

TIPS TO WRITE REVIEWS (OF FILMS AND BOOKS)

Reviews are short descriptions of books, films, plays, TV programmes, etc. They are written to inform readers and viewers, and to give them your opinion/recommendation about whether (or not) they should read a book or see a film/play/ etc.

A review should consist of:

a) an introduction in which you summarise all the background information of the book/film/etc. (i.e. title, name of author/director, type, setting, etc);

b) a main body consisting of two paragraphs: one about the main points of the plot, presented in chronological order, and another introducing general comments on the plot, the main characters, the acting, the directing, etc.

* **Note:** You should not reveal the end of the story to the reader.

c) a conclusion in which you recommend or do not recommend the book/film/play/etc, giving reasons to support your recommendation.

Notes:

- Reviews are normally found in newspapers, magazines or parts of a letter. The style you use depends on the publication and the intended reader and can be formal or semi-formal.
- You normally use present tenses and a variety of adjectives to describe the plot and make your comments more clear and to the point.

USEFUL VOCABULARY

Background:

The book/film tells the story of...

The film/book is set in...

The book/novel was written by.../directed by...

It is a comedy/horror film/ love story...

Main points of the plot:

The story concerns/is about/ begins...

The plot is (rather) thrilling...

The plot has an unexpected twist.

General comments:

It is rather long/ slow/ confusing...

The cast is excellent/ awful/ unconvincing...

The script is dull/ exciting...

It is beautifully/ poorly/ badly written.

It has a tragic/dramatic end.

Recommendations.

Don't miss it. It is well worth seeing.

I wouldn't recommend it because...

I highly/thoroughly recommend it.

It's bound to be a box-office hit.

It is a highly entertaining read. / It's a bore to read.

The Hound of the Baskervilles

(parag.1)*The Hound of the Baskervilles*, by Sir Arthur Conan Doyle, is an excellent story that takes place in London and Dartmoor. This fascinating book is about the famous detective, Sherlock Holmes, who with his trusted assistant, Watson, tries to solve the mysterious death of Sir Charles Baskerville.

(parag.2)The mystery begins when Dr. Mortimer, Sir Charles' personal doctor, relates the circumstances surrounding his patient's death to Holmes and Watson. The doctor believes that his death has something to do with the legend of the hound, which is an enormous, evil, hunting dog that terrorises the people of Baskerville. Soon, it becomes clear that Sir Henry, who is Sir Charles' nephew, and the only surviving heir to the Baskerville fortune, is also in danger. Holmes and Watson have to move quickly in order to protect Sir Henry's life and to solve the mystery.

(parag.3) *The book is full of thrilling moments as the author creates tension with unexpected twists and vivid descriptions. What gives the book its dark atmosphere, however, is the silent, evil presence of the legendary hound which dominates the story throughout.*

(parag.4) *I thoroughly recommend The Hound of the Baskervilles. Readers will have a difficult time putting this masterpiece down as they are kept in suspense until the very end of the book.*

TYPES OF BOOKS/FILMS:

Books: biography, science fiction, mystery, love story, romance, detective..., horror..., comedy, suspense..., travel book, a play (theatre), a book of poems (poetry),...

Films: comedy, romance, animated film, cartoons, action film, mystery film, thriller, western, science fiction film/movie, documentary, drama, ...

USEFUL ADJECTIVES:

Dull, excellent, terrible, boring, moving, superb, awful, fantastic, fascinating, touching, dreadful, thrilling, hilarious, entertaining, amusing...