

APSU Writing Center
Writing a Movie Review

What Is a Movie Review?

- A movie review evaluates a film by combining a brief summary with analysis and opinion. It examines how well elements like plot, theme, acting, direction, visuals, and music work together.
- Avoid vague opinions by supporting claims with specific examples from the film.

How to Prepare

- Read the film description
- Take notes on key moments
- Research the director and purpose of the film
- Watch the movie carefully (more than once if possible)

Plot Components

- **Exposition:** The beginning of the story that introduces the main characters, setting, and central conflict. It provides background information needed to understand what is happening and what is at stake.
- **Rising Action:** A series of events that build tension as the characters attempt to address or resolve the conflict. Obstacles and complications arise, but the conflict remains unresolved.
- **Climax:** The turning point of the story and the moment of greatest tension or emotional intensity. The outcome of the conflict is determined here.
- **Falling Action:** The events that occur after the climax as the tension decreases. These moments show the consequences of the climax and lead toward closure.
- **Resolution:** The conclusion of the story where conflicts are resolved and loose ends are tied up. It reveals how the characters have changed or what they have learned.

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What to Analyze

- Plot and theme
- Characters and acting
- Direction and pacing
- Cinematography and special effects
- Music and sound
- Emotional impact

Structure

- Introduction: Film title, director, overall impression
- Summary: Brief plot overview (no spoilers if possible)
- Analysis: Plot, themes, visuals, music, acting
- Opinion: What worked, what didn't, why
- Conclusion: Final thoughts and recommendation (rating optional)

Questions to Guide Your Review

- What atmosphere does the film create?
- What is the central theme or message?
- How effective is the acting and direction?
- What moments stood out most?
- Would you recommend it? Why or why not?

Useful Sentence Starters

- "In [movie title], director [name] explores..."
- "The film's strongest element is..."
- "The performances are especially compelling because..."
- "Overall, [movie title] succeeds/falls short due to..."

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Movie Review Outline

Introduction

Film Title:

Release Year:

Director:

Screenwriter:

Your impression of the film: In a thesis statement give your opinion of the film.

Paragraph 1: Plot Summary

Focus on one key moment or turning point. Include your reaction to that moment

Paragraph 2: Character Analysis

Describe one or two main characters. Explain their relationship using specific examples

Paragraph 3: Film Element Analysis

Discuss one major element. Provide specific examples. Explain why this element was effective.

Conclusion

Write a one or two sentence summary of your overall evaluation. Would you recommend it?