

## Writing a Book Report Exercises

### Exercises:

1. Read the text below. Answer the questions and write the Title and Author section for the book report using the answers. Do not forget to cite the website. Write a reference page sample.

*Daniel Defoe was born in 1660, in London, and was originally christened Daniel Foe, changing his name around the age of thirty-five to sound more aristocratic. Like his character Robinson Crusoe, Defoe was a third child. His mother and father, James and Mary Foe, were Presbyterian dissenters. James Foe was a middle-class wax and candle merchant. As a boy, Daniel witnessed two of the greatest disasters of the seventeenth century: a recurrence of the plague and the Great Fire of London in 1666. These events may have shaped his fascination with catastrophes and survival in his writing.*

.....

*Defoe began writing fiction late in life, around the age of sixty. He published his first novel, Robinson Crusoe, in 1719, attracting a large middle-class readership. He followed in 1722 with Moll Flanders, the story of a tough, streetwise heroine whose fortunes rise and fall dramatically. Both works straddle the border between journalism and fiction. Robinson Crusoe was based on the true story of a shipwrecked seaman named Alexander Selkirk and was passed off as history, while Moll Flanders included dark prison scenes drawn from Defoe's own experiences in Newgate and interviews with prisoners.*

....

*Defoe used the simple, direct, fact-based style of the middle classes, which became the new standard for the English novel. With Robinson Crusoe's theme of solitary human existence, Defoe paved the way for the central modern theme of alienation and isolation. Defoe died in London on April 24, 1731, of a fatal "lethargy"—an unclear diagnosis that may refer to a stroke.*

(Retrieved from <http://www.sparknotes.com/lit/crusoe/context.html>)



## Writing a Book Report Exercises

### Questions:

- a. Who is the author?
- b. When was he born?
- c. When did he die?
- d. What is the title of the book?
- e. When was it published?
- f. What are the features of this book?

### Title and Author:



## Writing a Book Report Exercises

### 2) Decide the point of view (first or third person) in the following texts:

a) I was born in the year 1632, in the city of York, of a good family, though not of that country, my father being a foreigner of Bremen, who settled first at Hull. He got a good estate by merchandise, and leaving off his trade, lived afterwards at York, from whence he had married my mother, whose relations were named Robinson, a very good family in that country, and from whom I was called Robinson Kreutznaer; but, by the usual corruption of words in England, we are now called-nay we call ourselves and write our name-Crusoe; and so my companions always called me. I had two elder brothers, one of whom was lieutenant-colonel to an English regiment of foot in Flanders, formerly commanded by the famous Colonel Lockhart, and was killed at the battle near Dunkirk against the Spaniards. What became of my second brother I never knew, any more than my father or mother knew what became of me.

(Robinson Crusoe, CHAPTER I-START IN LIFE <http://etext.virginia.edu/etcbin/toccer-new2?id=DefCru1.sgm&images=images/modeng&data=/texts/english/modeng/parsed&tag=public&part=1&division=div1>)

b) It is a truth universally acknowledged that a single man in possession of a good fortune, must be in want of a wife.

However little known the feelings or views of such a man may be on his first entering a neighbourhood, this truth is so well fixed in the minds of the surrounding families, that he is considered the rightful property of some one or other of their daughters.

“My dear Mr. Bennet,” said his lady to him one day, “have you heard that Netherfield Park is let at last?”

Mr. Bennet replied that he had not.

“But it is,” returned she; “for Mrs. Long has just been here, and she told me all about it.”

Mr. Bennet made no answer.

“Do you not want to know who has taken it?” cried his wife impatiently.

“You want to tell me, and I have no objection to hearing it.”

This was invitation enough.

(Pride and Prejudice, Chapter 1 <http://www.readcentral.com/chapters/Jane-Austen/Pride-and-rejudice/003>)



## Writing a Book Report Exercises

### 3) What is the problem with the tenses of the following excerpt? How would you correct them?

Robinson Crusoe was an Englishman from the town of York in the seventeenth century. His father wants him to study law at the university but Crusoe insisted on going to sea. Since his family is against Crusoe going out to sea, they explained the advantages of being a lawyer and having a secure life for him.



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### Key

#### Exercise 1

#### Answers:

- a. Daniel Defoe is the author of the book.
- b. He was born in 1660.
- c. He died on April 24, 1731.
- d. The title of the book is *Robinson Crusoe*.
- e. *Robinson Crusoe* was published in 1719.
- f. *Robinson Crusoe* is the first novel of Daniel Defoe. The story is about a shipwrecked seaman. The novel is written with the simple, direct, fact-based style of the middle classes.

#### Title and Author:

*Robinson Crusoe* is the first book of Daniel Defoe, who lived between the years 1660 -1771. This novel was published in 1719. The story of the novel is about a shipwrecked seaman. The novel is written with the simple, direct, fact-based style of the middle classes. In addition to these, the novel reflects the author's personal experience in life such as his family life and the greatest disasters of the seventeenth century taken place in London (SparkNotes Editors, n.d.).

#### Reference Page:

SparkNotes Editors. (n.d.). SparkNote on Robinson Crusoe Context. Retrieved from <http://www.sparknotes.com/lit/crusoe/context.html>

## Writing a Book Report Exercises

### Exercise 2

- a) First person point of view
- b) Third person point of view

### Exercise 3

The tenses are not consistent.

#### Corrected version:

Robinson Crusoe **is** an Englishman from the town of York in the seventeenth century. His father **wants** him to study law at the university but Crusoe **insists** on going to sea. Since his family **is** against Crusoe going out to sea, they **explain** the advantages of being a lawyer and having a secure life for him.

