

# Writing - Reviews

■ A review is a short description of a book, film, play, website, magazine, concert, game, TV programme, shop etc. It is written to inform readers and to give them our opinion/recommendation. ■ Reviews can be formal or informal, depending on the target audience and the publication. e.g. If we write for a lighthearted magazine such as a school magazine, we use informal style. ■ They can appear as articles in magazines/newspapers or as part of a letter/email. ■ The introduction should contain some background information about the book, film, play, book etc (i.e the name of the author/director, type, setting, name of main characters etc). ■ The main body normally consists of two paragraphs: one about the main points of the plot of the film, book etc we are reviewing in chronological order; the other contains general comments on the plot, main characters, acting, directing etc. We should never reveal the end of the story to the reader. ■ The conclusion contains our personal opinion and whether we recommend the film, book etc or not to the readers. We should justify our opinion with reasons. ■ Present tenses are mainly used to describe the plot. ■ We can use a variety of adjectives to make our review more interesting to the reader.

## Outline for reviews

### Paragraph 1

ARTICLE: background information  
LETTER/EMAIL: opening remarks; reason from writing; background information

### Paragraph 2

main points of plot (book, film, play game), regular features (magazine), tracks (album)

### Paragraph 3

general comments

### Paragraph 4

ARTICLE: personal opinion with reasons; recommendation  
LETTER/EMAIL: your opinion with reasons; recommendation; closing remarks

**Read the film review. What is each paragraph about?**

1

Complete the paragraph plan. Hugo is a drama adventure film based on the best-selling novel The Invention of Hugo Cabret. It is set in a Parisian railway station in the 1930s and stars Asa Butterfield, Ben Kingsley and Chloe Marez. The film is directed by the famous director Martin Scorsese.

2

Hugo (Asa Butterfield) secretly lives and maintains the clocks in a Parisian train station. The only thing Hugo has from his dead father is a robot that they were both trying to repair before his father's death. Hugo continues the repairs on the robot and at the same time searches for a key that will enable the robot to work. Little does he know that the key will uncover an even greater mystery.

3

Hugo is a tale full of imagination and adventure. The plot has unexpected twists with both touching and funny moments. The cast is excellent and the directing is superb.

4

This film is well worth seeing. The story is clever and will keep you entertained right to the end. It's a must-see!



Para 1

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Para 2

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Para 3

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Para 4

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**Choose the correct words/phrases.**

1 Christian Bale tells the story/plays the part of Batman in The Dark Knight Rises.

2 The Hobbit is a spectacular film; it's bound to be a hit/flop.

3 Many celebrities walked down the red carpet at the finale/premiere of the film.

4 The novel had a dull/tragic ending that brought tears to my eyes.

5 The main character/actor in the film is played by Kristen Stewart.

6 The film has an all-star script/cast.

7 The King's Speech is a touching film based on/set in the life of King George VI.

8 Although I found the novel quite dull/thick, it ended with a surprising twist/script.

9 I was completely absorbed in this book and couldn't put it down/throw it away.

**Match the adjectives to the nouns in the list.**

• film • novel • plot • album • success • game • character

1 slow-paced/gripping/shocking -

2 blockbuster/award-winning/animated-

3 best-selling/paperback/hardback-

4 admirable/heroic/believable/strong-

5 varied/latest/fabulous/solo-

6 international/box office/record-breaking-

7 virtual reality/interactive/single-player-

Fill in: spectacular, definitely, repetitive, soulful, edge, addition, challenging, suspense.

▲ The film is filled with 1) ..... as the crew race against time to land on Earth. The special effects are 2) ..... and bound to amaze the audience. If you like excitement, this film will keep you on the 3) ..... of your seat

■ If you are a fan of jazz, this album is 4) ..... for you. It's both smooth and 5) ..... – a perfect 6) ..... to anybody's collection.

● Despite its excellent graphics, it lacked creativity. Each level felt 7) ..... . What's more, it isn't 8) ..... enough for experienced gamers and can be completed too easily

## Useful Language

**Background** • It is a spy/adventure/fantasy/sci-fi etc story. • The film/book tells the story of ... • The film/story is set in ... • The film is based on ... by ... • The film was directed by ...

### General comments

#### Positive

• The cast is excellent./The film has a quality cast. • The script is exciting/fast moving/clever. • The plot is thrilling/ gripping/interesting/has an unexpected twist • The special effects are (absolutely) stunning/sensational/ amazing. • It is beautifully written. • The costumes are magnificent. • The characters are very convincing/ very well developed. • It has a(n) unexpected/ shocking/predictable ending.

#### Negative

• The cast is awful/unconvincing. • The script is dull/boring. • The plot is boring/predictable/unimaginative. • The special effects are unimaginative. • It is badly written. • The costumes are plain. • The characters are poorly developed/weak. • The ending is disappointing.

#### Recommendation

• It's well worth seeing. • It's bound to be a box-office hit. • It's a highly entertaining read. • It's a must-see. • I wouldn't have missed it for the world. • I wouldn't recommend it because ... • It is a dreadfully boring/brilliant/exciting read.

