

12 Genre and discipline-specific writing

- *What has been written/published before?* Put the text in the wider context.
- *What is the content of the text?* Summarise the book. Describe its general organisation, and the contents of each chapter.
- *Is it any good?* Draw attention to parts of the book and comment on them positively and/or negatively – refer to other publications that have done something similar if you can. Look at the purpose of the book, and whether or not it succeeds. Is it appropriate for the audience, for example.
- *What about the design, etc.?* Make any other comments on, for example, price, production, proof-reading, size, colour.
- *Is it appropriate?* Conclude, discussing whether it is appropriate for the audience, and make a recommendation.

Organisation of the review

The book review would have the stages shown in Figure 12.7 on page 231.

Activity 12.7 Understanding the structure of reviews

Match the stages in the outline on page 231 to the text types described in various sections of this book. For example, ‘Description of the subject of the text’ is covered in Chapter 7, pp. 117–124.

WRITING AN ABSTRACT

You will probably at some time have to write an executive summary or an abstract. The abstract can be part of a report or it can stand alone. For that reason it must be complete in itself. The abstract provides an overview of a study based on information from other sections of the report. The reader can read the abstract to obtain enough information about the study to decide if they want to read the complete report.

The abstract will have the title ‘abstract’, although in some subject areas, this section may be titled ‘summary’. If it is part of a report, it usually comes after the title and before the introduction.

Abstracts from most fields of study are written in a very similar way. The information included and the order in which it is written are very conventional.

- Start by giving some background information to justify your study.
- Then describe the main purpose of your study.
- This will be followed by a summary of the methodology used.
- The key results will come next.
- Then evaluate these results.
- Finally, briefly describe the conclusions, which may include recommendations.

Notice that this is the same structure as the report.