

You are going to read four reviews of a book about popularity. For questions 1-10, choose from the reviews (A-D). Reviews may be chosen more than once.

POPULAR

Four reviewers comment on psychology professor Mitch Prinstein’s book, *Popular*.

REVIEWER A

In this fascinating study, Prinstein notes repeatedly that popularity can be broken down into two primary types: one based on status; that is, being known and admired – but also being capable of bullying – and the other, based on likeability, friendliness, kindness and attentiveness to the needs of others. Through solid science, made accessible in layman’s terminology, he goes on to explain why only the latter has a high correlation with positive outcomes, regarding both the ability to establish meaningful relationships and career success later in life. Convinced as I was by his theories, however, they fell short when applied to my own life story. I admit to having been an embarrassingly shallow status seeker in high school, but despite this, I would rate most aspects of my adult life as fulfilling. Apparently nothing in the social sciences is set in stone.

REVIEWER B

*Popular* provides a fresh perspective on a subject which most of us are obsessed with, but few of us properly understand. Brilliantly expressed through a mixture of research-based insights, anecdotes and humour, this compelling page-turner highlights the difference between the type of popularity we crave – status – and the type that will improve our lives – likeability. That being said, I would have preferred a more in-depth definition of likeability beyond the rather sketchy description provided by Prinstein. Nonetheless, the book addresses issues which shaped and continue to shape our lives, so that it will engage readers regardless of where they were on the popularity scale in high school. As Prinstein points out, many of us are frozen in time, unable to escape patterns of behaviour which are no longer suitable or necessary. The extent to which a book like this can alleviate this situation is limited.

REVIEWER C

Prinstein has written an intriguing commentary on how popularity works, arguing that popularity in adolescence is by far more indicative of future success and happiness than any other factors, including inborn intelligence or family background. Having said that, he points out that there are two basic types of popularity, with only one leading to a positive outcome. I found the theory fascinating and entirely feasible, as it was backed by studies which have never before been shared outside of academic circles. Aside from the theoretical aspect, the book was a revelation in a personal sense, going a long way towards explaining why, despite the years that have passed, the sense of dread and perceived torment of my own school years affect my feeling of self-worth even now.

REVIEWER D

I rarely re-read a book, but I think Mitch Prinstein’s *Popular* will be an exception. I especially appreciated the last section, which gives practical advice on what we can do to improve our popularity, even after adolescence as well as increasing our children’s odds of success in this vital aspect of their lives. The author’s analysis of popularity is especially pertinent in today’s world, where social media exposes the needs of adults still addicted to popularity in the form of likes, retweeting and the need to create a well-known online persona. Prinstein questions the power that popularity – the status kind – holds over our lives and urges us, for our own good, to pursue a loftier goal than seeking gratification from the car we drive or the size of our bank account. Rightly in my opinion, he points out that we should instead be investing our energies in genuine, lasting social relationships.

Which reviewer makes the following statements?

- It may not help adults who still act like adolescents.
 1
- It presents findings that are contrary to the reviewer’s personal experience.
 2
- It contains research that is new to most people.
 3
- It assists readers who wish to put its theory into practice.
 4
- Some of the explanations are superficial.
 5
- It presents research in a way that is easy to read.
 6
- It sheds light on the reasons for following current trends.
 7
- It has clarified something that has bothered the reviewer for a long time.
 8
- He / She agrees with the values that it promotes.
 9
- Both readers who were once popular and those who were unpopular will find this book appealing.
 10