Mini-Mentors for Review-Writing

What could you use help with in your review? What could take your review to the next level and make it *even* better?

The mini-mentor texts below can help you with some common elements of reviews: getting started, writing a synopsis of the text you are reviewing, and articulating the theme (or message) of the text.

Read each. (The whole mentor text is linked to the author's name if you'd like to see more or to see how this mini-mentor fits in!)
Jot some notes on what you notice about each, and then **make some choices**: what will you use in *your* review

Mentor	We Could Call It...	What I Notice	What I Will Borrow (Place an X in this column if this is something you are intentionally going to try in your review)
For Getting Started...			
They are up there, and maybe I should be embarrassed about it, but I'm not. When my kids were born, I stocked their bookshelves with books from my own childhood and teenaged years — so they are up there, nestled amongst the Judy Blume and Paula Danziger, easily taking up about a third of my girls' bookshelf. With their garish 1980s cover art, order forms in the back, and often some sort of badge proclaiming series names like "Two Hearts," "Caprice," "Heart to Heart." Oh yes, the teen romances are up there. -Juanita Giles	**Personal Story Into**		

[(Another mentor text that does the same thing)](#)			
What would you do if monsters were real? No, wait. Think about that for a moment. If the last several years have taught us anything, it's that our *actual* reactions to things are not always (or ever) what we imagine they might be. I mean, what would you do if a global pandemic was real? What would you do if the millions of dead were real? What would you do if American fascism was real? What would you do if monsters were real? Cadwell Turnbull knows exactly what you'd do. Almost all of you. Almost all the time. You'd do nothing. - [Jason Sheehan](#)	**Repeating Questions Intro**		

Diversity (or, more accurately, the lack of it) has long been a Very Big Problem in technology and science. Google and other Silicon Valley giants, for example, have disclosed that their work forces are dominated by white men. And the companies point to a "pipeline" issue — not enough Black and Latino children getting into tech and science in the first place whom they can later recruit. Now here comes a book that tackles this "pipeline" issue head-on. -- Pui-Wing Tam (Another mentor text that does the same thing)	**Here's The Issue Intro...**		

For Giving a Synopsis...

It's just after winter break, and Jenna returns to seventh grade after her first holiday since her parents' divorce, being freshly dumped by her "perfect" boyfriend, and having fallen out of sync with her best friend, who has a perfect boyfriend of her own. What a good start. It's all there: the parent trouble, the competitive ex-boyfriend who is always underfoot, the best friend who has other priorities, and yes, an annoying yet interesting and handsome new guy, and the smart and imperfect girl who has to figure it all out. -- Juanita Giles	**Start-and-Topics Synopsis**		
Marisol Rainey is a child in the grip of anxiety. The kind of anxiety that stops her from doing the things she wants to do. Marisol is scared of swimming, and new places, and overwhelming relatives, and being alone in the car. "Why do I have to be scared of everything all the time? No one else is, Marisol thinks." She believes she alone has this sort of anxiety. So she would be good company for readers going through something similar. Marisol is proof, in case they're	**Reader Connection Synopsis**		

worried, that they are not the only ones. -- Atinuke			
"Maya and the Robot," a delightful tale by Eve L. Ewing, champions young people's interest in technology and the world of science fairs. The heroine is Maya, a shy brainiac who is Black and a fifth grader. The novel takes us through Maya's first-day-of-school jitters and swiftly sets up a story line where she finds, fixes and amazes everyone with an artificially intelligent robot named Ralph. Along the way, Maya explores popular tech tools and trends. Emailing with a renowned robotics professor at Stanford? Check. Learning about different types of batteries? Check. Finding out about a flavor of A.I. known as "natural language processing"? Check. The book even weaves a glossary of robotics terms — actuators, anyone? — into the story. - Pui-Wing Tam	**Big Overview Synopsis**		

Talking About Theme...

While it tackles issues such as racism, Wang's novel is about finding common ground. --Jean Kwok	**See-Saw Theme**		
And the message, to me at least, is clear: Young readers, don't be daunted by technology and science. -- Pui-Wang Tam	**Clear Drumroll-Colon Theme**		
Friendship is a common theme in Kelly's novels, which vividly evoke the vulnerability and anguish of early adolescence, when friendship is of the utmost	**Describe a Common Theme**		

importance. --Atinuke			
But the strangest, most haunting thing about *No Gods, No Monsters* — the thing that's buried deep, *deep* in the heart of this difficult book and speaks loudest to this moment and our reality — is the idea that most people, most of the time, will gladly claim that monsters and magic are *not* in fact real even when they see them with their own eyes. Even when the monsters are on the news. Even when the monsters are sitting at their dinner table. -- Jason Sheehan	**Down Deep Theme**		