How to Write a Great Movie Review

A practical guide to rating and reviewing trailers and films with clarity, honesty and style.

Why reviews matter

A good review helps another person decide how to spend two hours. It is not a summary of the plot: it is your honest reaction, backed by a reason someone else can check. The best short reviews do three things: they say what the film is trying to be, whether it succeeds, and who will enjoy it.

The 5-part structure

1. **Hook.** Open with one sentence that captures your overall feeling. "A slow-burn thriller that earns every quiet minute."
2. **Context.** Genre, tone and premise in one or two lines, without spoilers.
3. **What works.** Pick two specific things: a performance, the score, the editing, a striking image.
4. **What does not.** One honest weakness with a reason: pacing, a flat character, a confusing ending.
5. **Verdict.** Who should watch it, and your star rating.

Choosing your star rating

Stars	Meaning	Ask yourself
5	Outstanding	Would I recommend it to almost anyone and watch it again?
4	Very good	Small flaws, but it clearly achieves what it set out to do.
3	Decent	Enjoyable for fans of the genre; nothing special otherwise.
2	Weak	A few good moments, but the problems outweigh them.
1	Poor	I would warn a friend away from it.

Reviewing a trailer specifically

A trailer is an advert, so judge it on what it promises. Does it make the tone clear? Does it reveal too much of the story? Is the music doing the heavy lifting? A strong trailer leaves you curious, not informed of every twist.

- Rate the trailer, not the film you imagine.
- Mention the single most memorable shot or line.
- Say whether it made you want to watch the full film, and why.

Words that make reviews vivid

Instead of	Try
good acting	a restrained, lived-in performance; electric chemistry between the leads
boring	meandering; the middle act loses momentum
nice visuals	saturated neon palette; sweeping drone shots; claustrophobic close-ups

Instead of	Try
scary	dread builds through silence; the jump scares feel earned
funny	sharp, quick-fire dialogue; physical comedy that lands

Spoilers and fairness

Never reveal twists, deaths or the ending without a warning. Criticise the work, never the people in it. If a film is not made for you, say so: "Not my genre, but horror fans will love the practical effects" is fair and useful.

A 60-word example

"A warm, funny coming-of-age story that knows exactly what it is. The young lead is a natural, and the soundtrack is pure joy. The final act rushes its emotional payoff, but the journey there is delightful. Perfect for a family movie night. 4 stars."

Checklist before you post

- Did I give at least one specific reason?
- Is my rating consistent with my words?
- Did I avoid spoilers?
- Would this help a stranger decide?