

[Book review - A Professor of Writing task](#)

Book to review: World War Z by Max Brooks

Plot summary: The plot of World War Z is like many other zombie apocalypse books - zombies attack and take over most of the world - except it is set during a period of time after humanity has defeated the zombies and is beginning to recover a lost world. The book is made up of dozens of interviews with survivors of the apocalypse, of many different ethnicities, all with different perspectives of the calamity, including one from space and one from a submarine.

What I liked: The idea of a “zombie apocalypse” has been the subject of much pondering in my life, mostly thinking about what I would do in the unlikely event of an attack. I have studied survival skills, which would be a necessity in such a situation, and have even wished for a zombie outbreak occasionally.

Max Brooks also wrote a survival guide as a companion to World War Z, which goes into a bit more detail about the infection progression and the various behaviors of the zombies. I believe this guide is mentioned in World War Z, though not by name.

One more thing is his occasional use of violence to further the stories. There are very few places where action does not contribute to the overall book. He has a blind man with a sharp shovel go up against a dozen zombies and win, using his senses to determine where an undead head is so he can strike. I think this is an interesting depiction of how losing one sense can help the others grow stronger.

I was happy to find that there were few (if any) grammatical or spelling errors in this book, and no plot holes.

What I didn't like: In many of the accounts by survivors, there is a lot of profanity. This detracted from my reading experience, since I do not like when people swear, so I was mentally editing out the offending words. This would cause me to slow down, and I normally read very quickly, so I took my copy of World War Z and blacked out the swear words with a pen, which improved it slightly, but still hinders my reading.

What I can learn: Max Brooks did not do “information dumps”, he inserted information only when it was relevant to the situation. I have a bad habit of dumping details in the beginning of a longer story, which causes me to lose interest when I'm reading my old attempts at books and run out of steam after writing just four chapters of new ones.

Another thing I can learn is how to use chapters to switch perspectives. This is a technique I have tried once, but could never really figure it out. Max Brooks used chapter headings to give an introduction to both the survivor being interviewed and the setting where the interview takes place.

Overall, it is a very good book that I would highly recommend to someone who enjoys post-apocalyptic stories.