

# How to Write a Movie Review: Our Template

## Five Parts (Paragraphs) of a Movie Review

### Opening: Catch the Reader's Attention

Think about how advertisements sell movies: "trailers" show you a few seconds of the movie to get you interested.

When you begin your movie review, make your own "trailer." If you liked the movie, then your trailer should make people want to see it; but if you didn't like it, the trailer should be something that shows why you didn't like it. Don't explain why you liked it or didn't like it; make the reader like or not like the movie by what you describe. Begin your review by retelling an incident or moment from the movie which you think captures the spirit of the movie as you understood it.

Alternative: Begin your review with another kind of story or interesting fact--about one of the star actors, or about the making of the movie, or about the director.

### Second Paragraph: Take Care of Business

Near the beginning of the review, you have to tell the reader all the obligatory stuff--the title of the movie, the director, the studio, the main actors, the year it was made (if you watched it on video), the rating. This paragraph tells the reader the things they have to know about the movie. Also, in one sentence or two, you should explain very simply what the movie is all about--not necessarily what happens, but that might work, too, if you can say it in one two sentences.

### Third Paragraph: Character and plot summary

What happens in the movie? You shouldn't tell everything that

**happens--and especially not the ending. But you want to summarize the basic plot of the movie, in more detail than you do in the paragraph above.**

**One way to do this might be to write a sentence about each main character.**

### **Fourth Paragraph: A Key Moment or Idea**

**In this paragraph, go into detail about something important that interested you about the movie. If it was a musical, you should say something about the songs. Or if the soundtrack was good, talk about that. Or write more about one character who was really intriguing. Or retell another big moment from the movie and explain why it is important. If you think the "idea" behind a movie was really interesting, explain that idea and talk about it a little bit. In this paragraph, you must go into depth about the movie.**

### **Fifth Paragraph: Evaluate the Movie**

**Do you recommend it or not? Who will like it (kids or adults)? The most important thing here is that you must also explain *why* you are making your recommendation.**

**You must justify your opinion--and that opinion should grow out of what you write in the rest of the review. Give at least two reasons why you liked or didn't like the movie.**



LEO: Literacy Education Online

## Prewriting Questions for Book, Movie, or Play Reviews

The following questions are designed to help you generate and focus your ideas when writing a book, movie, or film review. You won't need to answer all of these questions for your paper, but many of the answers will help you discover information and focus your thinking.

### What questions

- What are you reviewing? What is it about? What's the plot?
- What's the theme?
- What is the author's/director's purpose?
- What genre or classification does it fit?
- What is the tone? What is the point of view? What's the mood?

### When and Where questions

- When was this done? Or when does the action take place?
- Where was this done? Or where does the action take place?

### Who questions

- Who wrote it, directed it, or acted in it? What else have they done?
- Who are the main characters?
- Who's the intended audience?
- Who has said what about this? Why?

### How questions

- How does it convey its main point, mood, or theme? How did the audience react to it?
- How well does it fulfill its purpose?

### Evaluation questions

<http://www.ucls.uchicago.edu/students/projects/1996-97/MovieMetropolis/howto.html>

<http://leo.stcloudstate.edu/acadwrite/bookrevpre.html>

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- Did I like this in general? Why?
- Did I agree with the main theme/purpose? Why or why not?
- What specifically did I like/dislike? Why?
- Did the author/actors/director do a good job? Why or why not?
- How could it be improved? Why would particular changes help?

After you have answered these questions, begin selecting and organizing the information that you'll include in your paper.

Once you've done the prewriting, you're ready to think about the [requirements and structure of a review](#).

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For questions and suggestions, please e-mail us at [leolink@stcloudstate.edu](mailto:leolink@stcloudstate.edu).

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