

Movie Review

APSU Writing Center Handout

A movie review evaluates a film by combining a 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 is where conflicts are resolved, and loose ends are tied up. It reveals how the characters have changed or what they have learned.

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...”

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?