

YOUNG FILM CRITIC

TEACHERS' NOTES: PRIMARY SCHOOL ENTRIES

ABOUT THE COMPETITION

Film Education's UK-wide Young Film Critic competition aims to encourage children to critically evaluate their cinema viewing experience. By building on the excitement and enjoyment of watching a film on the big screen, either independently or at one of Film Education's cinema events including National Schools Film Week, the competition develops pupils' ability to reflect on what they watch. As well as screening Hollywood blockbusters, Film Education's screening events aim to broaden children's experience of cinema, with screenings of silver-screen classics and subtitled world cinema titles. The Young Film Critic competition encourages them to reflect on their response after the film has finished. The 7–11 age category (Junior Film Critic) is designed for pupils in primary level education; there is also a Mini Film Fan category for younger learners aged 4–7. A separate supporting resource for this group can be found at <http://www.youngfilmcritic.org/resources>

THE BRIEF

Pupils are required to produce an original review of a film they have seen at the cinema in the last twelve months, either at a Film Education cinema event or independently. As well as creating an engaging review that informs its audience about the film, pupils should aim to include some of the conventions associated with the review format. There are guidelines on writing film reviews over the next few pages.

In preparation for writing reviews, teachers should introduce key critical terms (http://www.filmeducation.org/staffroom/film_in_the_classroom/film_language) and broaden pupils' understanding of review writing by offering a range of examples, including those of previous Young Film Critics of the Year which are included on the competition's homepage: <http://www.youngfilmcritic.org>. Encourage pupils to read, watch and listen to reviews of new cinema releases. Collect key vocabulary. Discuss the differences and similarities between reviewing a book (something most pupils will be used to doing) and reviewing a film. Depending on how you choose to deliver these activities, you and your pupils can decide how best to present their ideas.

(CONTINUED OVERLEAF)

Entries MUST be received by 16 December 2011, and may be submitted in the following ways:

- word document — maximum 200-250 words
- imovie/wmv/quicktime file — 1.5-2 minutes in length – maximum 250 words
- mp3 file or CD submission — 1.5-2 minutes in length— maximum 250 words

CURRICULUM RELEVANCE

LITERACY

Engaging and responding to texts:

- Writing reports
- Recounts: newspapers/magazines
- Film narrative
- Journalistic writing
- Argument
- Formal/impersonal writing

ICT/LITERACY

- Creating digital texts
- Articulating a message



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PUPIL ACTIVITIES

THE RULES

To enter the Junior Film Critic competition, you need to write an original (in your own words!) review of a film you have seen at the cinema in the last twelve months, either on a school trip or with friends or family.

Your review should be no more than 250 words and can be written, typed, filmed to camera or voice-recorded. Your review should be interesting and informative. It should also be written or performed in the style of real film reviews, so you will need to do some research to find out how critics go about creating their reviews.

Entries may be submitted in the following ways:

- word document — maximum 200-250 words
- imovie/wmv/quicktime file — 1.5-2 minutes in length — maximum 250 words
- mp3 file or CD submission — 1.5-2 minutes in length — maximum 250 words

A range of examples from previous Young Film Critics of the Year are included on the competition's homepage: <http://www.youngfilmcritic.org>.

You must be aged between 7–11 at the time of writing the review to enter the Junior Film Critic competition. There are separate categories for students with sensory impairments; that is, those who are deaf or hard of hearing, or blind or partially sighted. Make sure your entry is in the correct category.

All entries must be received by 16 December 2011

SUBMITTING YOUR ENTRY

Send entries by post to:

**Junior Film Critic
Film Education
91 Berwick Street
London
W1F 0BP**

Or email your files, along with a completed entry form, to:

yfc@filmeducation.org

Or submit scanned files online at:

<http://www.filmeducation.org/competitions/upload.php>



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GETTING STARTED: RESEARCHING REVIEWS

Before you start creating your own review about a film, it is a good idea to see how other people have approached it. These websites include lots of examples of reviews. Browse through the sites and read or watch some of the reviews for films you have seen.

Weblinks:

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/films/gateways/genre/family/index.shtml>

<http://www.cbbfc.co.uk/archiveDetail.asp?filmID=1707&reviewID=1001>

http://news.bbc.co.uk/cbbcnews/hi/newsid_9370000/newsid_9376100/9376119.stm

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/5live/films/genres/family/>

http://news.bbc.co.uk/cbbcnews/hi/newsid_4570000/newsid_4578100/4578172.stm

Download three of your favourite examples so you can keep them to refer to later.

- Why are these your favourites?
- Which of these reviews do you think is the most interesting? Why?
- What do you think are the most important points to consider when planning your own original film review?

CHOOSING A FILM AND PLANNING YOUR REVIEW

The film you review for this competition must be one you have seen in the cinema, either on a school visit or with friends or family, during the last twelve months. So how do you choose which film to write about?

Be adventurous! If you choose to write about a holiday blockbuster then be aware that you will be competing with lots of other entrants who have gone for the same option. Believe it or not it is much harder to write interestingly about a spectacular summer hit movie than an 'independent' (e.g. not Hollywood) title. Why not write about a British or European movie? Your review has more chance of standing out as an original this way. This is why reviewing a film featured in National Schools Film Week is a good idea. Think about your motive for choosing the film. Is it because you love it? Or hate it? A strong opinion is a good place to start!

ENTERING THE COMPETITION: TOP TIPS

- Reel in the reader quickly. Spend lots of time on your first paragraph – judges are going to scan that first to decide whether or not to read further, so make it original and interesting. Choose your vocabulary carefully.
- Write in the present tense. For example, 'The main character of the film is called...' or 'When the film starts we see...'



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- Your review should be original and not based on what anyone else has said about the film: be honest when you are writing your review. Use your voice, your viewpoint and your ideas! Make sure that what you say is expressed clearly.
- Check the word count for print reviews and the time allocation for video or audio files. Make sure you do not go over!
- When you think you have finished, check it over, then show it to a friend or family member and try to work out if there is anything you could improve upon. Is it really your final version?

You can read previous year's winning reviews at <http://www.youngfilmcritic.org>

Good luck!



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PLANNING YOUR REVIEW

To help you get started, it is a good idea to make some notes about the film and the impression it makes on you. Use the following chart to help you organise your ideas:

Key points	Evidence from film	Your opinion
DIRECTOR – who is it and what else have they directed that you have heard of?		
MAIN STARS – who are they? Will people be familiar with them already? What are they known for?		
PLOT – what is the film about?		
CHARACTERS – who are the main ones and which actors play them? Comment on the quality of the acting.		
GENRE – what type of film is it? Does it fit your expectations for this type of film? How would you describe the mood?		
SOUNDTRACK – did you notice/like/dislike it? How did it create atmosphere?		
AUDIENCE – who is it aimed at and do you recommend it? Why?		

- Now choose three adjectives that you think sum up the film for you. Make a note of these words to use later in your review.