

UNIT 12b Reviews

1 Look at the pictures and answer the questions:

- a) Would you rather read the book, or watch the film? Why?
 b) What kind of book is it? What kind of film is it? Tick (✓)

| | Book | Film |
|-------------------|------|------|
| 1 romance | | |
| 2 science fiction | | |

- c) Can you think of any other types of books and films?
 d) What's your favourite book/film?
 e) What would you say to a friend to recommend a book or a film?

Reviews are short descriptions of books, films, plays, TV programmes, etc. They are written to inform readers and viewers, and to give them your opinion/recommendation about whether (or not) they should read a book or see a film/play/etc.

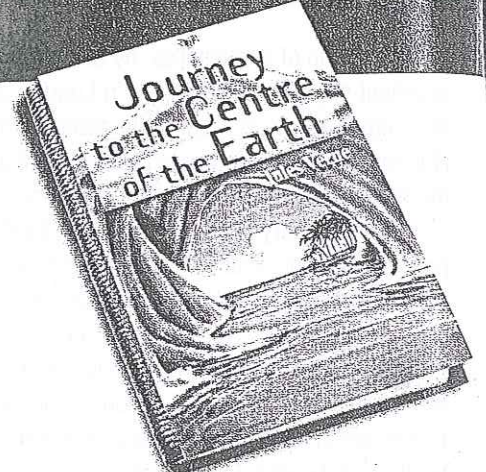
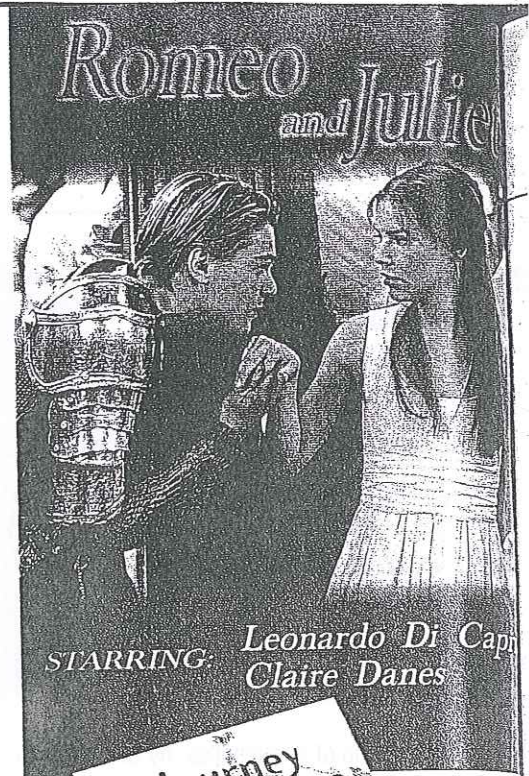
A review should consist of:

- a) an **introduction** in which you summarise all the background information of the book/film/etc. (i.e. title, name of author/director, type, setting, etc);
 - b) a **main body** consisting of two paragraphs: one about the main points of the plot, presented in chronological order, and another including general comments on the plot, the main characters, the acting, the directing, etc.
 - * **Note:** You should not reveal the end of the story to the reader.
 - c) a **conclusion** in which you recommend or do not recommend the book/film/play/etc, giving reasons to support your recommendation.
- Reviews are normally found in newspapers, magazines or as parts of a letter. The style you use depends on the publication and the intended reader and can be formal or semi-formal.
 - You normally use **present tenses** and a variety of adjectives to describe the plot and make your comments more clear and to the point.

2 Read the rubric and underline the key words, then answer the questions.

The editor of the magazine you work for has asked you to write a review about a book you have recently read. Write your **review**, giving a brief summary of the plot and saying why you think other readers might enjoy it.

- 1 Who is going to read the review? G who the main characters are
- 2 Which of the following must you include? Tick (✓). H how many of your friends have read it so far
- A what type of book it is I whether or not you recommend it
- B the author's biography J general comments
- C the title of the book
- D how the story ends
- E the name of the author
- F main points of the plot
- 3 Which tenses would you use?



Introduction

Paragraph 1

background information (title, name of author/director, type, setting, etc.)

Main Body

Paragraph 2

main points of the plot

Paragraph 3

general comments

Conclusion

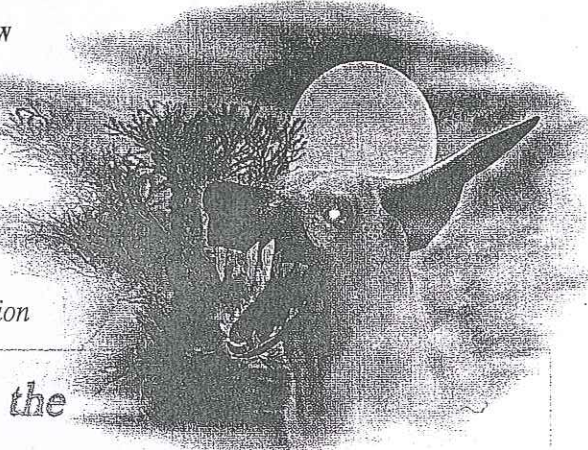
Paragraph 4

recommendation

3 a) Read the book review and label each paragraph with the headings below.

- recommendation
- general comments
- main points of plot
- background information

The Hound of the Baskervilles



The Hound of Baskervilles, by Sir Arthur Conan Doyle, is an excellent story that takes place in London and Dartmoor. This fascinating book is about the famous detective, Sherlock Holmes, who with his trusted assistant, Watson, tries to solve the mysterious death of Sir Charles Baskerville.

