

## Writing Film Reviews

Writing a film review is quite simple, and it can be a fun thing to do. A good film review has a few key elements, and those are listed below. Remember, however, to NEVER give away the ending of a movie. The purpose of most movie reviews is to help the reader in determining whether they want to watch the film. Also, not all film reviews are positive; it's okay to say a film is bad, but prove it! Read and check your review thoroughly. It can be embarrassing to find errors in your work after it has been published.

Tips for good reviewing:

- Make sure you pick up any programmes, guides, etc., so that you can get names right.
- Take notes at the time or straight afterwards.
- Establish the main idea, themes or issues the film tries to convey. What was its purpose?
- Look at selected elements. Don't try to cover every single aspect of the story and the film.
- Try to find some good things to say – even if you hated it! No one wants to read a totally negative review.
- Write about what you thought – people like a personal story.
- Be honest – people might go to an event (or avoid one) because of your review.
- Your conclusion should include a recommendation. Should we see the film?
- Look at some examples of good reviews on the internet or in newspapers and remember what you liked about them.
- Try to rate the film out of 5 with 1 being the lowest mark and 5 the highest. This will allow the reader to quickly discover what you think of the film.

Here are some general questions to ask yourself when writing your review:

1. Who are the actors and their characters?
2. Who produced and/or directed the film?
3. Was the action exciting?
4. How believable was the action, dialogue, etc?
5. How good or bad was the acting?
6. If special effects were used, were they believable?
7. Were the costumes and setting realistic?
8. Did the movie have an effective or moving soundtrack?
9. Who would be suitable viewers of this movie?
10. What's your opinion of the film?

**Helpful Website:** The Internet Movie Database <http://www.imdb.com>

**Movie Reviews:** <http://movies.yahoo.com>

**THE PHOENIX: PROJECTING THE INDEPENDENT SPIRIT SINCE 1910**  
**Patrons: Mike Leigh Maureen Lipman Michael Palin Bill Paterson Victoria Wood**  
"A wonderful building, lovely staff and the best cake." Voted 6<sup>th</sup> best cinema in London, Time Out  
"The best independent cinema anywhere." Voted 9<sup>th</sup> best independent cinema in the UK, Guardian