

Language

Film reviews

Learning objectives

- The students learn how to write a successful film review.
- In the project stage, they write a film review.

Warmer

Write these questions on the board, for the students to discuss in pairs.

- 1 How often do you watch films?
- 2 Where do you watch them?
- 3 How do you choose the films you watch?
- 4 Do you ever read film reviews? Why (not)?

- 1 Ask the students to look at the texts first, without reading them, and say what type of text they are (film reviews). Then ask them to answer the rest of the questions in pairs. Remind them not to read the texts for now. When checking the answers, point out that the last line of each review answers question 3 (e.g. Review by Ally, 15, Los Angeles).

Answers

- 1 Film reviews 2 in a newspaper, magazine, online
- 3 people who saw the film (Ally, Felipe, Marcin)
- 4 people who are choosing a film to watch

- 2 Ask the class to read the types of film in the box first and try to name a film for each type. Then ask them to read the texts very quickly and match them with the film types. Point out that some of the films may be more than one type.

Answers

A comedy B animation / comedy C animation / adventure

- 3 Ask the students to read the question and ask *Where do you think you will find the answer?* If necessary, point out that reviewers usually give their opinion in the final paragraph. Accept any reasonable answer that the students can justify with words from the text, e.g. *I think Ally gave the film four stars because she says 'it's one of the most entertaining comedies I've seen'. I don't think she gave it five stars because she says 'In general, I'd recommend this film,' but she also says about the dancing 'some people might think it's too perfect'.*

Suggested answers

- A 4 stars
 B 4 stars (*not as much fun as it was in the original movie; Would I recommend the film? Yes, I would, but ...*)
 C 2 or 3 stars (*the story goes from OK to quite bad in the second half; just doesn't work alongside the Tarzan story; it might be worth seeing if you have nothing better to do*)

- 4 Ask the students to look at the first paragraph in review A again and to say what the connection is between the four underlined words (words or phrases connected with talking about films). Ask them to find some more in the three texts. Encourage them also to find adjectives to describe films.

Suggested answers

Review A: appear on the scene, the best thing about the film, the script, written by, fast and funny, cool, performance(s), great, fantastic, too perfect, entertaining, musical comedy

Review B: the second in the series, (a bit) disappointing, directed by, it stars, voice, the story starts, a great ending, romance comes on the scene, things get complicated, good points, great moments in the story, awesome, character, not as much fun, original movie, fresh and new, it's more of the same, recommend, fun and a good laugh

Review C: big-budget, animated movie, the latest in a long list of films about, audiences, directed by, film-maker, 'motion capture' technique, base animation on real actors, it's about, the scenes when, enjoyable (enough), the story goes from OK to quite bad, in the second half, it's all connected with, it just doesn't work, (fairly) simple, adventure story, it might be worth seeing, in my view, it's better for, not (really) suitable for.

- 5 Ask the students to read opinions 1–6 first and try to remember which reviewer might say these things about the film they saw. Then ask them to read the reviews again and check their ideas. Encourage them to underline the words in the text which give them the answer.


Suggested answers

- 1 C (*not suitable for teens*)
- 2 A (*the performances are great*)
- 3 C (*the story goes from OK to quite bad in the second half*)
- 4 A (*some people might think it's too perfect*)
- 5 C (*it's all connected with environmental issues and the destruction of the dinosaurs, and it just doesn't work alongside the Tarzan story*)
- 6 B (*there are certainly going to be more; That was a great ending. Why start again!?*)

- 6 Ask the students to look at the reviews first, without reading exercise 6 and ask *How many paragraphs are there in each review? What information is included in each paragraph?* Then ask them to read exercise 6 and check their ideas.

Answers

a 2 b 4 c 1 d 3

- 7  2.15 Books closed. Ask the class *What sort of information should go in a review? What sort of language should you use in a review?*

Books open. Ask the students to check their ideas with the lists in the book. Next, ask them if there is anything in the lists in the book that they wouldn't include.

