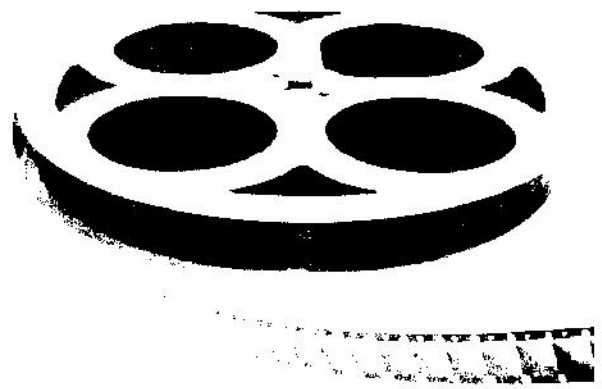


Movie Review Guidelines



1. After you have selected your movie, get familiar with its context.

- ✓ What have the actors and director worked on before?
- ✓ Are they Oscar winners?
- ✓ Are they known for a certain style?
- ✓ Is the movie based on a book or an historical event?
- ✓ Is it a remake or a sequel?

All of this information will help you understand the movie better. You'll pick up on details, allusions, trademarks of the actor or director, and probably have more insight into important story elements. You'll be able to tell readers how it lived up to the original, say, or the book. These are the things that help a critic offer a solid opinion that is of interest to the fan.

2. After you see the movie, formulate a specific opinion in one sentence.

Your job is to give an opinion of the movie. Ultimately, this may come down to a "thumbs up" or "three stars out of five." But you want to have a specific thesis/opinion to drive your critique. For example:

- ✓ "I didn't like this comedy" becomes "The story had funny moments but it went on too long."
- ✓ "This horror movie is good" becomes "This horror movie works because it builds suspense right up until the end."

Therefore, try to find that very specific opinion that will be the foundation of your review.

3. Create a good lead. You want your reader to be interested in what you have to say. Grab her in that first or "lead" paragraph in one of several ways:

- ✓ Start with a great quote from the movie, and explain how it reflects the movie; refer to the reputation of the actor or director and compare it to how he or she did in this movie;
- ✓ Compare this movie to another well-known film in a few sentences or two; explain what your expectation was, and then if it was fulfilled or not.
- ✓ Then end that first paragraph with your opinion statement.

4. Recap briefly, but don't give away anything big.

Some readers like to know what they're getting into before they lay down their money for a ticket. You can tell people the basic premise of the movie and tell them how the story builds, but don't give away key moments, especially not the ending! And keep it brief.

5. Back up your main opinion with specifics.

The readers now know you think "This comedy had funny moments but went on too long." It's time for you to prove it. Talk about how the teen actors had good timing like they did in that other movie. Talk about how the writers did a great parody of that famous film. But then add that there were too many scenes involving the family or the boyfriend. Talk about the fact that there were multiple endings and all of them were long. Use specifics to make your readers see you're right.

6. Be interesting.

Just because this is a review doesn't mean it's got to be dull. From lead to ending paragraph, make the review engaging, using metaphors, analogy, specific adjectives and adverbs to create the images you're looking for. But also be concise. A review isn't a place for long flowery prose.

7. Be honest in your appraisal.

Your reader and the work you're critiquing both deserve an honest opinion. So even if you HATE that actor or LOVE that actress, be sure not to hold back your true opinion of the film. Have some standards in mind. A comedy should be funny, a horror movie should be scary, etc.; judge the movie against those standards, not against any pre-existing opinions you may have. It will make the review more valuable to the reader and honest writing is always best!

