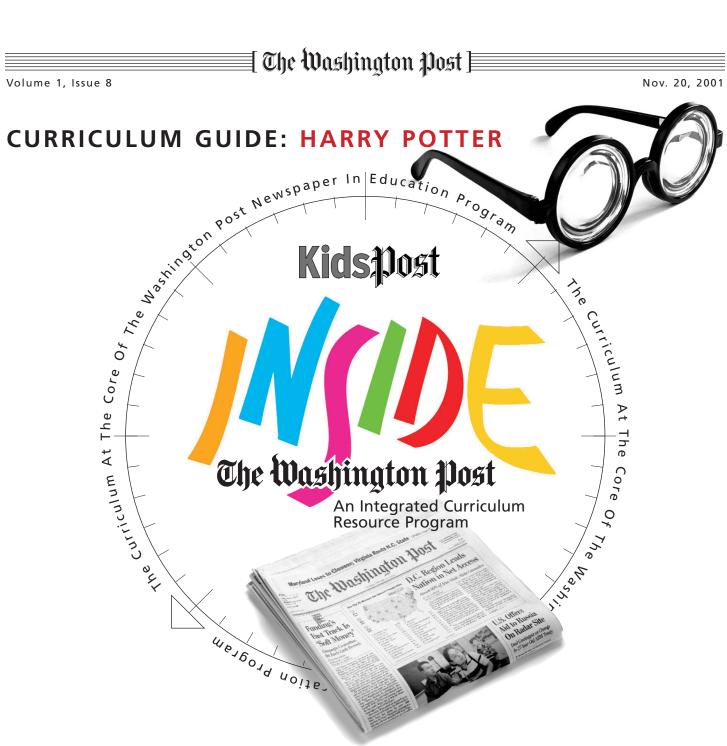
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The Movie Reviewer

KidsPost Article: "Critical Thinking: What's a Movie Reviewer Do Anyway?"

Lesson: Write a movie review

Level: Beginning to Advanced

Subjects: English, Language Arts,

Reading

Related Activity: Mathematics

Procedure

Read and Discuss

Read the interview with Washington Post movie critic Desson Howe. What does a movie critic do? What training did Howe have to become a movie reviewer? Why would The Washington Post include movie reviews?

Take a Trivia Quiz

We have provided you eight questions for a trivia quiz. Please note that the answers are on the sheet for your benefit. For the age of your students, you will have to decide how much information to give. For example, for the youngest students, the dates may be left in number one and the amounts of money may be left for number two. A test of numerical ordering with data would not be the same challenge for older students; delete the dates and amounts. Ouestion 8 is open-ended. Use it as a lead into giving opinion and backing that opinion with specific examples.

Analyze What You Know

When movies are based upon a book, readers have expectations. Ask students who have read *Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's Stone* to

tell what they expected the movie to include. Read "A 'Potter' Preview," a look at what appears in the movie and what has disappeared in the screen version (http://www.washingtonpost.com/wpsrv/entertainment/movies/features/potterfeature.htm). If students have seen the movie, do they agree with the director's decisions? What scenes are better left to the reader's imagination?

Discuss movie genres. What are the characteristics of movies in these genre?

Adventure, comedy, fantasy, science fiction, superhero, war, western. Can students name the best films in each category? What are Academy Award winners in each genre?

Expectations based upon the book and the genre can influence the review a movie receives.

Evaluate

Read "London's 'Harry Potter' Debut: Movie Magic of a Special Sort"

Sort" (http:

(http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/education/kidspost/nie/A39685-2001Nov4.html). Washington Post Foreign Service reporter T.R. Reid reviews the London premiere. Analyze the information he included and the order in which he presented it.

Give students "Guidelines for Movie Review Writers." Use these

Film Vocabulary

Action

"Action" is called during filming to indicate the start of the current take.

Actor, Actress

A person who plays the role of a character. Historically, the term "Actor" refered exclusively to males, but in modern times the term is used for both genders.

Animation (also Animated, Animator)

The process of creating the illusion of motion by creating individual frames, as opposed to filming naturally-occuring action at a regular frame rate

Close-up

A shot in which the subject is larger than the frame, revealing much detail.

Costume

The clothes worn by actors when being filmed.

Director

The principal creative artist on a movie set. A director is usually (but not always) the driving artistic source behind the filming process, and communicates to actors the way that he/she would like a particular scene played. A director's duties might also include casting, script editing, shot selection, shot composition, and editing.

