

# Essay 1: Critical Review

## Assignment Overview

Critical reviews are a large part of our daily lives. Many of us rely on reviews as a way of evaluating the quality of a product, restaurant, or movie to see how well-suited it is to our needs and desires. For this assignment, you will focus on reviewing a book or film—it can be one that you hated, loved, or feel “meh” about. As a critical review, you actually have to think *critically* about your chosen movie or book and not just tell your reader that it’s good or bad.

**Length:** a minimum of 750 words (about 3 pages)

**Format:** double-spaced 12 pt. Times New Roman font; include a title, heading, page numbers, and a Works Cited page with the film or book properly cited in MLA or APA

**File Type:** .doc or .docx turned in via Canvas

**Worth:** 15% of the total course grade

## The Rhetorical Situation

**Genre:** review/argument of evaluation

**Purpose:** to describe, analyze, and evaluate a film or book; to communicate its strengths and weaknesses to the reader

**Audience:** a general audience of American moviegoers or readers, like those who would read reviews in *Variety* or *The Washington Post*

## What to Include:

1. a summary of the text without “spoiling” the ending or major plot points.
2. a full and specific claim, or thesis, that lets readers know where you stand and what criteria on which you base your judgments.
3. clear criteria for evaluation that includes commentary on the purpose, structure, and style.
4. an examination or defense of the criteria, if necessary.
5. an examination of the claim in terms of the stated criteria.
6. evidence for every part of the argument.
7. consideration of alternative views and counterarguments.

## What to Avoid:

1. a full synopsis of the plot of the text.
2. overly emotional or exaggerated language (“it sucked” or “best movie in the world”).
3. too much first- or second-person (“I” or “you,” respectively).
4. plagiarizing—you may not copy and paste a summary to put in your review.

## Grading Guidelines

	An “A” Paper...	A “B” Paper...	A “C” Paper...
<b>Thesis (Claim) and Argumentation</b>	Takes a clear position (stated in the thesis) about your topic and supports it consistently with well-chosen reasons and examples. It anticipates the reader’s possible objections or concerns.	Takes a clear position (stated in the thesis) about your topic and supports it consistently with reasons and examples. It anticipates the reader’s possible objections or concerns.	Takes a position (stated in the thesis) and attempts to support it, though may lack clear development in parts. It tries to anticipate the reader’s possible objections or concerns.
<b>Genre and Audience Awareness</b>	Is always audience-aware, cohesive, stylistically consistent, and true to the review genre.	Is mostly audience-aware, cohesive, stylistically consistent, and true to the review genre.	Is somewhat audience-aware, cohesive, stylistically consistent, and true to the review genre.
<b>Evidence</b>	Provides sufficient evidence to ensure that what is being evaluated meets the criteria established for the evaluation. All evidence is insightfully analyzed for its significance and appropriateness.	Provides sufficient evidence to ensure that what is being evaluated meets the criteria established for the evaluation. Most evidence is analyzed for its significance and appropriateness.	Provides some evidence to ensure that what is being evaluated meets the criteria established for the evaluation. Some evidence is analyzed for its significance and appropriateness.
<b>Organization</b>	Makes a logical argument and has clear introduction, body, and concluding paragraphs. It has clear transitions between paragraphs and the reader can follow the progression of ideas.	Makes a mostly logical argument and has clear introduction, body, and concluding paragraphs. It has transitions between paragraphs the reader can mostly follow the progression of ideas.	Attempts to make a logical argument and has introduction, body, and concluding paragraphs. It may lack transitions between paragraphs the reader can somewhat follow the progression of ideas.
<b>Structure and Formatting</b>	Is in correct MLA or APA document formatting, including a heading, page numbers, title, and separate Works Cited or References page. It is double-spaced and in 12 pt. Times New Roman font, and it is at least 750 words in length.	Is in correct MLA or APA document formatting, including a heading, page numbers, title, and separate Works Cited or References page. It is double-spaced and in 12 pt. Times New Roman font, and it is at least 750 words in length.	May not be in correct MLA or APA document formatting, including a heading, page numbers, title, and separate Works Cited or References page; or it is not double-spaced and in 12 pt. Times New Roman font. It is at least 750 words in length.
<b>Grammar and Mechanics</b>	Consistently exhibits variety in sentence structure and word choice. Errors in grammar, spelling, and punctuation are few and do not interfere with understanding.	Exhibits some variety in sentence structure and uses good word choice; occasionally, words may be used inaccurately. Errors in grammar, spelling, and punctuation do not interfere with understanding.	Sentence structure may be simple and unvaried; word choice is mostly accurate. Errors in grammar, spelling, and punctuation sometimes interfere with understanding.