

Film as Lit Assignments

General rules for writing the critique

1. The critique is actually a critical analysis essay and not a movie review. There is a need to explain and support the thesis of the essay and not merely tell the reader what you personally thought of the movie.
2. Use a three part, MLA structure: intro, body and conclusion. State your thesis in the intro and then in body paragraphs, explain and support your main idea with several good examples and references to expert commentary. Wrap up your ideas with a strong conclusion.
3. A good way to begin is to research what others have said about the topic and follow their lead by offering your own statements about it. Develop the essay by explaining your statements and allow outside resources to help you defend your view or illustrate a point you make.
4. Use expert commentary and the film itself to support what you have mentioned. Weak papers rely on a mere listing of quotes where you attempt to explain them. Conversely, let the quotes explain what you have to say. This adds credibility to your own ideas and makes for a richer, more in-depth piece of writing.
5. Focus on the film, the artist or the topic and not yourself as the subject of the paper. These are not personal reflection papers but critical analysis essays, so avoid using first person pronouns and stick to third person in your rhetoric.

Film History Critique

In this essay, discuss an innovation or advancement of film during the formative years of the silent film era (1890-1929). Using silent films from this time period, discuss how successful/unsuccessful the innovation was towards the progression of filmmaking. Discuss what inventions were created, who was involved in them and what role any newer technology had towards making film a viable art form.

Camera Shots Critique

In this essay, analyze a critically acclaimed film made before 1960 that is noted predominately for its use of the camera. Focus on film as an art form (cinema) that relies on taking interesting pictures and explain how the use of the camera contributed to the overall quality of the film. Avoid listing examples of camera shots used in the film and speak about how the overall photography enhanced it.

Film Editing Critique

In this essay, analyze a film by the director Alfred Hitchcock and explain how he conveys a message to the audience by his use of montage and other film editing techniques. Focus on how he creates emotional meaning in the film and how that contributes to conveying his message.

Sound and Music Critique

In this essay, choose a critically acclaimed film director that uses sound and music to help the viewer *watch* film. Use several of that director's works as support to what you have to say. Examine parallel, contrapuntal and associative forms of music and how they work to help the audience "see" it better.