Editing (also Visual Editing, Film Editing)

Reconstructing the sequence of events in a movie

Lighting

Most productions use artificial lighting when filming for various technical and artistic reasons, both on location or on a set.



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Movie Reviewer

Continued

guidelines to evaluate the movie and to write the review.

Establish a Format

It would be helpful to establish a format for the movie review. You might want to use the Washington Post format. This is good training. If students are submitting for publication, they need to follow the format of the publication. If students will be submitting their reviews to your school's newspaper, use the format of that publication.

Give a Rating

Your class could devise its own rating system or symbols. Go to VideoHound Ratings for possible categories

(http://www.moviegoods.com/pop_r atings.html). Or go to the Motion Picture Association of America's Movie Ratings

(http://www.mpaa.org/movieratings) where you can learn how the rating system works and search a movie's rating. Have students think about standards before they write their reviews.

Write a Movie Review

Either show a movie in class or ask students to select a movie to review.

Share

Ask students to read their movie reviews aloud or publish them on a bulletin board. If several students have reviewed the same movie, they could read pointcounterpoint. Students could be movie critics on a television or radio show discussing the reasons they give the movie a positive or negative rating. If your school has a student newspaper, submit the best movie reviews for publication consideration.

Enrichment

Think about the mathematics and finances involved in the movie industry. Use "Movie Math" for articles and questions for discussion.

Moviegoer

One who goes to see movies.

Point of View (also POV)

A camera angle in which the camera views what would be visible from a particular object's position.

Scene

A continuous block of storytelling either set in a single location or following a particular character. The end of a scene is typically marked by a change in location, style, or time.

Script

A general term for a written work detailing story, setting, and dialogue. A script may take the form of a screenplay, shooting script, lined script, continuity script, or a spec script.

Set

An environment used for filming. When used in contrast to location, it refers to one artifically constructed.

Sound Effects

Sounds added during postproduction by the sound crew.

Special Effects (also SFX)

An artificial effect used to create an illusion in a movie. Refers to effects produced on the set, as opposed to those created in post-production (visual effects).

Source: http://us.imdb.com/Glossary/

Answers to Harry Potter Challenge 1. I, 2. QQ, 3. TT, 4. CC, 5. EE, 6. Q, 7. A, 8. J, 9. RR, 10. R, 11. DD, 12. K, 13. S, 14. VV, 15. B, 16. FF, 17. U. 18. UU, 19. L. 20. NN.

17. U, 18. UU, 19. L, 20. NN, 21. G, 22. G, 23. G, 24. U, 25. C, 26. D, 29. W, 30. V, 31. XX, 32. O0, 33. E, 34. II, 23. W, 35. W, 36. MN, 37. KK, 38. Y, 39. F, 40. O.

41. LL, 42. Z, 43. G, 44. N, 45. P, 46. AA, 47. JJ, 48. BB, 49. H, 50. SS

Movie Trivia

- 1. Put these films in order of year of release, starting with the earliest.
- (a) "Fantasia," 1940
- (b) "Mulan," 1998
- (c) "The Lion King," 1994
- (d) "Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs," 1937
- 2. Put these top grossing movies* in order of most money grossed in the U.S. to least
- (a) "E.T., the Extra-Terrestrial," 1982, \$399,804,539, ranked #4
- (b) "Jurassic Park," 1993, \$356,763,175, ranked #5
- (c) "Titanic," 1997, \$600,743,440, ranked #1
- (d) "Star Wars," 1977, \$460,935,655, ranked #2
- 3. In how many movies has Daniel Radcliffe starred before "Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's Stone"?
- (a) none
- (b) one
- (c) three
- (d) four
- 4. Which actor in Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's Stone is a member of the comedy group "Monty Python"?
- (a) Richard Harris
- (b) John Clesse
- (c) Dame Maggie Smith
- (d) Robbie Coltrane

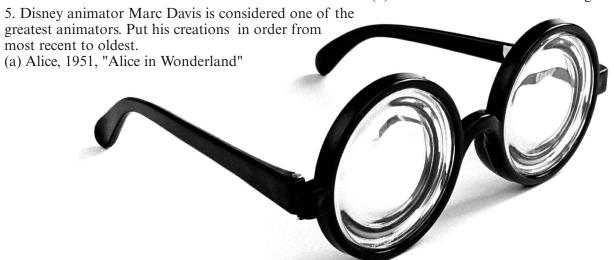
- (b) Cruella De Vil, 1961, "One Hundred and One Dalmatians"
- (c) Bambi, 1942, "Bambi"
- (d) Tinkerbell, 1953, "Peter Pan"

Marc Davis also created Brer Rabbit, 1946, "Song of the South" and Cinderella, 1950, "Cinderella."

