How to Write a Movie Review

The first thing you do after watching a movie is to go online and write a comment about it. Comments about movies are usually posted on social media profiles or public pages, review sites, blogs, among other platforms. You can make the process easier with tools available online.

Writing a movie review is a common assignment that students have to do in high school and college. Even though it may seem simple, movie reviews require time and proper organization. It's not just about writing what happens on the screen, the review goes deeper than that.

Movie Review Purpose

The main purpose of a movie review is to inform the reader about the film and its ideas. Seems simple, right? Reporting all events that happen and stating one's opinion about them is a common mistake that many students make. While movie review allows writers to express their opinions about some film or documentary, there is also the need for the unbiased and objective approach. An ideal review combines both.

The review determines whether someone will want to see the movie. Even if the professor (or teacher) assigned a specific title and film to review, one should act like this is the perfect opportunity to introduce the cinematography work to their lecturer. Always assume they haven't seen it before. As a result, it becomes easier to analyze events that happened on the screen.

Film review should be detailed enough to provide assistance in making an honest decision i.e. whether the reader wants to see it or if they'd like it. Why is this type of paper a common school assignment? Lecturers want to get more insight into a student's critical thinking skills and the ability to report event (one or more of them) in a manner that others understand easily.

In addition, they want to assess the way you analyze plot and characters. After all, movie reviews also involve the analysis of events that happened in a documentary or "regular" film. Reviews test writing and vocabulary skills, adapting to different genres and events they portray, and your capacity to sum up some major work and report it in a cohesive, logical, and interesting manner.

While reviews entail more responsibility than initially thought, students find them fun and with this guide, you will too.

How to write a Good Movie Review

You have to write a movie review for school and now what? Where to start, how to make it look more "academic"? Today, we have the opportunity to use numerous tools to make every part of our lives easier, and movie review writing isn't the exception. Throughout this tutorial, you'll learn how to compose a report about some film and what tools to use to simplify the process.

Step-by-Step Guide to How to Write a Movie Review

Beginnings are always the hardest. This is the point where you set the pace and determine how to approach this assignment in the most efficient manner. Here are some useful tips to kick-start the movie review writing process:

- Watch the movie or documentary twice and take notes of both major and minor events and characters. It's a mistake to rely on the power of your memory only, there's always something we overlook or forget
- Carry out a thorough research. Watching the movie isn't enough, research is equally important. Look for details such as the name of filmmaker and his/her motivation to make that film or documentary work, locations, plot, characterization, historic events that served as an inspiration for

the movie (if applicable). Basically, your research should serve to collect information that provides more depth to the review
- Analyze the movie after you watching it. Don't start working on the review if you aren't sure you understand the film. Evaluate the movie from beginning to an end. Re-watch it, if necessary, if you find some parts confusing. Only when you understand events that happened on the screen will you find it easier to create the review
- Draft an outline that you will follow to write the review in a concise and cohesive fashion
- Include examples for claims you make about the movie. If the plot has holes, then mention an example of a situation or scene when that was evident. Also, if the character(s) is poorly developed or bad casting affected the movie quality, name examples too. Provide examples when commenting dialogues, locations, plot, everything. If you want the reader to agree with you, it's essential to back up your claims with evidence. You don't want to make it seem like you're praising or criticizing the movie without any reason whatsoever
- Consider and comment a movie's originality and quality of scenes. Explain how the movie stands out or whether it just uses the same approach that worked for previous works in the industry

How to organize your movie review

Quality of your paper depends on the level of organization you implement. Never underestimate the importance of well-structured outline, regardless of the type of paper you have to write. Outlines help you focus on the subject and contribute to a logical flow.

In addition, getting things organized before you start writing is a great way to save time later on. Instead of trying to figure out what to include, you'll have a well-structured plan to follow. It's needless to mention you won't be too stressed out. Here's how to organize your movie review:

- Introduction (with title, release date, background information)
- Summary of the story
- Analysis of the plot elements (rising action, climax)
- Creative elements (dialogues, characters, use of colors, camera techniques, mood, tone, symbols, costumes or anything that contributes or takes away from the overall plot)
- Opinion (supported with examples and facts from the story)
- Conclusion (announcing whether the filmmaker was successful in his/her purpose, re-state your evidence, explain how the motion picture was helpful for providing a deeper understand of course topic)

Movie Review Elements

- The title of the film/documentary – just because your headline features the name of the movie or documentary it doesn't mean should skip mentioning it in the text. Always name the feature you've watched in the introductory paragraph. This may seem like a stupid thing to point out, but it's one of the most common mistakes that students make
- **Summary** – the whole point of the review is to summarize the documentary or movie for people who haven't watched it yet. To make this as effective as possible, always assume that your professor hasn't seen it either (as mentioned above). Why is this important? You won't leave out some important details thinking he/she watched it already so they won't bother. As a reviewer, your job is to explain what happened in the film and express whether the filmmaker failed or succeeded. Again, saying you liked or disliked it isn't a viable comment. Your opinion has to be supported by specific reasons and examples from the feature itself
- **Filmmaker** – do a little research on the person who directed the piece. Is that person a controversial figure? Is he/she known for a political stance? Does the filmmaker have a significant background?

Devote a paragraph or two to the person behind the movie and their other works in order to establish the significance of the film you are reviewing for the director's career

- **Significance to your class** – How does the content of the documentary or film fit into your course topic? Is it important for historical accuracy? If you are watching the motion picture for history class, make note of over-dramatization. If the motion picture is based on the book you've analyzed in English class, you can mention similarities, differences, or some elements that film contains, but book doesn't and so on
- **Creative elements** – filmmakers work hard to include creative elements into their motion pictures. How are these elements important to the plot and movie in general? For example, costumes can either enhance the movie or betray its intent. Colors can be vivid and lift the atmosphere or mood in the movie or they can be dull and make it seem depressing. Good sound effects enrich the viewing experience while bad ones only destroy everything. Moreover, camera movements and angles also add elements to the story. Take notes of symbols in the story, if any.
- **Actors** – let's not forget the casting! Were the actors realistic? Did they portray the role of a specific character successfully? Did they have good acting skills? Do you believe that some particular actor was the right fit for the role?

Checklist / Outline for a Good Movie Review

- Introduction (title, topic, release date, background information)
- Accuracy of depiction
- Use of sources in the documentary
- Creative elements that enhance or tarnish the overall story (quality of script, visual design, performance, lighting, hair, and makeup, costume, set design, symbolism)
- Your opinion
- Conclusion

Mistakes to Avoid

- Not focusing on the film – while connecting the plot to some specific historical event is a good idea (when applicable), strive to avoid writing about unnecessary details or introducing irrelevant information such as the history of cinematography or that particular genre, snacks, among other things
- Inserting yourself – you're the one who's writing the review. The paper reflects your understanding and opinion of the motion picture you've seen and there is no need to write in first person all the time: I noticed this, I saw that I liked this, I disliked that
- Failing to check facts about movie background and release date, director, casting etc.
- Giving out your opinion without mentioning any reason why you think that way
- Talking about irrelevancies
- Writing a review without a structure
- Writing generalities such as *great acting, cool effects, a good movie, it was bad*etc.
- Writing a review without substance or analysis of the feature