



## Film Review Terms

On this handout you will find a list of terms that you might like to think about in preparing your film review.

### 1. Blurbs

- When a quote from a review is used in a commercial/advertisement
- (ex – “Better than The Matrix! I would see it again and again!”)

### 2. Critic

- A professional who publishes their opinion on a particular movie/play/book
- (ex – Roger Ebert, Richard Roeper, Leonard Maltin, Pauline Kael)

### 3. Mediocre

- Competent but not especially outstanding
- (ex – “The film wasn’t bad and it wasn’t good either, it was just mediocre”)

### 4. Cliché

- Something that’s been used so many times that it no longer surprises or interests the audience; overexposure
- (ex – In a scary movie, a black cat jumps out and scares the character, but the real danger is RIGHT BEHIND HIM/HER!)

### 5. Character Driven

- When the characters in a fictional work develop over the course of the story into people you care about
- (ex – Twilight is about vampires, but more importantly, it’s the relationship between the characters that makes us care about the story)

### 6. High-Concept

- When the idea behind the story is interesting enough to get people to see the movie without knowing anything else about it
- (ex – A young clownfish gets kidnapped and put into an aquarium and it’s up to his father and a misfit group of fish to save him {Finding Nemo})

### 7. Plot

- What the story is about
- (ex – Kung Fu Panda is about a clumsy, overweight panda bear who dreams of becoming the ultimate kung fu warrior, etc... {note that a plot summary is about a paragraph long})

### 8. Hype

- Using different techniques to get the audience excited about the story
- (ex – “Come see Coraline in amazing 3-D! It’s like nothing you’ve ever seen before!”)

### 9. Out of Context

- When quotes are mixed up and changed around to give the words a different meaning
- (ex – The commercial says: “Roger Ebert calls The Big Crazy Movie BRILLIANT!”
- What Roger Ebert really said in his review was, The Big Crazy Movie could have been BRILLIANT if the acting wasn’t so terrible.”

### 10. Puns

- A clever play on words
- (ex –Waiting to Exhale will take your breath away!)
- (ex – “Run to the theatre to see Running Scared!)

### 11. Editorial rights

- When handing over a review to a publication, the editor has the power to create a title and cut things out of the review
- (ex – YOU WROTE: “This movie stunk.” The editor changes it to: “This movie wasn’t so good.”)

### 12. Syndication

- When the same article is published in more than one newspaper
- or publication.
- (ex – The Associated Press takes one article and sells it to 300 newspapers and 1000 websites across the country)

### 13. Ratings system

- When the critic uses a scale to show the degree of how much they recommend the movie
- (ex – “thumbs up” or “four stars”)

### 14. Audience demographics

- When the critic recommends that only a certain group of people should see, or not see, the film
- (ex – “ Kids will like ‘Madagascar but adults will get bored.”)

### 15. Critical bias

- When the critic cannot review the film fairly due to a personal problem with something in the film
- (ex – I hated Jaws because I’m afraid of sharks.)

### 16. Spoilers

- When a critic reveals secrets and plot points that could ruin the surprise for the audience and lessen their enjoyment of the movie.
- (ex – In the end of The Big Crazy Movie, John the main character dies) Note: DON’T TELL SPOILERS!!!