- 6. Rank these top grossing movies in the world market from most to least.
- (a) Jurassic Park, 1993
- (b) Independence Day, 1996
- (c) Star Wars: Episode I The Phantom Menace, 1999
- (d) Titanic, 1997

The Lion King is # 6, ET is #7, Aladdin is #19 and Toy Story 2 is # 22 at \$485.700.000.

- 7. All of these are Walt Disney animated movies. Which is the world's first animated movie?
- (a) "Pinocchio"
- (b) "Fantasia"
- (c) "Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs"
- (d) "Dumbo"
- 8. Which one of these gets your vote for best movie to see with your family?
- (a) "Toy Story 2"
- (b) "Shrek"
- (c) "Princess Bride"
- (d) "Wallace & Gromit: The Wrong Trousers"



*"Star Wars: Episode I - The Phantom Menace," 1999 is ranked #3.

Source: The Internet Movie Database (http://us.imdb.com/), Walt Disney (http://us.imdb.com/Name?Disney%2C%20Walt); Marc Davis Lecture on Animation (http://www.oscars.org/foundation/lectures/davis/index.html)

Question 1: D, 1937; A, 1940; C, 1994; B, 1998 — Question 2: C, D, A, B — Question 3: A — Question 4: B — Question 5: B, 1961; D, 1953; A, 1951; C, 1942 — Question 6: D, C, A, B — Question 7: C



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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 appreciated on the 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 to television or on video.

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 quickly. Give them the information they need.

Know the basics

Title, producer, director, rating, distributor, running time can be found on official movie Web sites.

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; otherwise, give information to help them to understand the comparison.

Know the genre

Is this a good example of the genre?

Know the actors, actresses and director

When writing about characters' actions, don't confuse the characters with the actors who are portraying them. Actors'

names often appear in parenthesis. 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 his approach or expectations viewers have of his movies.

Summarize the plot, but don't tell the ending

This is not as true when a movie is based upon a book or play. If the movie has a different ending, don't tell.

Select a scene

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

Read Desson Howe's online review of "Monsters, Inc." Look for actors' names; characters' names, appearance and qualities; and plot summary. Do you think Howe likes the movie?

In a hidden world inhabited by monsters of every shape and size, grizzly faced James "Sulley" Sullivan (voiced by John Goodman) and his one-eyed blob of a Scare Assistant, Mike Wazowski (Billy Crystal), work at Monsters, Inc., a utility company that harnesses energy from the fear of children. Sulley and Wazowski are part of the plant's front line, busting into kids' rooms, scaring them and producing a bounty of terror. Sulley's a monster among monsters. He's always topping the kudos list for most screams generated. But a treacherous, chameleon-like rival named Randall Boggs (Steve Buscemi) is threatening to knock Sulley from the No. 1 spot. That rivalry recedes temporarily into the background when young Boo (Mary Gibbs)—oblivious to the scariness of the monsters—wanders into her closet and straight into the monster dimension.

Checklist

- ☐ My opinion is clearly stated. Readers know whether I recommend they buy a ticket, wait for the video or just read the book.
- ☐ I have given specific examples to support my point of view.
- ☐ I have used the right tone and vocabulary for my readers.
- ☐ I have included a summary of the action.
- ☐ I have not revealed the ending of the movie.
- □ I have included something about actors, actresses and director.
- ☐ I have included something about the costumes, special effects and lighting.
- ☐ I have included something about camera work.
- ☐ I have used correct punctuation and spelling.
- ☐ I have used the correct format.
- □ I have been honest.

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Movie Math

You may think this is about buying a ticket or renting a video to see a film. Movie math is more than the price you pay for a ticket or the cost of a video.

Be a critical reader

If you take time to read the blurbs about movies, you have made an advertising company and movie distributor happy. You might be persuaded to buy a ticket. Read "This Story is Great!" John Kelly tells you about blurbs. Have you ever read a blurb that is negative?

Where should you look for other sources of information before you spend your money?

