

# **SAETA**

**2005**

**Yr 12 English Teachers  
Refresher Course**

**APPLICATION: Film Review and  
Interaction**

**Presenter: Marie Baker**

# Film Review (1<sup>st</sup> Application)

## Advantages

- ?? Introduce the main elements and language of English Communication (audience, purpose, context, style, form and language).
- ?? Introduce the structure and expectations of Application.
- ?? While teacher directed it allows students to select films and review types which suit their interests and ability.
- ?? Suited to students who are not confident writers or who need direction
- ?? Enables assessment of student's ability as a writer.

## Disadvantages

- ?? Some students feel limited
- ?? Due to the large amount of information available plagiarism is a possibility.
- ?? Students who lack confidence can resort to retelling the plot.
- ?? Students have difficulty separating the structure and language features of their own reviews for oral reflection.

# Structure

?? First two weeks are intensive, focusing on examining film reviews and exploring how different contexts and audiences change the style, structure and the language of the review.

?? I prefer the students to write two separate reviews, this enables the students to select two distinctly different contexts to write for, leading to a stronger oral presentation.

?? One review aids in avoiding plagiarism, but needs to be handled by a confident student who is able to make strong links between the films and their themes as well as offering a critical opinion.

?? Important to introduce plagiarism to the students here. Emphasize how important their own efforts are in their own growth as a writer. It becomes difficult to maintain that level of writing. Checking is important. Ensuring students hand in any backup of their site/ article/ review with both their drafts and final also helps.

?? Worksheet One: focuses on introducing film review – difference between Descriptive and Analytical reviews.

Elements of film to focus on when looking at a film

Useful web sites

?? It is important for students to find examples of the types of reviews they are interested in.

?? As a class we go through a number of different reviews discussing how structure and language are influenced by context and purpose. See structure example and student writing example.

?? Each student needs to complete a minimum of two analysis of reviews on their own. This goes into their folder as backup. Class discussion on analysis aids them in preparing for the oral presentation.

# YEAR 12 – APPLICATION ONE

## **FILM REVIEW**

During this Application you are required to research the structure and content of various film reviews closely. Film reviews are used to inform the public, promote and provide critical insight into a film. Film reviews appear in various media, such as magazines, radio, television, newspapers or on the Internet. There are two main types of reviews - descriptive and analytical.

### **Descriptive (newspapers, radio and television)**

- ?? Gives an outline of the narrative, and key themes the film examines.
- ?? Includes information about the director, producer or an actor which allows the work to be placed in a context, and compared and contrasted, with other works of the focus person.
- ?? Includes autobiographical information on the people involved as a way of examining the film.
- ?? It will discuss the structure of the film, its style and genre.
- ?? It may provide production details, such as cost, location and setting. It will discuss production values, such as cinematography.
- ?? It may compare the film to other contemporary films.
- ?? May include the distributor of the film and screening details.

### **Analytical ('arts' based newspapers, supplements – usually use specialist journalist)**

- ?? Detailed investigation of the film.
- ?? Opinions are backed by relevant argument supported by referencing the film.
- ?? May closely compare and contrast the film with other works.
- ?? In-depth examination of the ideas, themes and issues explored in the film – may be slightly abstract (the film is used as a jumping point to discuss the 'bigger' issue)
- ?? May explicitly or implicitly make a judgement or recommendation but is less clear cut than a descriptive film review.
- ?? Raises questions about the film

As a group examine your selected reviews closely. A review is a critique of a film either explicitly (stated) or implicitly (suggested), they are an individual's interpretation and opinion of a film. Clarify with your own reviews look for common elements and establish why they have been written in a particular style or develop a particular angle. What makes a review informative and interesting to read? What were the qualities that make one better than the other?

When writing your reviews it is important to be clear and specific about your ideas, generalisations will make your writing appear shallow. Remember when you begin to write your review to keep a particular type of publication in mind always consider the structure, language and presentation. While your notes will not be handed up for assessment they will aid you in preparing for your oral on the processes you went through in creating your own reviews.

Pick films that you feel strongly about, this helps give direction and purpose to your review. Make notes when viewing any film that may be reviewed by you, I encourage you to watch the film more than once and to write a draft copy of your review as soon as you have seen the film. Please get together as a group to discuss any films that you may see.

