**How to Write a Film Analysis Essay**

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Strengthen the authority of your essay through familiarity with movie-making jargon.

Writing a film analysis essay is an assignment that is less likely to terrorize those who fear the idea of writing an essay, because it allows them to write about something most people enjoy. Film analysis is not the same thing as writing a movie review, which involves passively watching a movie. An analysis means you must engage on a level beyond that of storytelling.

Step 1

Watch the movie. Then watch it again. Take notes during the first viewing and, if you are analyzing a movie that is available on DVD, be ready with your remote control to pause and rewind.

Step 2

Critically engage the movie so that you can effectively produce a strong essay. Focus on a single thematic concept related to the film. Ideas for essays taking this route could include an analysis of how the film is photographed, how the movie relates a historical event in a dramatic way without compromising the facts or how a single sequence within the film relates to larger cinematic concepts, like overlapping dialogue or the utilization of dramatic irony.

Step 3

Introduce the film and its major participants, such as the actors and director. Include the name of another technician on the film if your analysis will be focusing on that aspect. For instance, cite the name of the cinematographer if you are going to be writing about the importance of shadows to film noir, or include the name of the composer of the movie’s score if you are writing about the importance of background music to the emotional tone of the film.

Step 4

Provide a brief overview of the story, but avoid the temptation to pad your word count by writing what amounts to a synopsis of the story rather than analysis. Reveal plots twists or the ending of the film only if they relate directly to your analysis.

Step 5

Write your film analysis with the movie at hand if this is possible. Write next to a television and DVD player if applicable. Stay inside the theater for the second or third showing with your notepad ready if this is possible. Writing an effective film analysis is best accomplished if you don’t have to rely on your memory of events, dialogue or cinematic techniques.

Step 6

Familiarize yourself with technical jargon related to the art of filmmaking. Learn the difference between a cut and a dissolve. Write about subjective camera work if the analysis is dealing with a part of the movie shot from the point of view of one of the characters. Properly utilizing filmmaking terms will strengthen the authority of your essay