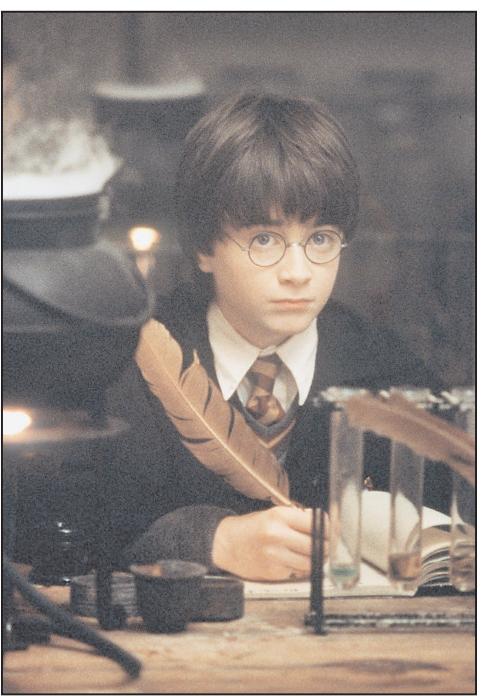
Be a critical viewer

J.K. Rowling insisted there be no product placement in the movie. She wanted her movie to reflect the British boarding school life and not have subliminal messages to buy certain products. As you view other movies look for the cars that are driven, the candy that is eaten and other products that are present. Think about it. What candy appears in "E.T., the Extra-Terrestrial"?

Why would a company want its product to appear in a movie?

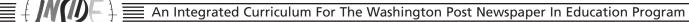
Be a critical consumer

You can order the official Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's Stone interactive game or sip Coke from a Harry Potter can. Marketing of Harry Potter book-related



WARNER BROS. PHOTO

Profits from the Harry Potter movie could soar to hundreds of millions of dollars for the movie's producer, Warner Bros.





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Movie Math continued

merchandise began in August 2000. T-shirts and clocks could be bought in Warner Bros. stores. By Thanksgiving, games and puzzles could be found in department stores. The studio began "mid-tier distribution" in spring 2001 to such stores as Sears, Roebuck and Co.

Learn about marketing, licensing and merchandising

Read "The Magic Touch?" (http://www.washingtonpost.c om/wp-dyn/education/kidspost/nie/A1 8619-2001Nov12.html). In the KidsPost article, Elizabeth Kastor explains licensing and product placement.

Read "A Harry Issue for Coke"

(http://www.washingtonpost.c om/wp-

dynleducation/kidspost/nie/A1 8625-2001 Nov12.html). In this KidsPost article, Ellen Edwards takes a closer look at how Coca-Cola is merchandising Harry Potter's image and those who are not happy.

Read "Testing AOL's Marketing Magic: With 'Harry Potter' Franchise, Media Giant Exercises

Relative Restraint"

(http://www.washingtonpost.c om/wp-

dynleducation/kidspost/nie/A4 4804-2001 Nov5.html). This business article appeared in the November 6, 2002, Washington Post. Alec Klein, Washington Post Staff Writer, examines the impact of the business partnerships and agreements.

Here are a few questions to consider:

- 1. Only Coca-Cola Co. has been allowed to use the Harry Potter image on their products. Why would Warner Bros. not want to overcommercialize the Harry Potter brand?

 2. How was the partnership
- with AOL utilized to promote the movie version?
- 3. Why is it important for movies to have licensee agreements? How have licensee fees from toymakers Mattel Inc. and Hasbro Inc. been beneficial?
- 4. According to sources, Warner Bros. paid \$500,000 for rights—movies, merchandising, music and television—to the first Harry Potter book. At that time, the book had been published only in Britain. Use the information provided in this article to evaluate the investment potential.

In the Money

Advance

Of payment: an amount given before receipt of services. Of a composite print: the distance between a point on the soundtrack and the corresponding image.

Advertisement

A notice, such as a poster, newspaper display or paid announcement in the electronic media, designed to attract public attention or patronage.

Agent

A manager responsible for the professional business dealings of an actor, director, or other artist.

Blockbuster

A well-known film that makes a lot of money.

Blurbs

Excerpts from reviews written by movie critics. Used to encourage readers to attend films.

Endorsement

Approval or support through a public statement. Endorsement can be implied; for example, an athlete's appearance in an advertisement gives encouragement to buy the product.

Hit

A successful or popular venture.

Licensing

Agreement that gives the right to use the name and image

Merchandise

(noun) Goods bought and sold in business. (verb) To promote the sale of, as by advertising or display

Movie Rights

A contract that is negotiated to give permission to make a movie based upon a book or script.

Product Placement

A company pays to have its product used in a film as props. For example, the cars driven, the soft drink consumed, the brand of tennis shoes worn can be advertising for a product seemlessly included in the flow of the movie.