**Aspects of the film** you might like to consider for review:

- ?? Who is my audience – how does that influence how I present my information.
- ?? What is the purpose of the film – to entertain, to shock, to make you think, to question, an emotional release.
- ?? Does the film fit into a particular genre, or does it cross over a number? What are the advantages and disadvantages of this?
- ?? What is the most appealing element about the film – the story, the ideas, the actors, the special effects, the action?
- ?? Your response to different characters – why you liked, despised or were indifferent to them.
- ?? What you thought about the performances of different actors.
- ?? The script – realistic or not? Comical or witty? Entertaining? Tragic? What were some of your favourite lines?
- ?? Visual effects and camera work – what scenes were particularly effective and why? What atmosphere was created? How was colour and lighting used? Any particular symbols or motifs used?
- ?? Use of music and sound effects – were there any particular musical motifs repeated? What kinds of instruments were used? Was the music contemporary or classical? How did it affect the atmosphere?
- ?? How the film made you feel at different points and why.
- ?? The overall style of the film and the role of the director in bringing all the various elements together.
- ?? How it linked to other text you have viewed, read or heard.
- ?? Whether you would recommend it to others.

If you want to draw connections between the films you may, ensure that you let me know which films you are planning to review in advance. The reviews can either be completed separately or as a single comparative piece. Your reviews should appear as they would look for publication, you have approximately 500 words per film. That's not a lot of words, write concisely in order to fit as much information as possible.

In your 4 –6 min oral presentation you should reflect on the process of viewing and reviewing the films.

### **Some helpful websites**

- ?? IMBD – <http://us.imbd.com/>
- ?? KIDS IN MIND – <http://www.kidsinmind.com/>
- ?? THE AUSTRALIAN – <http://www.theaustralian.news.com.au>
- ?? MOVIE SHOW – <http://www.sbs.com.au/movieshow>
- ?? ALL ABOUT – <http://allaboutmovies.com.au>
- ?? ALL REVIEWS – [www.all-reviews.com](http://www.all-reviews.com)  
<http://all-reviews.com/videos>
- ?? THE GATE – <http://www.thegate.ca/>
- ?? WORLD OF MOVIES – <http://world-of-ovies.com/index.htm>
- ?? AT THE MOVIES – <http://www.abc.net.au/atthemovies/review>
- ?? ROTTEN TOMATOS – <http://rottentomatoes.com>
- ?? EMPIRE – <http://empireonline.co.uk/default.asp>
- ?? HAPPY ROBOT - [http://happyrobot.net/reviews/default.asp?feature\\_id=39](http://happyrobot.net/reviews/default.asp?feature_id=39)
- ?? POP MATTERS – <http://www.popmatters.com/film/reviews/>

# FILM ANALYSIS

## SOME THINGS TO CONSIDER

### **Narrative Style**

- ?? Chronology
- ?? Where is the audience positioned in relation to the narrative? Is it given privileged information, does it see the action through the eyes and experience of one character?

### **Narrative Voice**

- ?? Who is telling the story?
- ?? With whom are we encouraged to sympathise / empathise?

### **Visual Elements**

- ?? Motifs – reoccurring themes eg. Hands, water, colours which give further meaning or contain a symbolism of their own
- ?? Camera work
- ?? Editing – Creates pace. Quick movement from one angle to the next can create the feeling of speed, action or confusion. Allowing the camera to remain stationary invites the viewer to look more closely at what is being depicted, it slows the pace of the film.
- ?? Lighting – can create mood, or setting. It can create tension, leave the audience in the dark or light the way starkly. May reflect the mood of certain characters

### **Sound**

- ?? Effects – Are some aspects of the film emphasised eg. The rustling of skirts
- ?? Music – Creates mood, or defines a character.
- ?? Density of sound / treatment of sound eg echo, reverb, layering

### **Characterisation**

- ?? Dialogue – Is there much dialogue? How important is the dialogue to making meaning from the film?
- ?? Costume / Design – Sets the character in a time and sometimes place. Often reflects the characters personality.
- ?? Make up – defines the character – man, woman or beast.
- ?? Style of acting

### **Camera Angles**

- ?? Used by the director to create mood. A high camera angle is used to indicate inferiority, suppression or defeat. A low camera angle can create the mood of control, domination and power

### **Camera Movement**

- ?? Camera movement can be used with shot size and camera angle to develop the mood of the film. It can also make the viewers feel they are part of the action, provide a new view of a scene or add variety to create new perspectives for the viewer.

