Writing A Film Review

<u>WALT</u>: Develop our literacy skills in a practical way.

What is a review?

- Gives information
- Expresses opinion
- Gives reasons for opinion
- Provides an overall summary
- Focuses on key details
- Uses technical language (jargon)
- Uses persuasive techniques

Choose a film to review. You could choose your favourite film, or a film you have seen recently.

Brainstorm your chosen film, writing down as much information as you can.

setting

Favourite scene

Plot

FILM

characters

Dislikes

actors

Likes

Special effects
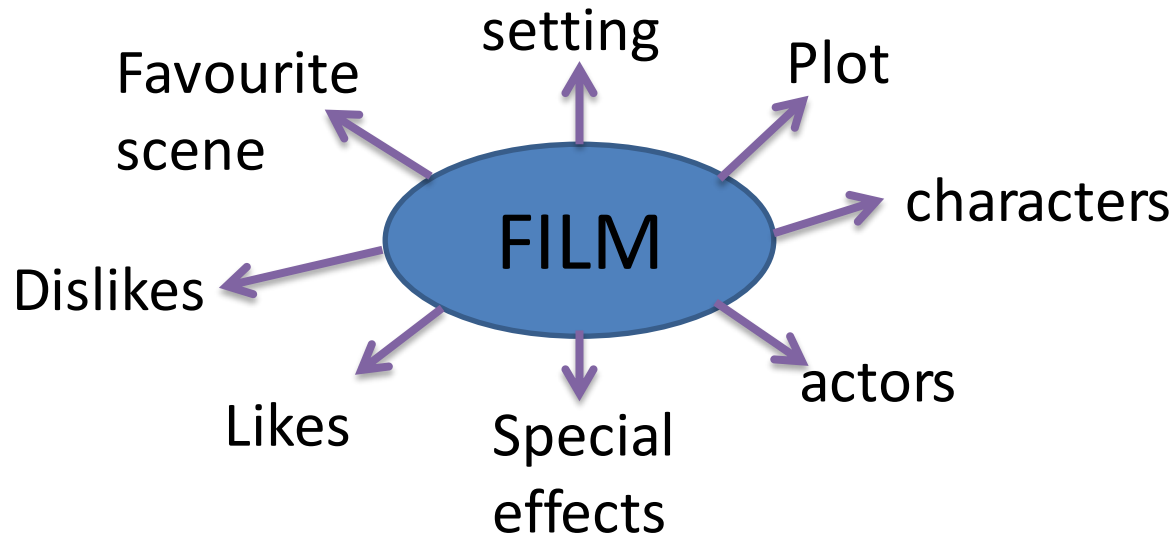
Now write the first draft of your review following this structure:

1) Explain what the film is about.
   - Don't go into too much detail.
   - Don't give away the ending.
   - What genre does it belong to? (horror, romance, action, etc)

2) Write about the actors.
   - Who are they? What else have they been in?
   - Are they believable? Do they do a good job?

3) Write about the good points of the film.

4) Write about the bad points of the film.

5) Write about your favourite part of the film.

6) Give your overall opinion of the whole film.

7) Finish with a star rating.

Improving Our Film Reviews

WALT: Improve our work based on peer feedback.

WILF:

Evidence of useful peer assessment (WWW / EBI) linked to the success criteria.

Evidence of improvements made following peer assessment.

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=H6dj_ljqIm8

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dz56hMacTuY

Swap your review with a partner. Read each other's review carefully to check:

- Capital letters
- Full stops, question marks, exclamation marks
- Other punctuation
- Spelling
- Does it make perfect sense?
- Paragraphs
- Standard English
- Is it informative and clear?
- Is it persuasive?
- Does it have any technical vocabulary (jargon)?

Give your partner two WWW (positive comments) and one EBI (target to improve).

Write *Peer assessed by (your name) on (today's date)* underneath.

Starter Task: TAC Time

Look at the comments that have been made in your book and:

1) Write your own comment underneath. Do you agree/disagree with the teacher's comment? Explain why. What will you do next to try to improve next time? Are there any questions (about the work) you would like the teacher to answer?

2) Make a list of spelling corrections at the back of your book. Try to learn these.

