

# FILMCLUB<sup>®</sup>



My Neighbour Totoro (1988)

## FILMCLUB Guide to... Writing Effective Film Reviews - Primary

*"Whether you're a first-time reviewer or an experienced film club critic, this worksheet will help take your review-writing skills to the next level."*

FILMCLUB Film Programmer

Review writing is one of the most important aspects of FILMCLUB, helping to improve literacy, critical thinking and engagement with learning. What's more it offers an outlet for expression.

FILMCLUB is an education charity which helps schools set up and run film clubs for pupils to watch, review, discuss and learn through a variety of fantastic films from past and present. Free to all state schools, FILMCLUB provides weekly screenings, online reviewing, industry events and hands-on support to engage, challenge and open new avenues for informal learning. Teachers receive the support they need to introduce pupils to the world of film, creating a memorable experience with proven academic benefit. Now even easier to join through online start up sessions!

**Pupils are encouraged to upload their film reviews to [www.filmclub.org](http://www.filmclub.org) where they can rate films and read the opinions of their peers.**

**Many more resources are available free from [www.filmclub.org](http://www.filmclub.org) when you join FILMCLUB. Follow FILMCLUB on twitter [@filmclubuk](https://twitter.com/filmclubuk) or find us on facebook [/filmclubuk](https://facebook.com/filmclubuk)**

### Activity 1: Interesting Adjectives

Adjectives are words that describe something or someone. 'Good', 'bad' and 'nice' are all common adjectives, but your film review could include words that are a lot more interesting than that!

- ▶ Colour the words for films you like **BLUE**
- ▶ Colour the words for films you **don't like RED**
- ▶ Colour the words that could apply to **both PURPLE**

Look up any words you don't understand in a dictionary

*Silly*      **FUNNY**      **SAD**

boring      **EXCITING**      **SCARY**

*exquisite*      **CHEERING**

unassuming      **MEAN-SPIRITED**      Exotic

confusing      **joyful**      manipulative

mundane      shallow      benevolent

**PRETENTIOUS**      **hilarious**

**UNBELIEVABLE**      **Smug**

**Luscious**      *spell-binding*      **CINEMATIC**

## Activity 2: One-Word Film Reviews

Below is a list of films you might have watched with your film club, at home or in the cinema. Next to each film you've seen write a word that describes how you feel about it. Make sure you use a different word for every film!



▶ The Secret of Kells

▶ .....



▶ Cloudy With A Chance of Meatballs

▶ .....



▶ Toy Story 3

▶ .....



▶ Up

▶ .....



▶ The Secret Garden

▶ .....



▶ Duck Soup

▶ .....



▶ Laurel & Hardy: Way Out West

▶ .....



▶ A Kid In King Arthur's Court

▶ .....



▶ Fantastic Mr Fox

▶ .....



▶ The Muppets

▶ .....



▶ Tangled

▶ .....



▶ Lost & Found

▶ .....



▶ Matilda

▶ .....



▶ Ratatouille

▶ .....



▶ Diary of A Wimpy Kid

▶ .....



▶ How To Train Your Dragon

▶ .....

## Activity 3: Snappy Synopses

The part of a review that describes the plot is called the 'synopsis' (plural: synopses). We want a review to tell us a little bit about what happens in the film – but not too much! Too much detail can be boring for the reader and might even ruin the film. That's why giving away the end of the film in a review is called a 'spoiler'.

Get into pairs. Pick a film you have seen and your partner hasn't. Describe what the film is about in **no more than 20 words**. Try to get them excited about the film, but remember to keep it snappy!

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### Activity 4: Comparisons

One of the best ways to help your reader understand something they haven't experienced is by comparing it to something they have.

Pick a film you have seen from the list on Activity 2 and complete the following sentences:

- ▶ If this film were an animal it would be .....
- ▶ If this film were an ice cream flavour, it would be .....
- ▶ If this film were a book it would be .....
- ▶ If this film were a celebrity it would be .....

### Activity 5: Writing Your Review

Now it's time to piece together the skills you've learnt into a finished review. This will contain three paragraphs, each doing a different job...

- ▶ **Paragraph 1: Synopsis**  
Using your snappy synopsis skills from Activity 3, describe what happens in the film. Don't include any spoilers!
- ▶ **Paragraph 2: Context**  
Use your favourite comparisons from Activity 4 to help your reader understand what watching the film is like. You might also want to include information like the names of the actors or other films the director has made.
- ▶ **Paragraph 3: Evaluation**  
Did you like the film? Why? Why not? Use your favourite adjectives from Activity 1 to describe how you feel about the film. You might also want to include a star rating or a mark out of 10.

#### ▶ Vocabulary List

synopsis	An outline of the plot of a play, film, or book
adjective	A describing word or phrase
spoiler	A description of an important plot development in a television show, movie, etc., before it is shown to the public
context	The set of circumstances or facts that surround a particular event, situation, etc.
evaluation	The act of judging value or worth



Wizard of Oz (1939)