

The Purpose of Film Reviews

Why do we have film reviews? Surely we can just go and see the films we see advertised on posters and in trailers and then decide for ourselves? Why should we listen to someone else's opinion?

Activity

What advantages, if any, do you think having a written review to consult might have over 'information' gained from 'cinema and the electronic media'?

To come up with an answer, you'll need to consider what kind of information might emerge from 'electronic media'?

For example, what is the purpose of a film trailer? Who designs trailers and what sort of information do we get from them?

Look at a trailer and consider these questions. Discuss why a review would be different in terms of what we learn about the film.

Activity

Why do you think newspapers and online sites bother to publish reviews?

The following statements offer some reasons for film criticism. Do you agree with these statements? Can you add any more?

- A review is important as a means of helping people decide which film they might want to see.
- A review can cut through all the hype and advertising and help the reader make a clearer decision based on a fairer, more objective viewpoint.
- A review written by a trusted reviewer whose views the reader has found matched their own in the past is more reliable than most information about a film ahead of its general release.
- A review can help give the reader a clearer view about the genre of a film and whether or not it might appeal to a broader audience than is suggested by its marketing.
- A review is great to read after seeing a film – it's a way of confirming how you felt about the film yourself.
- A review can help the reader share the passion a reviewer has for a film.
- A review can inspire the reader's curiosity about a film or director or actor.
- A review is great to read after seeing a film – it's a way of learning more about a film or deepening your understanding of it.
- A review is an important part of the 'public record' about a film. You can go back years later and find out a great deal about a film from the way it was first, and perhaps subsequently, reviewed.
- Reviews can help support independent films that do not have huge marketing budgets behind them, generating an audience for them and supporting the cinemas that bother to show a broader spectrum of films. Talk about your choice of words and why you have chosen them.