Play the recording and ask the students to tick the things they hear. If necessary, play the recording again and stop it after each answer is given.

Answers

Students should tick: the actors, the story, the director, a recommendation, contractions, phrasal verbs, some informal words, questions, talking to the reader

Audioscript

Teacher: OK, everyone. Now you've read some film reviews, let's talk about how to write one. First of all, what information should you include in a film review? Yes, Shona.

Shona: You have to give the reader enough information to decide whether they want to see the film or not.

Teacher: Indeed. Very good. So what kind of information is that? Jacob?

Jacob: Um, I think you need to give some information about the story, so people understand what it's about, and you should say who the main actors are.

Teacher: Yes, Laura?

Laura: And the director. Some people think the director is more important than the actors.

Teacher: That's true. Good point. Nick?

Nick: But you mustn't give away the ending.

Shona: Or anything unexpected, any surprises in the story.

Teacher: Yes, that's very important, no spoilers, as we call them. What about your opinion?

Jacob: Well, you should give a recommendation, but I don't think you should give your opinion on every little thing in the movie. People should make up their own minds.

Shona: And I might think that one actor's performance is good but Jacob might not.

Teacher: Yes, so perhaps you should give honest descriptions of the performances, the script and so on. Now, what about the language? What kind of language should you use?

Nick: Are we talking about a review for people of our own age, or for older people?

Teacher: Let's say it's for a young people's website.

Nick: Then we can be quite informal.

Laura: But not too informal! I think language sounds awful when it's really trendy and modern, and using words that only teenagers understand.

Teacher: Yes, Laura's absolutely right. Don't make your reviews too informal.

Jacob: And no bad words!

Teacher: Definitely not! So what kind of informal things can you include?

Laura: I think we can use short forms, you know, when you run words together, like *isn't* and *doesn't*.

Teacher: Contractions, yes, I agree.

Laura: And some informal words like *great*, and also phrasal verbs, like *hang out*.

Teacher: Good, you know your English language, Laura! Shona?

Shona: Can we use questions, and speak, I mean write, to our reader, using *you*, for example?

Teacher: What does everyone think?

Nick: I think so; it makes the review interesting.

Jacob: Yes, I agree.

Teacher: Yes, I agree too. OK. How about writing a review now? Why don't you ...

8 Write the answers from exercise 7 in a column on the left-hand side of the board. Ask the students to find examples of each of these in the reviews. When they are ready, invite two or three students to come to the board and write an example next to each thing.

9 Encourage the pairs to choose a film quickly. Then ask them to complete the information in note form. If the class is slow to start, choose a film and do it as a class on the board before the students work in pairs. For 'words and phrases' encourage the students to use some of the words they underlined in the reviews in exercise 4.

Cooler

A class quiz. Prepare some quiz questions about the films on this page and in Unit 16 (see suggestions below). Organise the students into teams, ask the questions and award points for the correct answers. If appropriate, ask the students to write some more quiz questions about famous films and organise a class quiz using their questions.

Suggested quiz questions

Who stars in *Pitch Perfect*? (Anna Kendrick and Skylar Astin)

Which university do the students go to in *Pitch Perfect*? (Barden University)

Who wrote the music for *Despicable Me 2*? (Pharrell Williams)

Who directed *Tarzan*? (Reinhard Klooss)

Who does Tarzan meet as a teenager? (Jane Porter)

Project

Tell the students they are now going to write their own review in pairs. Remind them about the organisation of a review by reading the project instructions together. Ask them to read their notes in exercise 9 and to say in which paragraph they should put each part of the review.

Tell them to make a plan before they start writing. If necessary, write a plan together on the board first.

When the pairs have written their review, encourage them to exchange it with another pair and to check each other's work to make sure they have included the things in exercise 7 (i.e. information about the actors, story, director, etc. and also contractions, phrasal verbs, etc.). Before compiling a class book, highlight any errors and ask the students to correct their work.

Ask them to read the reviews and, if appropriate, choose a film from the reviews to watch as a class.