The mystery begins when Dr. Mortimer, Sir Charles' personal doctor, relates the circumstances surrounding his patient's death to Holmes and Watson. The doctor believes that his death has something to do with the legend of the hound, which is an enormous, evil, hunting dog that terrorises the people of Baskerville. Soon, it becomes clear that Sir Henry, who is Sir Charles' nephew, and the only surviving heir to the Baskerville fortune, is also in danger. Holmes and Watson have to move quickly in order to protect Sir Henry's life and to solve the mystery.

The book is full of thrilling moments as the author creates tension with unexpected twists and vivid descriptions. What gives the book its dark atmosphere, however, is the silent, evil presence of the legendary hound which dominates the story throughout.

I thoroughly recommend The Hound of the Baskervilles. Readers will have a difficult time putting this masterpiece down as they are kept in suspense until the very end of the book.

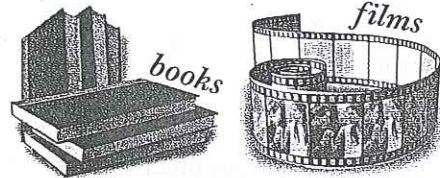
Para 1

Para 2

Para 3

Para 4

4 a) Read the useful vocabulary box below. Which phrases refer to books? Which refer to films? Which refer to both?



USEFUL VOCABULARY

Background:

The film/book tells the story of ...
 The film/story is set in ...
 The book/novel was written by ...
 The film is directed by ...
 It is a comedy/horror film/love story.

Main points of the plot:

The story concerns/is about/begins ...
 The plot is (rather) boring/thrilling.
 The plot has an unexpected twist.

General Comments:

It is rather long/boring/confusing/slow.
 The cast is excellent/awful/unconvincing.
 The script is dull/exciting.
 It is beautifully/poorly/badly written.
 It has a tragic/dramatic end.

Recommendations:

Don't miss it. It is well worth seeing.
 I wouldn't recommend it because ...
 I highly/thoroughly recommend it.
 It's bound to be a box-office hit.
 Wait until it comes out on video.
 It is a highly entertaining read.
 It's a bore to read.

b) Read the review in Ex. 3a again and replace the underlined sentences in the review with other appropriate ones.

5 Underline the correct word/phrase.

- 1 The starring role/character is played by Jack Nicholson.
- 2 The reader/audience screamed when the murderer appeared.
- 3 *Angela's Ashes* is a well-written/ acted book that tells the struggle of a poor Irish family.

b) Answer the questions.

- 1 Which paragraph includes the writer's recommendation? What phrases does she use to recommend the book?
- 2 Which paragraph includes a short description of the main points of the plot? Does the writer reveal the end of the story?
- 3 In which paragraph does the writer include information about where the story takes place and what it is about?
- 4 Which paragraph includes general comments on the book? What are they?
- 5 Which of the following has the writer used? Tick (✓).
 passive voice ___; variety of adjectives ___; colloquial expressions ___; abbreviations ___; complex sentences ___.

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- 4 The plot has an unexpected **twist/cast** when little John finds out the truth.
- 5 The story has a **dull/tragic** end when the helicopter crashes on a mountain.
- 6 The **script/cast** of the film includes some of the hottest names in Hollywood.
- 7 The book is **based on/set in** the incredible life story of Charlie Chaplin.
- 8 *The Matrix* has the most spectacular **special effects/premieres** in film history.
- 9 *Mad Park* is a **box office hit/dull read**. You'll fall asleep after the second page.
- 10 *Captain Correlli's Mandolin* **plays the part/tells the story** of a young Italian soldier who falls in love with a Greek girl.

6 a) Match the types of books/films to their definitions.

| Column A | Column B |
|-------------------|---|
| 1 comedy | A a film in which cartoons are brought to life |
| 2 romance | B an exciting film full of adventure and danger |
| 3 animated film | C a book or a film about a frightening story |
| 4 mystery | D a film that makes people laugh |
| 5 action film | E a book or a film about life in space/the future |
| 6 science fiction | F the story of a person's life written by sb else |
| 7 horror | G a book or a film about a love story |
| 8 biography | H a book or a film about strange events that are not solved until the very end of the story |

b) Fill in the table below with adjectives from the list.

dull, excellent, terrible, moving, superb, awful, fantastic, fascinating, touching, dreadful, thrilling, hilarious, entertaining, amusing


| | | |
|---|----------------------|-------|
| 1  | good/ interesting | |
| 2  | exciting | |
| 3  | funny | |
| 4  | sad | |
| 5  | boring | |
| 6  | bad | |


c) Use adjectives from the table to talk about films/plays you have seen and books you have read, as in the example.

e.g. *Dr Doolittle is one of the most amusing comedies I have ever seen.*


7 Look at the chart and use words/phrases from the useful vocabulary box on p. 79 to write your recommendation for each book/film, as in the example.


BOOKS Readers' Poll

1 *The English Patient*, by Michael Ondaatje
Romance 

2 *20,000 Leagues Under the Sea*, by Jules Verne
Adventure 

FILMS Viewers' Poll

3 *Sleep Well!*
directed by Jack Miller
Drama 

4 *Stuart Little*, directed by Rob Minkoff
Comedy 

e.g. *I highly recommend The English Patient. It is a well-written and touching romance.*

RELATIVE CLAUSES

To make your review more interesting to the reader you can add details about the plot using *relative clauses*.

- e.g. *Detective Larch wants to catch Scar. Scar is a diamond smuggler.*
→ *Detective Larch wants to catch Scar who is a diamond smuggler. William discovers a secret path. It leads to the castle.*
→ *William discovers a secret path which leads to the castle. Claire is a teacher. Her son wins a scholarship to study biology.*
→ *Claire is a teacher whose son wins a scholarship to study biology. They travel to York. In York they meet a very unusual taxi driver.*
→ *They travel to York where they meet a very unusual taxi driver.*