Praising and criticising

1 Decide which of the adjectives in the box below are used to praise, and which to criticise. Then add an adverb to intensify each adjective.

Example: action packed – to praise, incredibly action-packed

> action-packed brutal far-fetched gloomy
> gripping moving powerful predictable
> pretentious slow-moving spectacular
> stylish subtle unconvincing uninspired
> witty

2 Note down three films or TV series you would recommend, and three you wouldn't.

Tell your partner about them using the expressions in the box plus the *to*-infinitive or *-ing*.

Give reasons using phrases from Exercise 1.

Example: I would definitely recommend watching this series. It is totally convincing and extremely powerful.

> I would definitely (not) recommend …
> My advice is (not) …
> I would advise against …
> Viewers would be well advised (not) …
> This series is certainly (not) worth …

Part 2: review **W** *Page 105*

3 Discuss these questions with a partner.

1 What kind of things are reviewed in newspapers, magazines and online?
2 What do you expect to find in a review?
3 How far would you be influenced by a good or bad review of a film or TV series?

4 Look at the exam task and answer the questions.

1 What do you have to review?
2 Who are you writing for and why do they want a review?
3 What must you do in your review?

Exam task

You see this notice on a film review website.

> In every imaginable category there are so many great films to watch, both old and new. The trouble is, there just isn't time to see all of them. So to help film lovers make informed choices, we regularly post reviews comparing and contrasting movies. Send us your review of two films of a similar type of any age, together with your recommendations, and we may well post it on our site.

Write your **review**.

5 Quickly read the model review on page 55 and answer the questions.

1 Did the reviewer enjoy watching
   a) *Goldfinger*   b) *Skyfall*?
2 Which does the reviewer particularly recommend?

Two must-see Bond movies

Skyfall, directed by Sam Mendes, is a massively-popular action film featuring secret agent James Bond. Just as, almost fifty years earlier, Guy Hamilton's *Goldfinger* was, too.

In the older film, Bond has to prevent aptly-named gold smuggler Auric Goldfinger from stealing the US gold reserves in Fort Knox, following narrow escapes from death in England and Switzerland. In *Skyfall* it is the Secret Service itself, in particular Bond's boss M, that is under attack. The action takes place in superbly-shot locations as far apart as Istanbul and Macau, Shanghai and Scotland, as 007 battles Javier Bardem's utterly evil Silva.

These frequent changes of setting help maintain the pace of both films, holding the viewer's attention throughout – as do the highly-accomplished actors who play Bond. Other similarities include the magnificent title songs, sung by Shirley Bassey and Adele respectively, that famous suspense-building incidental music, and even the same Aston Martin car. In both movies, Bond faces genuinely scary opponents, particularly Goldfinger's deadly assistant Oddjob, although *Skyfall* keeps the excitement level a little higher by having longer action sequences.

One key difference is that *Skyfall*'s M is a woman, brilliantly played by Judi Dench. This, unfortunately, does not reflect any real change in the role of female characters in Bond films, even after half a century. Another criticism is the amount of violence, often shown in rather unnecessary close-up.

To sum up, both films are certainly worth watching, but for today's audience, accustomed to the non-stop action of movies like *Mission Impossible*, I would probably recommend *Skyfall*.

6   Answer the questions about the model review.

1   In which paragraph(s) does the writer:
- give a synopsis of each film?
- make recommendations?
- give a little background information?
- mention characters in both films?
- aim to catch the reader's attention?
- criticise both films?
- praise both films?

2   According to the reviewer, what similarities are there between the films? What contrasts are there?
3   What examples are there of adverb/adjective collocations?
4   What style is the review written in?
5   What expressions give the reviewer's own opinions?
6   Does the review make you want to watch either of the films (again)?

Quick steps to writing a Part 2 review
- Choose a subject for your review and decide if you enjoyed it.
- Think about what your readers will want to know.
- Plan your review, ensuring it contains description, praise and/or criticism and a conclusion.
- Sound enthusiastic if you enjoyed what you are reviewing.
- End either by recommending or advising readers against the subject.
- Give your review an eye-catching title.

7   Look at these exam task instructions and answer the questions in Exercise 4 about it.

Exam task

You see this announcement in an international magazine called *Home Entertainment*.

> Nowadays there are so many box sets of TV series on sale in the shops and online that it can be difficult to know which to choose. Our reviews section aims to help people make those choices. We therefore invite readers to send in a review comparing and contrasting two different TV series.

Write your **review**.

8   Discuss these questions in small groups.

1   What is your favourite type of TV series?
2   Which two series of that type made most impression on you? Why?

9   Look at the Quick steps and plan your review. For each series, make notes about some of these:

- the type of series
- the setting(s) and plot
- the main characters
- the acting
- the soundtrack
- the photography
- themes, e.g. bravery, dishonesty
- who it might appeal to

10   Write your **review** in **220–260** words in an appropriate style. When you have finished, check your work as in Unit 1, Writing Exercise 8 on page 15.

Exam tip ›

If you have to review two different things, write a similar amount about each.