

Units 5 & 6 Writing worksheet

Writing a review

GOAL: write review for a TV and film website.

Include: paragraphs; examples; contrasting ideas; expressions for giving an overview, a summary and an opinion.

1 Discuss the questions in pairs.

- 1 When you go to the cinema, how do you decide which film to watch?
- 2 How do you decide which show to watch on TV?
- 3 In a bookshop or library, how do you decide which book to choose?

2 Read the text quickly. Where might you read this – in a book about boats, on a film website, or in an email to a friend?

Life of Pi

¹ Surprisingly successful with both reviewers and cinema-goers, *Life of Pi* shows films do not have to feature famous actors. The film, based on a novel by Yann Martel, is directed by Ang Lee and stars 17-year-old Suraj Sharma. Despite having no previous experience, Suraj was chosen from 3000 other young men for the part of Pi.

² The film tells the story of Pi, an Indian boy who survives a shipwreck. His family drowns, along with the zoo animals travelling with them. However, there is one other survivor – a Bengal tiger. The film shows many episodes in the trip they take together in a lifeboat. For example, one scene shows Pi catching fish for the tiger. Towards the end of the film, they land on a strange island. To illustrate this strangeness, Pi is shown finding a human tooth in a flower. The film ends with the boat reaching Mexico.

³ I agree with many reviewers that this is one of the best films of recent years. Although the storyline is unusual, Lee and Sharma have successfully brought this challenging plot to mainstream cinema. It is a timeless film and I would argue that people will still be watching this film in years to come.

3 Read the text from Exercise 2 again. Find the words which mean the following (write 1– 3 words).

- 1 Never done this type of work before – _____
- 2 Events that form part of a sequence – _____
- 3 A sequence of continuous action in a film / play / book – _____

4 Critics – _____

5 Films that most people watch – _____

6 Not changing, not becoming unfashionable – _____

Writing skill planning paragraphs

Well-organised writing is easy for readers to follow. Write an outline of your paragraphs before you start. This will help you to write a stronger, more logical text. For a review, follow this structure:

Paragraph 1 – overview and general information (for example, title, author, actors)

Paragraph 2 – brief summary of the plot (storyline, key events)

Paragraph 3 – your opinion

4 Read the text from Exercise 2 again. Then complete the table with other details for each paragraph.

Paragraph	Content details
1 Overview	<i>Life of Pi ...</i>
2 Summary	<i>Pi survives a shipwreck ...</i>
3 Opinion	<i>One of best recent films ...</i>

Writing mechanics giving examples

Adding examples to the review will make your writing more engaging and clearer. Use linking words in different positions to give examples.

*... together in a lifeboat. **For example**, one scene shows Pi catching fish for the tiger ...*

*... they land on the shores of a strange island. **To illustrate** this strangeness, Pi is shown ...*

5 Circle the linking words for giving examples, and underline the details given.

1 The author makes a point about money and modern life, for instance, by showing the problems the main character has. Another issue covered in the book is health.

2 The book changes direction half way through to include more focus on themes for younger people, such as career and study choices. However, the overall message remains the same.

3 The historical context is also shown clearly, namely in the long opening scene showing life in general at that time. Returning to the main theme now, we can see that ...

Writing mechanics contrasting ideas

Use linking words to make contrasts. By contrasting different views, ideas and information, you make your writing more engaging and richer. Check the grammar and punctuation when you use linking words.

Although the storyline is unusual, the director and main actor have successfully brought this challenging plot to mainstream cinema ...

His whole family are drowned, along with the zoo animals they were travelling with.

However, there is one other survivor ...

Despite having no previous experience, Suraj was chosen from 3000 other young men for the part of Pi.

6 Use linking words from the Writing mechanics box to complete the sentences.

- 1 Travel books are not usually amusing. _____, this one is really funny.
- 2 _____ the film is more than two hours long, the time goes by very quickly.
- 3 _____ having short episodes, the show doesn't manage to engage the viewers at all.
- 4 _____ the film has great actors and a famous director, it is not very interesting.
- 5 Reviews of the film were negative. _____, the film quickly became a huge success at the box office.
- 6 The plot was extremely complicated. _____ this, it was easy to watch.

WRITE

7 Think about a film or show you have seen or a book you have read recently. Make notes of details for each of these headings.

Overview details

.....
.....
.....

Plot summary overview and details

.....
.....
.....

Opinion details

.....
.....
.....

8 Look at the *Key language* box. Underline the expressions in the text in Exercise 2.

Key language expressions for giving an overview, a summary and an opinion

Overview

... based on the novel by ...

... was directed by ...

... starred ...

Summary

... tells the story of ...

... one scene shows ...

Towards the end of the film / book ...

The film / book ends with ...

Opinion

I agree with ...

I would argue that ...

9 Now write your review for a TV and film website. Use paragraphs, examples, linking words to contrast ideas and expressions from the *Key language* box. Write 150–180 words.

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

Has your partner ...

- ☐ ... used well-organised paragraphs?
- ☐ ... given clear, engaging articles?
- ☐ ... contrasted ideas?
- ☐ ... used expressions for giving an overview, a summary and an opinion ?

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

1 Do you think the film / show / book sounds interesting? Would you like to see / read it? Why? / Why not?

2 If you have already seen / read it, do you agree with your partner's review? Why? / Why not?