Developing Our Film Reviews

WALT: identify the features of a film review and use these in our own writing.
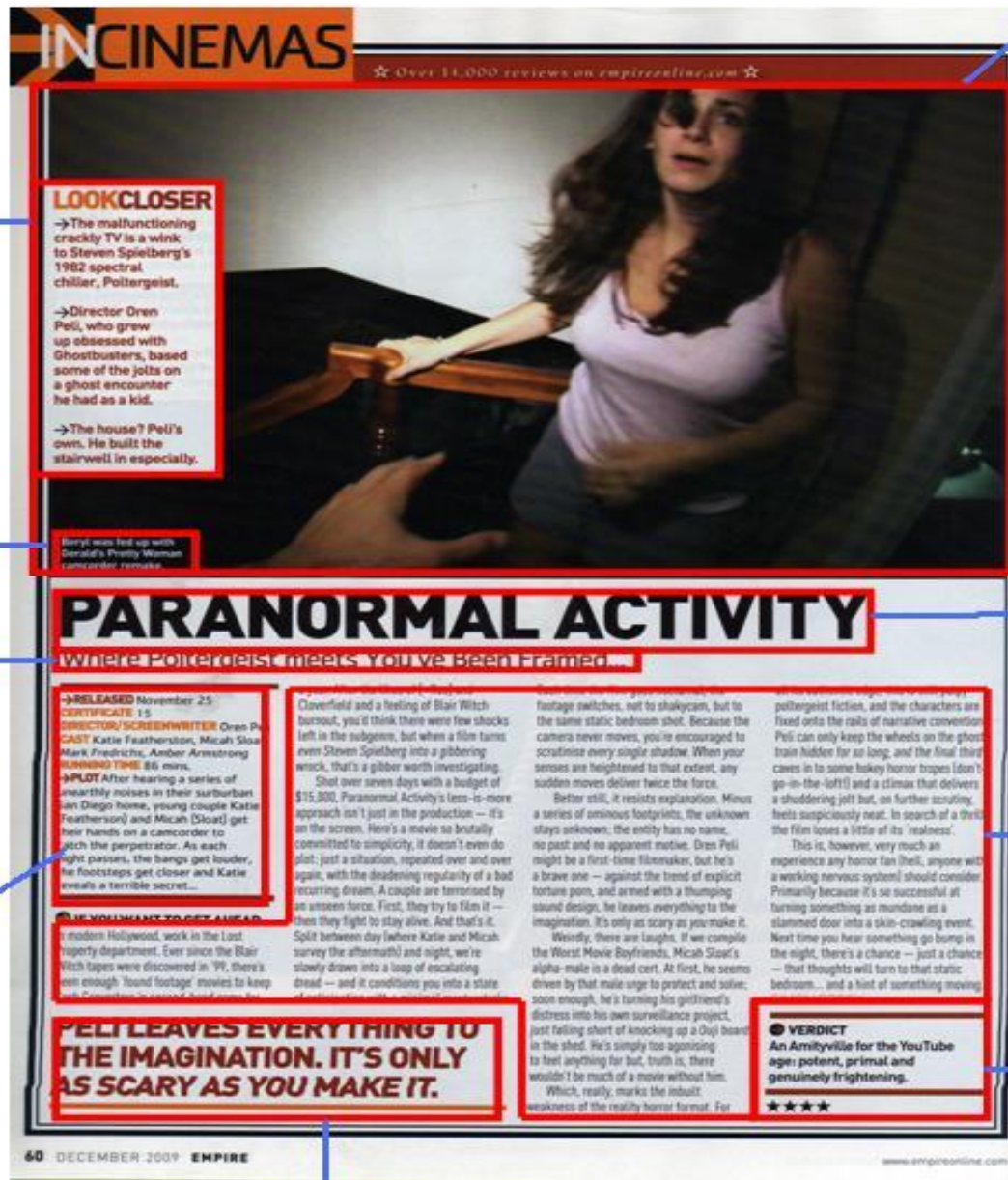
Main image, screen shot taken from the film, dominating the page.

Look Closer box containing a few facts and bits of further information about the film.

Witty description or quote for the main image.

Tag line for the review.

Box highlighting important details about the film including release date, certificate, director, cast, running time and a brief plot summary.

Title of the film being reviewed.

Main body of text, the review.

General verdict of the film and star rating.

Significant sentence taken from review.

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☆ Over 14,000 reviews on empireonline.com ☆

LOOKCLOSER

→The malfunctioning crackly TV is a wink to Steven Spielberg's 1982 spectral chiller, Poltergeist.

→Director Oren Peli, who grew up obsessed with Ghostbusters, based some of the jolts on a ghost encounter he had as a kid.

