APSU Writing Center
Movie Review

Writing a Movie Review

Resource: website Spirit of Baraka

- Writing a movie review is a great way to express your opinion of a movie. The purpose of most movie reviews is to help readers determine if they want to watch, rent, or buy the movie. The review should give enough details about the movie so that the reader can make an informed decision, without giving anyway any essentials such as the plot or any surprises.

- Reviews analyze the *effectiveness* of the plot, theme, acting, direction, special effects, musical effects, cinematography, and all other elements that created the movie. There are qualities and guidelines that a critique of a movie should possess. Avoid the use of generalized opinions such as "it was a great movie" or "the acting was horrible," but rather give specific reasons and the *whys.*

Steps to Writing a Movie Review:
- **Watch the movie**
  - The first step in writing the review is to watch the movie. Watching the movie a second time will help you absorb a lot more detail about the movie. Most movie reviewers take notes as they watch the movie.

- **Evaluate the movie**
  - Most movie reviewers will give their opinion of the movie. However, as in all good journalism, the reviewer should also give impartial details and allow the reader to make their decision over an issue the reader liked or disliked. Opinions should be explained to allow the reader to determine whether they would agree with your opinion.

- **Who is your audience?**
  - You need to consider who your audience will be. Writing a movie review for children requires a different approach than if writing for a movie club. Ensure you report on the factors that matter to your likely audience

- **Actors**
  - Detail who is starring in the movie and how well you think they acted.

- **Structure**
  - Did the movie follow a regular predictable story line, or did it get you thinking, like a Quentin Tarantino movie?

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- **Cinematography and lighting**
  - Give details about how well the movie was shot and directed. Was the lighting good in the moody scenes?

- **Music**
  - Did the movie have its own score like ET, or did it feature songs from popular artists?

- **Proofread**
  - Read and check your review thoroughly. It can be embarrassing to find errors in your work after it has been published. This is especially important for reviews that will be published on the Internet as search engines are always looking for the correct spellings of key words.

- **Guideline for a Movie Review**

  - **Paragraph 1:** You will need to include the following: name of the film, prominent stars of the film, basic setting (time and place), and genre.

  - **Paragraph 2:** You will need to write a short plot summary for the movie. Do not reveal the ending.

  - **Paragraph 3:** Discuss one aspect of filmmaking. You may choose from acting, direction, editing, costume design, etc. *Be sure that you are specific and cite examples from the movie.*

  - **Paragraph 4:** Discuss another aspect of filmmaking different from the one you discussed in paragraph 3.

  - **Paragraph 5:** Give your overall reaction to the film as well as your opinion on the quality of the film. Include your recommendations for potential viewers.