or with "And", and "So".
 - Too frequent use of "I", "it" or "its", "they", or "their". Tell us what "it" is, and who "they" are!

REVIEW FORMAT- Be sure your review includes the following in the order shown:

1. A **title** - Name of software, version number, and the reviewer's name.
 2. An **introduction** - Introduce the subject matter. What is your review is about? Provide an overview.
 3. A **body** – Make separate paragraphs for each subject. This is the description of the program. Tell what the program does, not how to use it. Use a simple, conversational tone. Use your own words. Describe your experiences when using the program instead of providing an impersonal list of features. Do not plagiarize the manufacturer's descriptions. Don't use terms and expressions readers may not understand. Assess the ease or difficulty of learning and use. Are there features you liked or disliked? . Be specific about the program's strengths and weaknesses. Evaluate the program on its own merits. **DO NOT** name other products if making a comparison. Did you have any problems with installation, operation, or conflicts with other programs? Did it do what was expected of it? Are there any changes you would recommend? How good are the manuals and the online instructions? Did you require tech support? How good was it? Write about the good, bad and indifferent. Be specific.
 4. A **conclusion**, summary or ending of some type - Do not leave the reader dangling. If necessary, summarize some of the materials in the body of the writing. Provide an overall impression of the product. How would you rate the software as far as ease of use, value vs. price, and user level? Would you recommend the program or not? Why?
 5. After the end of review include: (If any of this information is in the review, you need not repeat it here)
 - Street price- phone, view ads, the Web (use a shopping bot like mysimon.com). **DON'T** use retail price.
 - Operating system & amount of memory used vs. required. Special system or hardware requirements.
 - Vendor's full name, address, phone number, and Web address. Tech support policies (free or the cost)
 - Your article should contain 500 to 1000 words. It may contain less or more in special circumstances.
- **You must use your spelling checker.** Use a grammar checker. Read the review over carefully a few times. Read it aloud. **Read it again the next day.** You will catch all kinds of problems on each rereading. **Don't use columns, underlines, italics, bolds, or double spacing after a period.** Start paragraphs at the left margin. Submit your review via e-mail to Bart Koslow (**review @ topcc.org**), or on floppy disk.