

Units 1 & 2 Writing worksheet

Writing a review

GOAL: write a film review for a blog.

Include: paragraphs; topic sentences; examples and details; a personal opinion; expressions for describing and recommending a film.

1 Discuss the questions in pairs.

- 1 What was the last film you saw?
- 2 What did you like about the film?
- 3 What didn't you like about the film?

2 Read the film review quickly. Is it positive or negative?

Lion

¹ True stories of becoming famous are popular in cinema. But the story in *Lion* involves no one you have ever heard of before. Directed by Garth Davis, the film is based on the memoir by Saroo Brierley called *A Long Way Home*. The film has a fantastic cast, with Dev Patel from *Slumdog Millionaire* as the main character and Nicole Kidman playing his mother in Australia.

² The story follows the five-year-old Saroo, an Indian boy who gets lost on the streets of Kolkata, thousands of kilometres from home. He has lots of adventures before being adopted by a couple in Australia. Twenty-five years later, Saroo sets out from Australia to find his real family in India. The excellent script, by the Australian writer Luke Davies, tells the story truthfully from Saroo's own point of view as days, months, and eventually whole decades go by until he is reunited with his family.

³ Personally, I think the film has a really strong plot. In my view, it is a film you will not forget once you have seen it because it makes you think on so many levels. I can recommend it for everyone to see.

3 Read the text from Exercise 2 again and choose the correct option.

- 1 The film is set in India and *America / Australia*.
- 2 When Saroo is separated from his family, he is *five / fifteen*.
- 3 The film is a *comedy / real life drama*.

Writing skill writing in paragraphs

What is a paragraph?

A paragraph is a series of sentences that are grouped together. All the ideas in the paragraph sentences are about the same topic.

How can paragraphs help us as readers and writers?

Paragraphs help writers to focus and organise their ideas. Paragraphs help readers to understand the main points of the text.

How can you write better paragraphs?

Always make a plan. Organise your ideas into groups and place in different paragraphs. Have one main focus in each paragraph.

When you write, leave a small space between paragraphs so your reader can see them clearly.

4 Read the text in Exercise 2 again. Then complete the table.

Main focus of paragraph	Paragraph number	Example phrases
Factual information		
Summary of plot		
Opinion		

Writing mechanics using topic sentences

Topic sentences introduce the main idea. The other sentences then give more detail and/or examples. Topic sentences are usually, but not always, the first sentence in the paragraph. For example:

Topic sentence – *The story follows the five-year-old Saroo, an Indian boy ...*

Following detail – *He survives many challenges before being adopted by ...*

5 Underline the topic sentences in each paragraph.

- 1 I like most types of books. However, the books I enjoy most are travel books. I like reading about different countries and the famous places there. When I go on holiday, I always buy lots of books about the place I am visiting. Travel books help you to understand a place.
- 2 This film is definitely worth seeing. It will touch your heart and make you cheer for the ordinary people like Mariam. She is most certainly the most important person in the film in the film. Don't miss it.
- 3 The director's latest film is a sci-fi thriller. It is set somewhere in the outer galaxy with a gripping plot. The story follows the adventures of two families going off to live a new life on a new planet. It is quite scary, to say the least.

Writing mechanics showing attitude in writing

When you write a review, you often need to show your reaction to the film, book or show you are writing about. You can use adverbs and expressions to do this. Common adverbs and expressions to show attitude include:

<i>certainly</i>	<i>cleverly</i>	<i>definitely</i>	<i>fortunately</i>
<i>luckily</i>	<i>of course</i>	<i>personally</i>	<i>surprisingly</i>
<i>unfortunately</i>	<i>in my opinion</i>	<i>in my view</i>	<i>to say the least</i>

6 Complete the sentences with expressions from the box. (There is one extra expression.)

surprisingly	of course	personally	to say the least	unfortunately
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- 1 Whilst some find the final scene too emotional, _____, I think it is the best part of the film.
- 2 _____, the storyline was not believable and the acting was weak.
- 3 _____, this film will be nominated for an Oscar, despite the reviews.
- 4 So, should this be announced as the best film of this year? _____ it shouldn't!

WRITE**7 Think about a film or show you have seen recently. Make notes for each of these headings.**

Factual information

.....
.....

Summary of the plot

.....
.....

Opinion

.....
.....

8 Look at the *Key language* box. Which expressions does the writer use in the text in Exercise 2?

Key language expressions for describing and recommending a film

This latest film / book is a ...

Directed / Written by ...

The film / book / story is based on ...

The story follows ...

It tells the story of ...

The best / worst thing about the film was ...

In conclusion, it's a film for ...

I can recommend the film for ...

I wouldn't recommend the film for ...

9 Now write your review for a blog. Use paragraphs, topic sentences, language to show attitude and expressions from the *Key language* box. Write 150–180 words.

10 Read your partner's work and tick (✓) the checklist.

Has your partner ...

- ☐ ... organised his or her ideas logically?
- ☐ ... used paragraphs correctly?
- ☐ ... included topic sentences?
- ☐ ... used expressions to show attitude and opinion?

11 Change pairs. Read your new partner's review; then discuss your answers to these questions.

- 1 Do you think the film sounds interesting? Would you like to see it? Why? / Why not?
- 2 If you have already seen it, do you agree with your partner's review? Why? / Why not?