

Film Reviews

What makes *you* want to see a film? Is it publicity about the film in the media? Recommendations from others who have already seen the film? Film reviews in newspapers or magazines? And if a film review is positive or negative, does that influence your desire to see the film or not?

Film reviews look critically at a film and try to say whether it is successful or not according to certain criteria. Read the following review of the film *Harry Potter and the Goblet of Fire* taken from the magazine *Newsweek*. Does this review influence in any way your desire to see the film?

The Pitter Potter of Magical Feats

Newsweek

Nov. 21, 2005 issue – Sexual attraction has entered the Harry Potter universe. Harry (Daniel Radcliffe) is now 14, and he’s one of four contestants competing in the dangerous Tri-Wizard Tournament. The first event requires him to capture a golden egg that’s guarded by a ferocious Hungarian flying dragon. Terrifying as this is, it pales in comparison with having to ask the beguiling Cho Chang (Katie Leung) to Hogwarts’ Yule Ball. Now, that takes courage.

The hormonal confusions of adolescence threaten the camaraderie of Harry, Ron (Rupert Grint) and Hermione (Emma Watson). But if the teenagers are experiencing growing pains, the movie series has come into its own. “Harry Potter and the Goblet of Fire” may not reach the lyrical heights of Alfonso Cuarón’s stylish “Prisoner of Azkaban,” but this fourth installment, directed by Mike Newell, has a stronger tale to tell. And the storytelling is so assured that its 144-minute running time feels half that – unlike the first two movies, which felt twice as long as they actually were.

Newell (“Donnie Brasco,” “Four Weddings and a Funeral”) and screenwriter Steve Kloves have made the funniest, the scariest and possibly the

feat dād
ferocious /fəˈrɒʃəs/ grusom, vill / fælsleg,
vill
’beguiling sjarmerende/sjarmerande
yule /ju:l/ jul, jule-



most human of the series. It also offers our first up-close-and-personal glimpse of Harry’s great antagonist, Lord Voldemort (Ralph Fiennes). There will be debate among Potter fans whether Fiennes’s arch villain matches their direst expectations. At worst, his scene is a near miss.

The uncontested triumph of “Goblet of Fire,” however, is Brendan Gleeson’s Alastor (Mad-Eye) Moody, the grizzled new Defense Against the Dark Arts professor. With a face like cracked pottery and a manner both menacing and mentoring, he becomes Harry’s protector as he faces life-threatening tests. Gleeson, one of the screen’s greatest character actors, steals every scene he’s in – no small feat when you’re up against Maggie Smith and Alan Rickman.

Kloves has streamlined J. K. Rowling’s 700-plus-page opus into cinematic fighting form. And the special effects, which threatened to overwhelm the first two movies, are seamlessly integrated. The question now becomes: can the next two episodes be finished before Radcliffe, Grint and Watson literally outgrow their roles?

– David Ansen
© 2005 Newsweek, Inc.

antagonist motstander/motstandar
arch erke-
villain /ˈvɪlən/ skurk
direst villette/villaste
uncontested ubestridt/uomstridd
grizzled /ˈɡrɪzld/ gråsprengt/gråsprengd
menace trussel
mentor veileder, mentor / rettleinar,
mentor
opus verk

ACTIVITIES

1 Understanding the review

- a Would you say the reviewer is favourably impressed by the film or not? What gives you this impression?
- b What does he say about the actors? Is anyone in particular singled out? Why?
- c How much of the plot is revealed in the review?
- d Who directed the film and who wrote the screenplay? Have they done a good job according to the reviewer?
- e Does the reviewer have any criticisms of the film? If so what?
- f Does he say anything about the technical aspect of the film such as visual effects?
- g In what way does this fourth film differ from the three previous Harry Potter films?

2 Talk about it

- a Does this review influence your own personal view of the film *Harry Potter and the Goblet of Fire*? Do you agree or disagree with the reviewer?
- b Why do you think the reviewer says so little about the plot? Should he have said more in your opinion?
- c Did the reviewer leave out anything that you would have mentioned? If so, what?

3 Improve your language

- a Increase your vocabulary. Match the following words taken from the film review with the correct definitions.

ferocious	charming
beguiling	a remarkable, skilful or daring action
grizzled	savagely fierce or cruel
uncontestable	a spirit of familiarity and trust between friends

direct	which cannot be questioned or disputed
camaraderie	streaked with grey
feat	most fearful

Now use each of the words once in the text below.

Anna-Mae was a ... young woman of ... beauty and courage. When she was only sixteen years old, she traveled to the far reaches of the African continent with her ... old uncle, a ... not very common in 1900. While on safari, her ... fears were confirmed when she was attacked by a ... lion. She was rescued at the last minute by the others in her group and the feeling of ... that she developed for her rescuers has never left her.

b Working with adjectives.

Film reviews use adjectives abundantly. This is perhaps the one genre where you can really spice up your writing by generously “peppering” it with adjectives. In groups of three or four pick, out adjectives from the list below to fill in the blanks. Read the “story” first without the adjectives and you will notice that it functions fine without adjectives but comes alive with the use of unusual, descriptive words. You will probably find it useful to use your dictionaries.

grotesque, pathetic, deformed, meagre, horrendous, inquisitive, unspeakable, beady, ridiculous, deserted, miniscule, bleak

The...boy looked out the...window and noticed a...man in a(n)...overcoat walking down the...street. When he got to the corner, his...face was illuminated by the...light of the street lamp. He had a...scar on his right cheek

and his...eyes looked up and down the...street as though he was searching for something or someone. The...boy was filled with...terror as he looked at this...figure of a man.

4 Writing

Choose a film you have recently seen and write a film review. Keep in mind that a review is a highly personal genre but give reasons for your personal evaluation. Give your review a catchy title that reaches out and “grabs” the reader.

Ask yourself the following questions before you start writing.

- What were the highlights of the film in your opinion?
- Were there any parts that you found disappointing and why?
- Were the actors good? Give your comments.
- Should anyone in particular be praised?
- Were there any special effects that should be mentioned?

Remember to mention the plot without saying too much about it and make sure you do not give the ending away. Be fair in dealing out praise and criticism. Bottom line: Is the film worth seeing and would you recommend it to others?

5 Research

Many of you may have read one or more of the Harry Potter books or know about Harry Potter through films. Many of the characters in this magical world are memorable because they are so unusual. Individually or in pairs, pick one character and write a short presentation of him or her. Present your character in groups. If you want, you can make wall posters of all the characters. Find pictures to illustrate your posters. Go to the *Passage* website (passage.cappelen.no).