

What makes a good review?

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Introduction This learning sequence enables students to critically analyse the features and structures of a review and then to apply these elements when writing their own reviews.
Skills, Knowledge and Understanding Students will: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• understand how language is used in an evaluative manner• use comprehension strategies to interpret, analyse and synthesise information from a review• critically discuss ideas and issues in reference to a variety of review texts• apply critical reading and thinking strategies to deconstruct a review• apply their understanding of reviews to write their own critical reviews.
Focus Questions What are the key features of a review? What critical reading, thinking and listening skills need to be applied in deconstructing a review? What elements should be included in a review? What makes a good review?
Introductory Activity <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Students pair up (A and B) and take it in turns to talk about the last film that they saw and whether it was a good film or a bad film. Whilst A speaks, B is encouraged to take notes about the things that the partner mentions.• Discuss the notes that the students make. What are the elements or characteristics that they listed for a good/ bad film?• Ask the students to raise their hands if they have ever read a written review or listened to a review delivered on radio or online? <i>Connect to previous activity and introduce how reviews are written to capture the elements of what makes something good or bad.</i>• What can be reviewed? List examples (eg. movies, books, video games, restaurants etc.).• Lead into a class discussion, by asking, ‘What is a review?’ (List ideas on the board.)• Explain to students that over the next series of lessons, they will be looking at what makes a good review. They will formulate a set of criteria by looking closely at some written reviews and then applying these elements in their own writing.
Activity 1: Teacher modelled, ‘Think Aloud’.
Resources: Interactive whiteboard Electronic copy of the Movie Show review of <i>Happy Feet</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Explain to students that the class will be completing a ‘think aloud’ as they look closely at a review of the animated film, <i>Happy Feet</i>. The goal will be to look closely at the features of the review, line by line, pointing out things that are interesting and things that could help them with their understanding of what elements go into a good review.• Begin the ‘think aloud’ process, posing questions along the way to encourage student participation, eg. How does this review begin? When do you first know that it will be a positive review? <i>Print the annotated review for future reference, or encourage students to annotate their own hard copies of the review as the ‘think aloud’ is being conducted.</i>

Plan and implement logically sequenced teaching programs to develop understanding of core concepts

The teacher guides the students in exploring and practising concepts, firstly through direct modelling and demonstration (Think Aloud) to the small group deconstruction of a film review (Sharing and Collaborative Learning), and then to individual work (independent writing).

Activity 2: Co-construct an anchor chart, ‘What makes a good review?’

Resources:

Interactive whiteboard,
or butcher’s paper with textas

- On completion of the ‘think aloud’ activity, inform students that they will begin to create an anchor chart displaying their findings on what makes a good review.
- The chart will be updated as more is learned/discovered.
Good reviews include, for example:
 - a catchy heading or the title of what is being reviewed
 - a summary of the plot
 - information about the producer, cast (or author, characters)
 - personal opinion.

Teacher reflection

At the initial stage, my key goal was to model the process of being a critical reader and thinker. I directed the class through a reading a film review. We then co-constructed a list of ‘What makes a good review?’ The students then applied this list (and added to it) in small groups as they worked together to deconstruct a second review. My goal was to carefully scaffold the learning for my students.

Activity 3: Small Group Activity

Listening critically and responding to Triple J’s *Happy Feet* review.

Resources:

Smart board or computer access to a link to the online audio clip:
http://www.abc.net.au/triplej/review/film/mp3s/film_happyfeet.mp3

Highlighters

- Working in small groups, students will listen to an audio review and deconstruct the review.
- In small groups, students will then complete the thinking proforma.
- Students will then share their ideas as a whole class and further points will be added to the ‘What makes a good review?’ anchor chart.

Activity 4: Joint construction of review.

Resources:

Printed copy of the anchor chart

- Using the criteria of ‘What makes a good review?’ developed by the class, the teacher and students will jointly construct a review using a short text. (Suggested texts might include a picture book or short film.)
- The jointly constructed review will be placed on display in the classroom for student reference.
- Any further insights about ‘writing a good review’ are added to the anchor chart.

Assessment:

The written reviews will be assessed using a rubric that students will create based on the criteria developed in class around ‘What makes a good review?’ Students will firstly peer assess written drafts using their rubrics, before submitting their reviews to the teacher for both formative and summative assessment.

Plan and implement teaching sequences that engage students in actively applying the key skills of the learning area to its content

The teacher has framed the learning around an inquiry question as a way to engage the students into a problem that they must collaborate on in order to solve. By unpacking ‘What makes a good review?’ the teacher is assisting the students in their understanding of the features of review writing, such as language, tone and structure, to prepare them for the final activity.