

Writing Reviews

A review is a description of your opinion of a particular experience. This might be your opinion of a book you have read, a film you have seen, a game you have played, a meal you have eaten or anything at all. You will frequently read or watch reviews online. Most reviews follow a similar structure.

A. INTRODUCE ...

- What you are going to talk about
- The title or name of the book, film, website, music release, restaurant, hotel, etc.
- The type of book, film, website, restaurant, etc. it is. For example, a book or film could be horror, romance, drama, comedy, etc. A restaurant could be Italian, bistro, fine dining, etc.

B. DESCRIBE ...

Book/Film/Game

- Where and when the story takes place
- Who the main character is or characters are
- The general outline of the plot – without spoiling the ending!
- The cinematography/graphics/other special effects
- The main point or message in one sentence, if possible.

Restaurant/Hotel/Venue

- The types of food you tried
- The décor and atmosphere
- The quality of service.

Music Release/Event

- Artist and genre
- Atmosphere and venue
- Lyrics and themes
- Vocals and music style
- Production quality.

C. JUDGE ...

Book/Film/Game

- The main strengths and weaknesses, in your opinion
- The difficulty level
- How much you liked or disliked the characters/avatars
- Whether or not the descriptions of the relationships were believable
- Whether or not it kept your interest; did it maintain suspense?
- If the ending was satisfactory – without giving it away!
- The language or camera shots and special effects in the film/special features of the game.

Restaurant/Hotel/Venue

- The quality of taste, presentation and ingredients in the meal
- The style of décor, noise, background music, comfort of furniture
- The overall atmosphere/vibe
- The friendliness/professionalism of the staff.

Music Release/Event

- The overall atmosphere of the track/album/event
- Whether or not the playlist works
- Which were the strongest and weakest aspects
- How it made you feel.

D. DECIDE ...

- To whom you would recommend the book/film/music/game/restaurant to, explaining why
- What age group it is suitable for
- The type of person who would/would not enjoy what is being reviewed
- A rating or a final comment.

Review Of

TOY STORY 3



Toy Story 3 is the much-anticipated sequel to the first two in the series. As such, it has a very high standard to live up to. In the previous instalments, the focus was on the relationship between the little boy, Andy, and his toys. However, Andy is now heading off to college and his mother insists that he let go of his beloved Woody and friends.



It all kicks off with the decision to donate Andy's toys to a day-care centre. The toys believe that they will be happy there as the children will play with them. Unfortunately, all is not as it seems and we are swept into a dark drama. The toys' exploits while regaining their freedom are reminiscent of the great escape prison movies and draw on allusions to *The Shawshank Redemption* with a nod to classic crime dramas like *The Godfather* along the way. The character of Lotso is the next ingenious creation in the pantheon of Pixar personalities, the reasons for this cannot be elaborated on further for fear of spoilers!

The film is full of hilarious moments, like a rebooted Buzz Lightyear who can speak only Spanish, Mrs Potato Head's frantic search for her missing eyeball and Woody's perpetual frustration with his rag-tag friends. The attention to detail in the animation and state-of-the-art computer graphics only add to the viewer's enjoyment. This is most evident in the climatic moment as Buzz, Woody and his troops are sliding down an avalanche of rubbish into the red-hot oblivion of an incinerator ...

However, what makes this movie a masterpiece is the emotional heart at its centre. I defy anyone who has ever played with a favourite toy to watch this movie to the very end without feeling a lump in their throat or a tingle in their tear ducts. As always, Pixar manages the difficult balancing act of appealing to all viewers aged from six to 106. A word of warning; after seeing this movie you might never be able to part with your childhood toys without emotional trauma.

WHY DON'T YOU...

Write a review for a popular website of any book, film, computer game or music event you have recently experienced.

OR

Most books, films or games have a short **blurb** on the outside of the back cover. Typically, this is a brief text which describes and praises the plot, characterisation, acting, etc. Write such a blurb for any book, film or game of your choice.

Use **PALS** to help you plan and **brainstorm**.