

SEVEN CONSIDERATIONS FOR WRITING A MOVIE REVIEW:

- 1.** If circumstances permit, view the film more than once. It's easy to miss key elements, or even the whole point, after just a single viewing.
- 2.** Express your opinion of the film, but support your criticism. If you are offended or disappointed or embarrassed, provide a valid reason, even if you think it is obvious. A film review that comes across as a personal attack on an actor, director, or screenwriter or a diatribe about a genre is a failed review.
- 3.** Adjust the style of your review for the readership. If you're pitching reviews to a traditional publication, you're expected to be fairly evenhanded (though even mainstream film critics are permitted — nay, expected — to gently mock particularly inept filmmaking). If your target audience is fanboys (and fangirls) on a movie-geek Web site, though, feel free to take the gloves off. Either way, though, support your criticism with valid observations; hurling invective is not the same thing as evaluation.
- 4.** Avoid spoilers. One of the most pernicious fairly recent developments in the review genre is the careless, thoughtless revelation of key plot points. It's a sign of professionalism to refrain from giving such information away. Exception: Reviews of previously released films don't necessarily adhere to this rule, though it's still considered sporting to warn readers or site visitors to skip to the next paragraph if they don't want to read something. Some classy sites actually code spoilers to be invisible unless the visitor scrolls over the blank area to highlight that passage in the review.
- 5.** Judge the story. Are the character's actions justified, and are their motives plausible? Is there an internal consistency to the way each person behaves, or do some words, thoughts, or actions ring false? Does the plot make sense? Is the story line logical? Is the narrative arc well shaped, with an economy of form, or is it flabby or drawn out, with time-killing pointlessness?
- 6.** Rate the actors. Do they meet the expectations dictated by the plot and other story elements? If not, is it their own thespian shortcomings, are they hampered by a poor script, or is there something about their performances that makes you believe the director is at fault? What could the performers, the screenwriters, or the filmmaker have done differently to make the movie work better?
- 7.** Evaluate the technical elements. How do the cinematography, editing, lighting, sound, and other components support or detract from the film? Is music appropriate and effectively employed? You needn't know film-technology jargon to share your thoughts about how these elements contributed to or detracted from the whole.

