When writing a review, you provide information on a book, play or film you have read or watched, as well as expressing your opinion about it. Reviews are meant to either recommend the work in question or discourage people from reading or seeing it.

UNDER REVIEW

1. Read the book (or watch the movie) and **reread** especially **important scenes**, make **notes** of interesting, good or bad aspects (e.g. things that made you laugh or cry, scenes that you found to be exaggerated)
2. **Structure** your ideas and make an **outline**.

Structure	
Header	– Title. running time/number of pages, year, writer's/ director's name and your rating (out of 5) *TIP: try to think of a catchy title!*
Introduction	– basic information – type of book, movie – what it is generally about
Main Part	– Summary of the plot – Short overview of the most important characters *TIP: do not give too much away, the reader of the review might want to read the book*
Comment	Your opinion on e.g. the plot, the actors, the characters, the dialogue, the perspective of the book, the message / authors' intention, topics/themes *TIP: try to **weigh some pros and cons** e.g. great characters BUT a bit too dramatic (…)*
Conclusion	– Summary of your opinion (But is the book as good as it seems? ….) – Recommendation – Target group (suitable for/ the target audience is…)

Criteria	☺	☹

'Good' Literature	'Bad' literature
– It has stood the test of time (problem: decision is only possible in retrospect).	– The author uses a bestselling formula in order to attract a wide readership.
– The characters are somewhat real and true to life.	– Flat characters and stereotypes are employed.
– The author is aware of the full context, e.g. complexity of emotions or psychological basis of an action.	– The author presents a world of black and white.
	– The author avoids complex issues.
– The author achieves an organic and understandable relation among all individual elements of the story, i.e. every scene fits well into the overarching aim.	– The author reduces the range of hum an emotions depicted in the story.
– There is originality in a way that old, unalterable themes are expressed in a new way.	– The author is not concerned with the psychological basis of an action.
– The author's main concern is truth, i.e. topics and themes can be related to real life.	– The author flatters (= schmeicheln) the readers' moral sense, i.e. he uses topics in which the reader can identify his own moral values or feels m orally superior.
– The story displays and deals with ambiguities in m orality and psychology.	– The narrative focuses on a fast-moving narrative.
– There is multivalence, i. e. every time you read the book you can discover something new.	– Dramatic effects are important and add suspense.
	– Violent and emotional effects are more important than credibility of plot and character.

Method Guide: Kreative Methoden für den Literaturunterricht in den Klassen 7 -12 by Engelbert Thaler, Schöningh Schulbuchverlag, Paderborn 200 9, p. 19

Helpful phrases:

- – The book tells the story of ...
- – ... is a story about...
- – The beginning of the book made me want to read on.
- – The book is packed with ...
- – The book gives a lot of information on ...
- – The characters are (un)realistic/(un)convincing/ fascinating/unappealing ...
- – The character I most liked was ... because ...
- – It was easy/difficult to read because ...
- – I did not like ... because ...
- – It is an interesting/great/funny/moving/boring ... book because ...
- – The book is great/not good; I would/would not recommend the book because ... I liked/did not like the ending because ...
- – I enjoyed/did not enjoy reading the book because ...
- – I give the book ... out of five stars!

Example criteria:

Text type review

Criteria	Yes	No
1. Does my text have an interesting beginning that makes people want to read on?		
2. Is my description of the content logical and comprehensible?		
3. Have I made sure not to reveal too much of the plot so that I don't spoil the story for people who are unfamiliar with the novel/play/film?		
4. Does the main body of my review contain analysis to explain to my readers why I like the film/novel/play/...?		
5. Have I included quotes that show the style of the writing/dialogue (in a film or play)?		
6. Is my final recommendation a good conclusion of the whole review?		

Language and style

Criteria	Yes	No
1. Have I used an appropriate register for my review (not too colloquial, but not too formal either)?		
2. Have I used the correct terms for stylistic devices I analysed?		
3. Have I used suitable linking phrases to make my review coherent?		
4. Have I avoided my 'pet mistakes' or should I consult a dictionary and/or grammar book again?		

Skills

Criteria	Yes	No
1. Have I considered all the elements of analysing a film or a fictional text that are mentioned on the *Focus on Skills* pages in this chapter?		
2. Have I consulted the relevant sections in the Skills File?		

Chapter

Criteria	Yes	No
1. Have I included literary elements from the chapter as appropriate?		