

Useful phrases and expressions for film reviews

Film vocabulary	Useful phrases
Kind of film (genre)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Drama - Action film - Thriller - ...
Producer	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - a person whose job is to produce plays, films, programs, etc. - produced by ...
Director	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - a person who decides how a play, a film or a TV programme will appear on stage or screen, and who tells the actors and technical staff what to do - a film directed by ... - to develop a story ... - well-directed - expertly directed
Screenplay/ script	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - the words to be spoken in a film, and instructions about what will be seen in it - ... from a screenplay by .. - multi-layered script - screenwriter ... - the script was written by ... - ... co-writes ... - ...'s writing is astonishing/plausible/ witty - tightly written - give characters the opportunity to ...
Setting /atmosphere	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - the scenery, properties, or background used to create the location for a stage play, film, etc. - is set in ... - The story unfolds in ... - ...provides the setting for ... - create a certain atmosphere/mood ...

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Actors/ characters	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - exceptional performance - fervently performed, well-acted - ... does a very good job as ... - The performances in ... are excellent. - ... gives the part much personality - ...ads a lot to the film - ... is absolutely remarkable/ especially memorable as ... - ... is very/ less convincing .. - The most complex/ incredibly played character is that of... - newcomer - a film full of wonderful characters - appealing, fascinating, funny, stereotypical, two-dimensional, warm-hearted
Plot/ story	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - amusing, boring, clichéd, confusing, entertaining, exciting, melodramatic, thrilling, unbelievable - arouse curiosity - full of tension - build up to/ reach a climax - develop a story - interlocking stories/ fragmented narrative/ non-linear narrative - unexpected plot twists - One of the most surprising moments occurs when ...
Dialogue	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - melodramatic - (unconvincing - realistic
Music/ soundtrack	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The music conveys a sad/ happy/ melancholy atmosphere - The music underlines a mood/evokes feelings/ shows a character's emotions/ connects scenes - The music and lyrics support the plot.
Miscellaneous	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The film contains a few funny bits. - ... full of humorous moments - The film gets extremely dramatic in places. - One of the most poignant scenes of the film ... - powerful scenes - The film is close to reality.

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Evaluation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - A must-see/ a smash hit - A box-office success/failure - An audience pleaser - Well worth seeing - Not to be missed - A moving production/an emotionally strong film - A truly great piece/a skilful piece of filmmaking - An impressive debut - A very moving portrayal - I definitely recommend this film to everybody ... - The film is a worthwhile watch - On a scale from zero to five, I give this film a five. - The film literally brought tears to my eyes. - I highly/strongly/definitely recommend the film. - If you like ..., this is the film for you. - If you find films like ... or ... compelling then be sure to give ... your full attention. - I certainly wouldn't recommend the film because ... - I'm afraid ... is a complete waste of time and money. - It's a film that will change the way you think about ... - I was impressed by ...
Adjectives	<p>Action-packed, amusing, badly acted, balanced, beautiful, boring, breath-taking, captivating, compelling, complex, (totally, slightly) confusing, contrived, disappointing, enigmatic, enjoyable, entertaining, exciting, fantastic, (totally/ rather) far-fetched, (truly) fascinating, funny, gripping, hilarious, humorous, inspiring, lousy, manipulative, masterful, perfect, poignant, powerful, (un)realistic, ridiculous, romantic, overacted, overrated, overwhelming, (im)perfect, predictable, provocative, silly, stupid, surprising, super, tense, unbelievable, unoriginal, (highly) uplifting</p>
The film	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - is the dramatic/thought-provoking story of ... - has a circular structure, beginning with ... and ending with
The director	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - aims to achieve a certain effect by ... - uses ... to underline/emphasize sth. - draws viewers' attention to sth. - tries to convey a certain impression - creates a mood - provides information about ...

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Narrative structure	<ul style="list-style-type: none">– non-linear/fragmented narrative– ensemble film– plot structure– The plot contains several cleverly woven together storylines.
The opening sequence	<ul style="list-style-type: none">– shows/presents/mirrors/reveals ...– captures the atmosphere– conveys the setting– portrays the characters
Camera operations	<ul style="list-style-type: none">– describe characters indirectly– show characters' emotions– draw attention to sth.– describe the setting– evoke a certain atmosphere
The camera	<ul style="list-style-type: none">– is at a great distance from .../is very close to ...– shoots from a high/low angle.– pulls back– moves in/closes in on ...– cranes up over ...– fades in on .../fades out from ...– pans from left to right– tilts up/down– zooms in on/zooms out from ...– cuts from ... to ...

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Camera distance and camera perspective	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- The director uses a long shot of the setting.- There are many brief shots.- The ... shot establishes where the action is about to take place.- The close-up is used to focus attention on .../reveals the character's feelings/makes the situation more intimate.- ... uses a lot of close-ups.- ... The director uses a high-angle shot of .../a helicopter shot of ...- We see a low-angle shot/high-angle shot of the characters.- ... are presented in a low-angle shot/high-angle shot.- This shot is taken from a bird's eye view/worm's eye view.- ... is/are filmed from above/below.- The scene is shot from ...'s point of view/... is seen from the perspective of ...- The over-the-shoulder shots include the viewers in the action.- The POV shots make the audience experience the (emotional) perspective of a character.- There is a tracking shot as the camera follows ...- ... uses a fade-in ...- The hand-held camera underlines .../gives the scene an unsteady quality/aims at authenticity
A visual symbol	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- stands for sth.- takes on a deeper meaning- signals/symbolizes/visualizes sth.

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Sound/ music	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- The ... suggests that ...- The rhythmic/.../... background music contributes to the atmosphere of ...- The lyrics suggest ...- The scene is accompanied by soft/alarming/melancholic music.- There is a voice-over.- The soundtrack contributes to the mood/atmosphere of the scene.- The sound / the music provides an extra feeling of tension/adds to the atmosphere.- The sound sets the scene/builds tension/acts as cue/finishes the scene/...- The soundtrack provides an atmosphere of .../contributes to the somber atmosphere/...- The sound of ... can be heard.- Continuous background music bridges ...- Music can be upbeat/gloomy/aggressive/slow/fast-paced
Lighting	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- low-key lighting- shot into light- backlighting- bright light- ... makes the scene seem (un)realistic, ...- gives the scene a ... quality- Lighting in the scene of.....is used to enhance the sense of
Editing	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- The pace of the film is slowed down/accelerated by- slow motion, cross-cuttings, match cuts