Introduction to College Writing D1
Writing Essay #2: Product Review

Many of us are familiar with reviews—for movies, plays, restaurants, and so on. A review is a type of evaluation. Reviews can be useful. They help us make decisions about what we watch, read, and buy. Reviews can also be a source of income. Believe it or not, many companies pay consumers to write reviews of their products. They use these evaluations to improve their products and compete more effectively in the marketplace.

Your assignment is to write a review of a product with which you are very familiar. You are to inform, in a formal way, people such as your classmates, teacher and other interested people, about a product you know well. The purpose is to give your audience the benefit of your expertise in making buying decisions.

Your review should have four parts:

• **The introduction.** Introduce the product by name and describe it in detail. You should share with the reader how you came to be familiar with the product.

• **A discussion of the product’s strengths.** Identify a small number (e.g. 3) of aspects of the product (design, for example) that are especially strong and explain why you think so and give concrete details and examples. Make sure you know what criteria you are using to make your judgment. Make sure that you can explain this to the reader.

• **A discussion of the product’s weaknesses.** What aspect(s) of the product don’t succeed or could be improved? Why are these aspects important? What suggestions do you have for improvement? Again, you don’t have to mention every little thing. Focus on the most important weakness(es) and describe it/them in depth and detail.

• **An overall evaluation of the product.** What is your general opinion of the product? Do you recommend it or not? What’s the “bottom line”—thumbs up or thumbs down? What “final grade” do you give it (A, B, C, D, F)? Why? Is it a good value for the consumer or not? Explain.

Your first draft should be between 300 and 500 words in length. It should be double-spaced, hand-written or typed. The first draft is worth 20 points. The second draft is worth 50.

PRE-WRITING TASK. Make an Outline!

It’s good to do some brainstorming on this topic before you write the paper, and you should also make an outline that you can follow as you write. An outline will help you
keep your ideas organized. If your paper is better organized from the beginning, then you won’t have to re-write it so many times and can get a better grade with less work. Imagine that!

Make an outline for your product review. Follow the model below. You don’t have to address three strengths and three weaknesses. There could be a smaller or larger number.

Outline Template: Product Review.

a. Introduction.
   i. Story of how you discovered or started using the product
   ii. Purpose & description of the product

b. The main strengths of the product are ___, ___, and ___.
   i. Strength 1 explanation/description:
      1. Detail/example
      2. Detail/example

   ii. Strength 2 explanation/description
      1. Detail/example
      2. Detail/example

   iii. Strength 3 explanation/description
      1. Detail/example
      2. Detail/example

c. The main weaknesses of the product are ___, ___, and ___.
   i. Weakness 1 explanation/description:
      1. Detail/example
      2. Detail/example

   ii. Weakness 2 explanation/description:
      1. Detail/example
      2. Detail/example

   iii. Weakness 3 explanation/description:
      1. Detail/example
      2. Detail/example

d. Overall evaluation.
   The “bottom line” and your reasons for this final “grade.”