→The house? Peli's own. He built the stairwell in especially.

Beryl was fed up with Gerald's Pretty Woman camcorder remake.

PARANORMAL ACTIVITY

Where Poltergeist meets You've Been Framed...

→RELEASED November 25
CERTIFICATE 15
DIRECTOR/SCREENWRITER Oren Peli
CAST Katie Featherston, Micah Sloat, Mark Fredrichs, Amber Armstrong
RUNNING TIME 86 mins.
→PLOT After hearing a series of unearthly noises in their surburban San Diego home, young couple Katie (Featherston) and Micah (Sloat) get their hands on a camcorder to catch the perpetrator. As each night passes, the bangs get louder, the footsteps get closer and Katie reveals a terrible secret...

IF YOU WANT TO GET AHEAD modern Hollywood, work in the Lost Property department. Ever since the Blair Witch tapes were discovered in 'PA, there's been enough 'found footage' movies to keep...

Cloverfield and a feeling of Blair Witch burnout, you'd think there were few shocks left in the subgenre, but when a film turns even Steven Spielberg into a gibbering wreck, that's a gibber worth investigating.

Shot over seven days with a budget of $15,300, Paranormal Activity's less-is-more approach isn't just in the production — it's on the screen. Here's a movie so brutally committed to simplicity, it doesn't even do plot: just a situation, repeated over and over again, with the deadening regularity of a bad recurring dream. A couple are terrorised by an unseen force. First, they try to film it — then they fight to stay alive. And that's it. Split between day (where Katie and Micah survey the aftermath) and night, we're slowly drawn into a loop of escalating dread — and it conditions you into a state

footage switches, not to shakycam, but to the same static bedroom shot. Because the camera never moves, you're encouraged to scrutinise every single shadow. When your senses are heightened to that extent, any sudden moves deliver twice the force.

Better still, it resists explanation. Minus a series of ominous footprints, the unknown stays unknown; the entity has no name, no past and no apparent motive. Oren Peli might be a first-time filmmaker, but he's a brave one — against the trend of explicit torture porn, and armed with a thumping sound design, he leaves everything to the imagination. It's only as scary as you make it.

Weirdly, there are laughs. If we compile the Worst Movie Boyfriends, Micah Sloat's alpha-male is a dead cert. At first, he seems driven by that male urge to protect and solve; soon enough, he's turning his girlfriend's distress into his own surveillance project, just falling short of knocking up a Ouji board in the shed. He's simply too agonising to feel anything for but, truth is, there wouldn't be much of a movie without him. Which, really, marks the inbuilt weakness of the reality horror format. For

an ice-cold mug mm te wm plays poltergeist fiction, and the characters are fixed onto the rails of narrative convention. Peli can only keep the wheels on the ghost train hidden for so long, and the final third caves in to some hokey horror tropes (don't go-in-the-loft!) and a climax that delivers a shuddering jolt but, on further scrutiny, feels suspiciously neat. In search of a thrill the film loses a little of its 'realness'.

This is, however, very much an experience any horror fan (hell, anyone with a working nervous system) should consider. Primarily because it's so successful at turning something as mundane as a slammed door into a skin-crawling event. Next time you hear something go bump in the night, there's a chance — just a chance — that thoughts will turn to that static bedroom... and a hint of something moving.

PELI LEAVES EVERYTHING TO THE IMAGINATION. IT'S ONLY AS SCARY AS YOU MAKE IT.

● VERDICT
An Amityville for the YouTube age: potent, primal and genuinely frightening.
★★★★

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Task One: Label the review you have been given identifying these main features of a film review.

- Title of film being reviewed is bold and eye-catching.
- A tag-line underneath the title usually giving a hint about your overall opinion.
- Key information about the film is in its own text box and uses bullet points.
- Main body includes a brief plot summary (without giving away the ending), your opinions about plot, characters, setting, actors, effects and significant parts of the film, with reasons for your opinions.
- An overall opinion at the end with a star rating.
- Technical jargon.
- Humour.
- Images from the film which give an ideas of what sort (genre) film it is.

Main Task: Now rewrite your film review so that it follows the same pattern.

JAWS
A beast of a film!

Image from the film (draw a box at first, then add this in later if you have time)

Title of film being reviewed in bold

Tagline for your review

Key information in bullet points: director, actors, length, date of release, etc

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-
-

Main article written in columns (Use a ruler and pencil to lightly draw these)

Overall opinion of the film and star rating

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