

# A good guide on how to write a movie review essay sample



**ASSIGN  
BUSTER**

There is a clear difference between a movie review and a movie analysis, but students find it hard to understand this. A review is basically an honest opinion about a film, while a movie analysis is a deeper exploration of the themes and styles and messages that a movie is trying to portray. In movie reviews you state how you feel after watching a movie. You assume the reader has not yet watched a movie and you give them your unbiased opinion on the movie. Whether they choose to watch the movie or not is up to them.

A movie analysis assumes the reader has already watched a movie and it therefore has a lot of spoilers. An analysis goes into deeper examination of a movie using facts and evidences to support a theme or phenomena. It also looks at characters and tries to explain why they behave the way they do. An analysis is therefore not a personal opinion like a review, but rather a series of facts supported by evidences from the movie. Now that we have understood the difference between the two, let us concentrate on how to write good movie reviews.

## **Purpose of a Movie Review**

The purpose of a movie review is to enlighten the reader about the movie and its ideas in an unbiased way. Here is where the students go wrong. They know that the professor has already watched the movie that he/she needs reviewed. So instead of reviewing it, they analyze it, which is a mistake. Take this approach: you have just watched a movie and your friend comes to you and asks you,

“ How was the movie?”

You will obviously not go into details about the film's themes or character analysis. Instead, you will give him a general synopsis of the movie, informing him how you felt about the movie and even liken it to a previous movie that he/she has watched. That is a review. Use the same approach when writing a college paper to your lecturer. Assume he/she has not watched the movie and needs your personal opinion. While they seem quite easy and fun for a college setting, movie reviews are popular assignments because they improve students' critical thinking abilities and their skills to report events in a comprehensible and interesting way.

### **Step-by-Step Guidelines**

- The first step is quite obvious you just have to watch the movie. You cannot review something you have not watched. However, you have to watch it more than once, jotting down ideas on a paper. Watching it for the first time will give you the emotional state that you need in order to convince your reader to watch it or not. You will grasp ideas that passed you when you watch it for the second and third time.
- The second step you need to do is to carry out a thorough background research about the movie. Details such as historic events that inspired the movie, name of the filmmaker, locations and plots are necessary to provide more depth to the review.
- Thirdly, you may analyze the movie. This is however not necessary if you have watched the movie severally and you fully understand it or you have done extensive research about it. It may seem tedious to do an analysis then a review, but you will fully understand the film from

the beginning to the end. You will therefore create a more compelling essay that will secure you a good grade.

- Next, you will have to draft an outline. An outline is a plan that will help you write the review in a cohesive and precise manner.
- And don't forget to give examples to supplement the claims you make about the film. If you feel there is something missing in the plot or there is bad casting for example, be sure to include various examples in the movie to support your claims.

### **How to Plan Your Movie Review**

Writing an outline is important for all types of essays, not just for movie reviews. An outline will help you break down the essay into various steps, which will be easier to follow than just writing without a proper arrangement of ideas. The movie review should be organized in this manner:

- Introduction. It should have a title, its release date and some background information.
- Summary of the movie.
- Creative elements. Since this is a film class, you need to include creative elements to make the review more in-depth. They include camera techniques, use of colors, dialogues, camera angles-movements and shots and costumes. In your own opinion explain how these elements affect the overall product.
- Offer an unbiased opinion about the movie, using examples from the movie.

- Conclusion. This is where you announce your position regarding the movie. You rate it and conclude whether you like it or not.

### **Components of a Movie Review**

For your essay to be considered a review, it must have the following features:

- Title of the Film. This is an important component of a review, although students choose to ignore it because they assume that the name is already in the title. You should always mention the title of the film in the introductory paragraph.
- Summary. As mentioned earlier do not assume that the professor has watched the movie and skip this feature. The main goal of reviewing a movie is to summarize it and explain whether the filmmaker was successful in expressing the ideas he/she was trying to put across or not.
- Filmmaker. Do some background research on the filmmaker. What are his/her religious beliefs? What are his/her political affiliations? Knowing the filmmaker better will help you understand the direction he/she was going with the film and if he/she was successful or not.
- Creative elements. These are the spices that filmmakers use to enhance the plot of the movie. For instance, chilling and shrieking sound effects are used to bring out the suspense or horror in a movie, while dull colors are used in depressing situations. Keep into consideration how these elements affect your perception of the film.

- **Actors.** Take a look at the casting also. How was their performance? Was it convincing? Which actors deserved accolades and who were a let down?
- **Relevance.** Make sure your review relates to your course topic. If it is based on a book that you are studying in class for example, you can comment on the similarities and differences of the book and the film.

#### **Avoid These Mistakes**

- Do not deviate away from the film. Avoid unnecessary details and only include historical events that are connected to the film.
- Avoid using first person all the time. Since the review reflects your personal opinion, there is no need to make yourself visible throughout the essay.
- Failing to do a background check on the movie.
- Giving opinions without evidences from the film.

#### **Read good examples of movie essays:**

Wall-E Movie Analysis