Series (also Franchise)

A sequence of films with continuing characters or themes, but with little other interdependence, especially with respect to plot or significant character development.

Source: American Heritage Dictionary, Internet Movie Database



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Harry Potter Matching Challenge

Match the names, places and objects found in "Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's Stone"

		A. Twice the size of a normal man, with loose tangles of busny, black hair B. You-Know-Who
		C. Ron's pet rat
 1. Harry Potter	26. Neville Longbottom	D. Guards the entrance into Gryffindor Hall
2.5 (M.C. II	27 M	E. About half the size of a walnut, bright gold with silver wings
 2. Professor McGonagall	27. Madam Hooch	F. Maker of the sorcerer's stone
2 Harriana Granau	28. The Fat Lady	G. Hagrid's pet dog
 3. Hermione Granger	28. The Fat Lady	H. The address of the Dursley's home.
 4. Ron Weasley	29. Nimbus Two Thousand	I. Thin faced, knobby knees, black hair, bright, green eyes with a scar in the shape for a lightening bolt. Wears round glasses held together by tape.
 5. Peeves	30. Remembrall	J. The house that Harry, Ron, and Hermione are sorted into at Hogwarts K. Non wizarding people
 6. Argus Filch	31. Comet Two Sixty	L. The maker of fine wands
7. Rubeus Hagrid	32. Bludger	M. Draco's 2 best friends N. The Hogwart's nurse
8. Gryffindor	33. Golden Snitch	O. A Norwegian Ridgeback P. The people who raised Harry after his parents' death
		Q. The caretaker of the inside of Hogwarts
9. Slytherin	34. Quaffle	R. Defense Against the Dark Arts instructor. He was a man with two faces.
•		S. Resident ghost of Gryffindor tower
 10. Professor Quirrell	35. Professor Flitwick	T. The wizards' bank
		U. The school for wizards
 11. Professor Dumbledore	36. Wingardium Leviosa	V. Informs if you have forgotten something to do
42 M	27 7 11	W. The Charms teacher
 12. Muggles	37. Troll	X. Harry's owl
13. Nearly Headless Nick	38. Mirror of Erisod	Y. Shows a person's most desperate desire
 13. Nearly neadless Nick	36. WIIITOI OI ETISOU	Z. Half man, half horse, a centaur
14. Draco Malfoy	39. Nicolas Flamel	AA. The gate where the Hogwarts Express arrives and exits
 14. Diaco Malloy	55. Nicolas Hamel	BB. Dudley's best friend
15. Lord Voldemort	40. Norbert	CC. Red hair, Harry's best friend
		DD. Headmaster of Hogwarts
16. Diagon Alley	41. Fluffy	EE. The poltergeist who listen only listens to the Bloody Baron
,	,	FF. The town where wizards shop
 17. Hogwarts	42. Ronan	GG. Head of Slytherin, teaches the potion's class
		HH. Raised by his grandmother
 18. Quidditch	43. Fang	II. Ball thrown through a hoop to score 10 points
40 Ma Ollinandan	44 Marley Develope	JJ. The Dursley's neighbor who babysat Harry
 19. Mr. Ollivander	44. Madam Pomfrey	KK. Twelve feet tall, dull grey skin with a head like a coconut
20. Dudley Dursley	45. Uncle Vernon & Aunt Petunia	LL. Three headed hound that guards the Sorcerer's Stone
 20. Dudley Dursley	45. Office verifor & Autit Fetulia	MM. Words spoken to cause objects to levitate
21. Professor Severis Snape	46. Platform 9 3/4	NN. Four times larger than Harry; his fat, spoiled cousin
 21.110103301 30VCH3 3Hape	10.1 lattofff 3 3/1	OO. Ball used to knock players off their brooms
22. Scabbers	47. Mrs. Figg	PP. Flying lessons instructor
		QQ. Teacher of transfiguration, Deputy Head mistress
 23. Gringotts	48. Piers Polkiss	RR. The house Lord Voldemort resided in while living at Hogwarts
-		SS. A scrawny dusty-colored cat
 24. Crabbe and Goyle	49. Number 4 Privet Drive	TT. Very smart, comes from a muggle family, a friend of Harry's and Ron's
		UU. The wizard sport like football in the muggle world
 25. Hedwig	50. Mrs. Norris	VV. Harry's enemy at Hogwarts
		WW. Sleek and shiny with a mahogany handle, a long tail of neat, straight twigs
	See answers on Page 3	XX. The broom most guidditch players used.



