

Writing a Movie Review

Watch any movie and **write a movie review** such as what you would read in the newspaper. Do NOT start out by saying "the film I chose was..." **Minimum 1.5 pages** hand-written, single spaced or 1.5 pages typed, double spaced. (8.5 x 11" paper)

NOTE: the assignment is not to answer these questions as you did in the last assignment. It is to write critique (**essay form**) in which you will address many of the questions below.

1. Pick a creative title (that is **not** the same as the title of the movie)

2. Give your opinion, overall

Name what stands out the most as your overall impression – or REALLY jumps out at you. Use one or two sentences for this.

3. Name the movie

If not already done in the first sentence, tell us the title of the movie. Also name the director and any main actors. Are there big stars that would draw people in to see it (George Clooney, Nicole Kidman) or was there an unknown in the lead role who is worth noting? You can give your opinion of the actors here, or later in your paper.

4. Summarize the plot

This should not give away the ending of the film. The summary segment should be no longer than 1/3 of a page. Follow this with an opinion of the plot and characters. Are they unique or original? Were there surprises? Give examples from the film.

5. Technical and critique – opinions and examples

The notes in this section are not necessarily part of the overall rating for entertainment value, however they are a good key is building a critical analysis from.

- Writing
- Acting
- Casting
- Lighting
- Production design
- Special effects
- Editing / pacing
- Music
- Costume design
- Cinematography

6. Story critique: what worked well, what didn't, and why?

- Or is this a movie with timeless themes?
- It is still good enough to make it to the big screen?
- What didn't work so well for me was...
- Would I recommend this movie to others... and if so, whom?
- Rate your chosen movie on a scale and note what that scale is. For example – thumbs up/thumbs down, # stars out of 5 possible, etc.

Please complete this checklist for your paper and include it with your homework:

HWK #2 Grading Checklist

- _____ Gave the paper a creative title (not movie title), written at top of the paper
- _____ opinion and movie title are given in the first paragraph
- _____ started second paragraph with a short synopsis of the story
- _____ gave opinions on categories relevant to the film and named actors
- _____ used examples from film to back up opinions
- _____ did not give away the ending of the film
- _____ named who they would recommend it to, or to no one and why
- _____ rated movie on a scale, and scale is noted
- _____ comments covered at least 1.5 full pages (8.5 x 11" paper)
- _____ turned in on time

More Tips on How To Write a Movie Critique

"After watching the film that is to be reviewed, it is important to take notes immediately. This will be of great importance when you actually sit down to write the piece. The notes should be detailed enough to bring back to memory the images that you found most appealing. This is the most important part of the writing process.

Once you have established the audience you are writing for, it is time to retrieve your notes and look at your basic ideas. Firstly, you need to think of an **imaginative title**. For instance, if I was writing a review of the film *Apocalypse Now*, perhaps a good title could be, 'faith and hope disappear in the midst of the Vietnam War'. This title gives a very brief idea of the nature of the film and provides a starting point for the reader to focus on.

The second stage is to give a **brief synopsis** of the film. You could also state your early opinions here, but don't give too much away too soon. Your aim is to make the audience want to finish the article.

After the synopsis, go into detail about **what you thought of the film**. Was it thought provoking? Did it have lasting images and ideas that particularly enthralled you? Did you think that it was a complete turkey? Whatever you view is, it is important to stress it in a comprehensible manner. Examine the film more closely, try to go into detail about the many ideas contained within the film. Don't forget, what you enjoyed and remembered from the images and ideas in the film are what could be the deciding factor in whether or not the reader actually goes to see the film themselves. **If you really enjoyed it or really hated it, make it clear.**

It is necessary to **break the film down into its separate parts**. By this, I mean that you should spend time stating which parts of the film worked for you. Was the setting and atmosphere successful? Did the plot flow all the way through the film or did it become disjointed and messy part of the way through? You must also look carefully into the characterization. A close examination of the key roles in the feature will provide your audience with a better idea of how the film is going to be. Never simply say that you loved or hated a certain movie without giving your reasons. **Always explain why you feel the way you do** and back it up with descriptive examples.

Even though your article should show from the start what your opinions are, at the end of the piece you should give a conclusion that states strongly what you thought." http://ks.essortment.com/writingfilmrev_ralk.htm