

## Writing a Movie Review

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

Similar to the purpose of writing book reviews, movie 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 quality and guidelines that a critique of a movie should possess. Avoid the use of generalized opinions such as “oh, it was a great movie” or “the acting was horrible,” but rather give specific reasons and the *whys*.

Here is a good guide to follow. While we don’t limit you to a certain style of writing, the number of words you must have in your review, and what you must (or must not) write about, we do provide the following guideline to help you get started in writing a 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 type of film ( comedy, adventure, drama, etc.)

### Paragraph 2

You will need to write a plot summary for the movie. Do not reveal the ending. Discuss at least 5 events and be sure to cover the entire scope of the movie, except the very end.

### Paragraph 3

Discuss one aspect of filmmaking. You may choose from acting, direction, editing, costume design, set design, photography, background music, or anything else you may think of. Be sure that you are specific and cite examples from the movie.

### Paragraph 4

Discuss another aspect of filmmaking. You may choose from acting, direction, editing, costume design, set design, photography, background music, or anything else you may think of, but obviously choose something different from what you discussed in the previous paragraph. Be *sure that you are specific and cite examples from the movie.*

### Paragraph 5

Give your overall reaction to the film as well as your opinion on the quality of the film. Also include your recommendations for potential viewers.

Remember, the guideline above is just what it is. It’s just a guideline, so throw in your own spin and develop your own format if you want to.

# **Steps to Writing a Movie Review:**

## **1. Watch the movie**

The first step in writing the review is to watch the movie. Watch the movie in a relaxed environment you are familiar with. You do not want to be distracted by an unfamiliar room. 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 review.

## **2. Evaluate the movie**

Most movie reviewers will give their opinion of the movie. This is important as the reviewer can express the elements of the movie they enjoyed or disliked. However, as in all good journalism, the reviewer should also give impartial details, and allow the reader to make their own mind 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.

Many regular movie reviewers will develop a following. If one can find a reviewer who shares a similar taste in films, one can confidently follow the reviewers recommendations.

## **3. Who is your audience?**

You need to consider who your likely audience. 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.

## **4. Give an outline**

Give the outline of the movie, but don't give away essential details such as the end or any surprises. If there is a big surprise you want to entice readers by telling them something special happens, just don't say what.

## **5. Actors**

If the movie contains actors, as most do, detail who is starring in the movie and how well you think they acted.

## **6. Structure**

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

## **7. Cinematography and lighting**

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

## **8. Music**

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

## **9. Read, read and read**

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.