

Positive and negative language for reviews

Write + for positive and – for negative next to the two expressions in each section below. There is always one of each. Note that some words below don't fit in the section they are in (e.g. are not really about availability), but are there to contrast with the one it is with.

Looking at both sides

benefit
drawback

cons
pros

Availability

USP/ (unique) selling point
sold out

Comparisons to others/ Market share/ Popularity

cutting edge
uncompetitive

market leader
resting on its laurels

award-winning
overrated

unique
weird

odd
quirky

distinctive
strange

unmatched
unoriginal

famous
notorious

outstanding
stands out like a sore thumb

Content

original
unrealistic

action-packed
dense

fun
trivial

Cost

priceless
worthless

a bargain
bargain bin

a steal
a rip off

reasonable
tacky

overpriced
underappreciated

Design/ Attractiveness/ Appearance

bland
subtle

easy on the eye
an eyesore

Difficulty/ Ease of use/ Effort needed

complicated/ overwhelming
sophisticated

easy to use
simplistic

childish/ juvenile
comprehensible

a grind
pushes you

can't make head or tail of it
intriguing

tough going
unputdownable

Features/ Functions

feature-packed
fiddly

lacking
stripped down

trying to be everything to every man
versatile

adaptable
changeable

multifunction
neither one thing nor the other/ neither fish nor fowl

History/ Future

a classic
(very much) of its time

dated
up-to-date

needs updating
regularly updated

a fad
up-to-the-minute

flash in the pan
instant hit

minority interest
slow burner

Marketing (claims)

hyped
renowned

a let down
lives up to...

masterpiece
“masterpiece”



genius
so-called genius

Motivation (to carry on)

consistent
monotonous/ repetitive

engrossing
gross

irritating
stimulating

annoying
captivating/ gripping

Portability/ Size

a brick
pocket-sized

Reliability

breaks down
breaks the mould

faultless
faulty

predictable
reliable

impeccable
imprecise

delightful
fragile

Suitability/ Usefulness

indispensable
unsuitable

Time

addictive
time consuming

killing time
time flies

impressive
shocking

General/ Others

astonishing
dreadful

amusing
unintentionally amusing

terrible
terrific

appealing
appealing to the lowest common denominator

Recommendations

I heartedly recommend...
I was disheartened by...

I couldn't recommend... more.
I wouldn't necessarily recommend...

If you like..., then you'll love...
... is strictly for fans of...

I wouldn't be in any hurry to...
Rush out and...

Don't miss...
Give... a miss.

... is sure to disappoint if you expect...
You won't be disappointed if you...

You shouldn't... or you'll regret it.
You won't regret...

Don't bother with...
Don't look any further, just...

Brainstorming stage

First of all without looking above, try to write positive and negative words that could be used to explain each thing below in reviews, e.g. in a review of a language learning app. Many words not above are also possible.

Looking at both sides**Availability****Comparisons to others/ Market share/ Popularity****Content****Cost****Design/ Attractiveness/ Appearance****Difficulty/ Ease of use/ Effort needed****Features/ Functions****History/ Future**

Marketing (claims)

Motivation (to carry on)

Portability/ Size

Reliability

Suitability/ Usefulness

Time

General/ Others

Recommendations

Use the mixed answers to help with the brainstorming task above.

- (very much) of its time
- “masterpiece”
- ... is strictly for fans of...
- ... is sure to disappoint if you expect...
- a bargain
- a brick
- a classic
- a fad
- a grind
- a let down
- a rip off of...
- a steal
- action-packed
- adaptable
- addictive
- amusing
- an eyesore
- annoying
- appealing
- appealing to the lowest common denominator
- astonishing
- award-winning
- bargain bin
- benefit
- bland
- breaks down
- breaks the mould
- can't make head or tail of it
- captivating/ gripping
- changeable
- childish/ juvenile
- complicated/ overwhelming
- comprehensible
- cons
- consistent
- cutting edge
- dated
- delicate/ fragile
- delightful
- dense
- distinctive
- Don't bother with...
- Don't look any further, just...
- Don't miss...
- drawback
- dreadful



- easy on the eye
- easy to use
- engrossing
- famous
- faultless
- faulty
- feature-packed
- fiddly
- flash in the pan
- fun
- genius
- Give... a miss.
- gross
- hyped
- I couldn't recommend... more.
- I heartedly recommend...
- I was disheartened by...
- I wouldn't be in any hurry to...
- I wouldn't necessarily recommend...
- If you like..., then you'll love...
- impeccable
- imprecise
- impressive
- indispensable
- instant hit
- intriguing
- irritating
- killing time
- lacking
- lives up to...
- market leader
- masterpiece
- minority interest
- monotonous/ repetitive
- multifunction
- needs updating
- neither one thing nor the other/ neither fish nor fowl
- notorious
- odd
- original
- outstanding
- overpriced
- overrated
- pocket-sized
- predictable
- priceless
- pros



- pushes you
- quirky
- reasonable
- regularly updated
- reliable
- renowned
- resting on its laurels
- Rush out and...
- selling point
- shocking
- simplistic
- slow burner
- so-called genius
- sold out
- sophisticated
- stands out like a sore thumb
- stimulating
- strange
- stripped down
- subtle
- tacky
- terrible
- terrific
- time consuming
- time flies
- tough going
- trivial
- trying to be everything to every man
- uncompetitive
- underappreciated
- unintentionally amusing
- unique
- unmatched
- unoriginal
- unputdownable
- unrealistic
- unsuitable
- up-to-date
- up-to-the-minute
- versatile
- weird
- worthless
- You shouldn't... or you'll regret it.
- You won't be disappointed if you...
- You won't regret...

Use the paired ones above to help. Note that some are not in the right sections.

Positive and negative language for reviews brainstorming game

Work in pairs. Choose one thing that could be reviewed such as one of the things below. Choose which of you will be positive about it and who will be negative about it. Take turns saying positive and negative things until you both run out of ideas, listening carefully to your partner to make sure their sentences make sense and that you don't contradict each other. Then choose other things to review and do the same, each time changing who is positive and who says negative things. You can copy what your partner said earlier if you like, as long as it also matches the new topic.

Possible things to review

- A restaurant
- A movie
- A TV series
- A play/ A musical/ An opera
- A concert/ A gig
- A book
- A computer game/ A video game
- An amusement park ride
- An art exhibition
- A building/ Some architecture
- A fashion show/ A clothes shop

Play the same game, but this time both taking the same side and continuing the same positive description of something or the same negative description of something (not both). Continue until someone repeats or runs out of ideas, then do the same for other kinds of review above.