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Word Study: A look at movie lingo



A movie reviewer is often a film **buff**. A Harry Potter buff is someone who is enthusiastic and knowledgeable about all things in the books and movie.

This meaning of buff originated around 1920. People then liked New York firefighters as much as we do in 2001. New York volunteer firemen wore buff-colored uniforms. Someone who had a strong interest in fire fighting and fires was called a buff.

A film buff would certainly know who is the **star** of the movie. The star gets top billing on movie posters. The star's name is larger and comes before the names of other actors and actresses in film credits. The star has the leading role. If a movie reviewer thinks someone with a minor role did a better job

acting, the star is not happy. The star wants to shine above all others.

A star would not ordinarily want a small part in a film. When director Michael Anderson was trying to get many famous actors to play small, or bit, parts in "Around the World in 80 Days," he told actors he wanted them to play **cameo** roles. A cameo is a carving in a gem or shell in relief. Although small, the cameo can be very delicate and valuable. Anderson got the stars he wanted.

You know that a pan can be used for cooking or frying. Romans and Greeks had words for it: In Latin it was *patina*, meaning shallow pan or platter, which came from Greek *patanē*. During the gold rush,

prospectors would "pan for gold." A shallow pan was used for washing gold from gravel.

Miners used the expression to "pan out" when they found gold. Pan out also could refer to a mine or soil that held gold. For actors, a positive review is as good as gold. When the noun or verb is **pan**, the expression is changed to harsh criticism. When a movie critic gives a negative review, he pans the film.

If you are talking about the cinematography of a film, you may discuss the successful use of panning. This has nothing to do with gold or negative reviews. It has everything to do with visual effect. If the camera is rotated on its vertical axis to produce a panorama, the director of photography, or DP, has panned the shot.

The holy grail of movie lingo, the Hollywood sign in Hollywood Hills, Calif., has letters that are as tall as a 5-story building.

REUTEURS



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Academic Content Standards

This lesson addresses academic content standards of Maryland, Virginia and the District of Columbia. Among those that apply are:

The main lesson addresses these academic content standards of:

Maryland

Reading

Reading (1.0): Students examine, construct and extend the meaning of a variety of self-selected and assigned text (traditional and electronic) by applying a range of reading strategies and analytic techniques. 6. By the end of grade 5, students know and are able to summarize text in a manner that reflects the main ideas, significant details and its underlying meaning.

Language Arts

Writing (3.0): Students produce informational, practical, persuasive, and narrative writing that demonstrates an awareness of audience, purpose, and form using stages of the writing process as needed (i.e., pre-writing, drafting, revising, editing, and publishing). By the end of grade 8, students know and are able to write to persuade an intended audience by selecting an appropriate form that

- Makes a clear and knowledgeable judgment
- Supports arguments with detailed evidence, examples, and reasoning, differentiating between evidence and opinion
- Refutes counter arguments.

A complete list of State Content Standards of Maryland can be found at http://www.mdk12.org/mspp/standards/.

Virginia

English

Reading/Literature, Grade 7: 7.5 The student will read a variety of fiction, nonfiction and poetry. Describe setting, plot structure and theme or conflict. Analyze relationship between author's style, literary form and intended impact on reader. Describe how word choice and language structure convey an author's viewpoint in newspaper and magazine articles and critical reviews.

Writing

Writing, Grade 7: 7.8 The student will develop narrative, expository, persuasive and technical writings.

- Apply knowledge of prewriting strategies.
- Elaborate the central idea in an organized manner.
- Choose vocabulary and information that will cause a reader to perceive images and tone.
- Revise writing for clarity.

A complete list of Standards of Learning of Virginia can be found on the Web at http://www.pen.k12.va.us/.

Washington, D.C.

English Language Arts Reading/English Language Arts, Grade 3, Content Standard 1: Students comprehend and compose a wide range of written, oral and visual texts. Performance standard: The student relates new information to prior knowledge and experiences; makes connection to related topics or information. Content Standard 2: Students respond in many ways to a rich variety of literary texts and relate texts to life. Performance standard: The student responds to nonfiction, fiction, poetry and drama:

- Identifies recurring themes across works:
- Considers the differences among genres;
- Explains the reasons for a character's actions;
- Critiques the degree to which a plot is realistic or unrealistic;
- Makes inferences and draws conclusions about themes, events, characters and settings;
- Relates literary texts to their own life, to lives of others, and to other literary works;
- Understands, explains, the writer's craft.

A complete list of Standards for Teaching and Learning of the District of Columbia Public Schools can be found at http://www.k12.dc.us/.