

Let's Go to the Movies!

Skills Focus

Informational Text, Summarizing, Distinguishing Fact and Opinion

Connection to Habits of Good Readers

Evaluating, Determining Importance

Overview

Does your family like going to the movies? What makes you choose the movies you see? Do you value the opinions of friends, other family members, or even movie reviewers? Watching a movie on television or in the theater can be a fun family activity. It can also help to support your child's literacy by sharing opinions about the movie, verbally or in writing. Reading and creating movie critiques can also be a great way to help your child explore the differences between facts and opinions.

Guiding Questions and Talking Points

Consider sparking a discussion about movies by asking your child the following questions:

- What do you like about watching movies?
- What makes a film good or bad?
- Would you rather watch a movie or read a book? Why?
- What makes you choose one movie over another if you have a choice?

Intro Activity

Poll each member of the family to learn his/her favorite movie, and why. As everyone shares, see if there are any movies that are mentioned multiple times. Talk about the types of movies your family most likes to watch. Consider genres such as comedy, drama, horror, action, adventure, documentary, mystery, and love story. Review the terms "fact" and "opinion" (see terms below), and encourage family members to share one fact and one opinion about their favorite movies.

Before (Background Knowledge and/or Vocabulary)

While many of us give our unofficial opinions on various subjects, there are actually people who are paid to evaluate movies and share their opinions about those movies. These people are known as "critics" or "reviewers." You may have seen their work when an advertisement states that a movie has been rated as "four stars" or in the opinions on a movie poster.

The following are helpful terms for children to know when they are learning about movies and movie critiques:

- Audience: person or group of people for whom the message of a text is meant.
- Critique: an article or essay that gives a detailed evaluation or review of a movie.
- Evaluate: to judge or determine the significance or quality of something.
- Dialogue: the conversation between characters.
- Plot: the main story of a dramatic or literary work.
- Fact: something known to exist or have happened.
- Opinion: a personal view, attitude, or appraisal.
- Scene: a portion of the movie that involves the passage of events.

Let's Go to the Movies! (cont.)

Skills Focus

Informational Text, Summarizing, Distinguishing Fact and Opinion

During

As a family, discuss any recently released movies that each family member would like to see. Then, locate one or two reviews about the movie. These reviews can come from the local newspaper or an online source. Carefully read each review. As you read the reviews with your child, have your child identify the places where the critic is giving his opinion. In addition, identify those elements that are factual.

- **Emergent readers** can underline all of the factual information presented in the review. Also, have your child decide whether or not the review makes him/her want to see the movie. Your child should tell you the specific parts of the review that made him/her want or not want to see the movie.
- **Proficient readers** can create a two-column chart. In one column, list the parts of the review that are factual. In the other column, list the parts of the review that are the critic's opinion. Have your child decide whether or not this is a movie the family should see. Encourage your child to use information from the review to support his/her decision.
- **Advanced readers** can identify the parts of a review and evaluate the review. Have your child identify the strengths and weaknesses of the review. What does the writer do to convince him/her to go see (or not see) the movie?

After (Extension Activities)

- Host a movie night at your home. Watch a set of films. When the movie has ended, ask each participant to rate the movie(s). Discuss the strengths and weaknesses of the film(s).
- Rent a "classic" film. Look up and read old reviews of the film. Watch the film and write your own review of the film.
- Find a movie that is based on a book. Read the book and then watch the movie. