

# **GUIDELINES FOR MOVIE REVIEW WRITERS**



# KNOW YOUR PURPOSE

- You are helping moviegoers to make a decision. Individuals cannot afford to go to every movie that opens.
- Some movies are not appropriate for all audiences.
- Some movies can only be fully appreciated on a large screen.
- While some movies are worth viewing, they are not worth the price of the box office ticket. These are the ones that should be viewed when they come out on DVD/Netflix, etc.



# DON'T HIDE YOUR OPINION

- People are reading your movie review to know your opinion.
- Don't be afraid to state it.



# USE A FORMAT

- Where does the title of the movie appear?
- What information is included at the end of each review for quick reference?
- Readers want to read the review fairly quickly; give them the information they need.



# KNOW THE BASICS

- Title, producer, director, actors, rating, distributor and running time can be found on official movie web sites.
- IMDB is a great resource too.



# KNOW YOUR AUDIENCE

- Use vocabulary that your readers will understand.
- The tone of your review can reflect the type of movie and your publication.
- If you want to compare this movie to other movies, be sure your readers are likely to have seen or heard of the movie(s).
- Otherwise, give information to help them to understand the comparison.



# KNOW THE GENRE

- Is the movie a good example of the genre (Sci-fi, Rom-com, Fantasy, Drama, Bio-pic, Action, Adventure, Horror, Crime drama to name a few; Foreign, Independent (these two aren't genres themselves, as you can have an Independent comedy, etc.)?)



# KNOW THE ACTORS AND DIRECTOR

- When writing about characters' actions, don't confuse the characters with the actors who are portraying them.
- Actors' names often appear in parentheses.
- Include the names of leading actors and actresses and evaluate how well they played their roles.
- Include other movies directed by the director if they help to understand their approach or expectations viewers have of their movies.





# DON'T FORGET TO ADDRESS THE SCRIPT/WRITING

- The screenplay is one of the key elements of a movie, but some reviewers often forget to discuss the writing or deal with it very superficially.
- Is the screenplay original or adapted?
- If adapted, are there some key differences or similarities worth noting?



# SUMMARIZE THE PLOT — BUT DON'T TELL THE ENDING

- This is not *as* true when a movie is based upon a really well-known book or play.
- But, it's generally a good idea to **NOT** give away the ending.
- If the movie has a different ending than the original work it's based upon, don't tell that either.



# SELECT A SCENE

- Is there a scene that captures the spirit/essence of the story?
- Is there a scene that demonstrates lighting and cinematography as well as acting?



# MOVIE REVIEW SITES

- Two excellent aggregate sites for accessing multiple reviews in order to see exemplars are:

- metacritic: <http://www.metacritic.com/>

and

- Rotten Tomatoes: <http://www.rottentomatoes.com/>