**FILM ANALYSIS NOTES**

**Film Title:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Running Time:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Production Company:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Other Films:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Director:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Other Films:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Genre:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Themes:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Background research on film (production/trivia)** \_\_\_\_\_

**Starring:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Performance:** \_\_\_\_\_

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**Others:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Plot:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Directors Perspective/ themes/ issues:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Musical Score comments:** \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Editing/ the cut:** \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Setting/ locations:** \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Special FX (highlights/ incorporation into film):** \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Action / Stunts:** \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Visual quality of film:** \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Tone of film:** \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Other:** \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**ENGLISH COMMUNICATION**  
**APPLICATION: FILM REVIEW (ORAL)**

ORAL PRESENTATION NEEDS TO LAST FOR 4 – 6 MINUTES.

**REFLECT ON**

- ?? The selection of your films – why chose those films and the influence your approach to the reviews. Are there any connections, such as genre, theme, director, actor)
- ?? Times and locations of viewing – any distractions caused by location
- ?? The different focus you placed in each viewing, such as sound, lighting, dialogue, acting, director, or editing.

**STRUCTURE**

You will need to discuss

- ?? What information did the reviews contain?
- ?? What did you have to consider before writing your review – such as the expectations of context and style, chosen publication/ media and the intended audience, along with elements of the film.
- ?? Explain the decision to write one or two separate into two reviews
- ?? What models of reviews were used?
- ?? Who was your audience and how did this influence your review?
- ?? Structure of your review – why?
- ?? Language used in your review – why did you use that style? (give some examples of words specific to your style eg. technical
- ?? Who was your intended audience and how did this effect the way your review (s) were written?
- ?? Success or otherwise of your review.

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# Interacting

## Advantages

- ?? Allows students to choose areas they are already working or are comfortable in.
- ?? Easily organised within the school structure.
- ?? Enables students to focus on elements they enjoy
- ?? Students already familiar with expectations of Application.
- ?? Students can be involved in and reflect on a number of different level interactions.

## Disadvantages

- ?? Some students have difficulty with time organisation.
- ?? Students often do not fully research their particular form of interaction structure, context, language as they are already very familiar with the form and do not necessarily view it as out of the normal or worthy of analysis.
- ?? Some students struggle to reflect in detail on the interaction.
- ?? Some students have difficulty analyzing the language of the interaction.
- ?? Some difficulty separating the written reflection from the oral presentation. Students feel they are doubling up on elements of information, such as analysis and suggesting alternative strategies.

# Structure

- ?? Reiterate the structure and expectations of Application.
- ?? This interaction is more students generated. Cover the expectations and criteria carefully.
- ?? Students should select their interaction in consultation with teacher. They need to list off how they are going to meet the criteria with their interaction.
- ?? Use of SSABSA support material sheet helps provide a clear overview for the students to refer to in terms of what information they need to provide.
- ?? Interview, writing letters, and surveying others in the community helps the student with their interaction. Any letters, or questions need to ensure that they examine an element of the criteria.
- ?? Student should keep notes on audience, purpose, style and language of all interactions in the planning process. (See: example folders)
- ?? Suggested that students design an activity plan to help the actual interaction

Time	Activity	Student will	Teacher will	Expected Outcomes	Real Outcomes

## **Interaction**

?? All interactions should be video taped. Students find it useful to watch the video after and use the review sheet to help them reflect on the process. Video can also be used as part of oral presentation to help student demonstrate/ show evidence of the expected style, language and structure.

## **Written Reflection**

?? Focus on drafting early – carefully sort what elements go in the written and the oral.

?? Focus – record of the process

- summary of the findings
- Analysis, interpretation and evaluation

## **Oral Presentation**

?? All orals need to be fully drafted before handing in.

?? Useful to organise information into presentable chunks using Power point, overheads and video as part of the presentation.

?? Focus – what language to use in the context

- Was the language use effective in this context?
- Elements which affect overall presentation
- Alternative strategies.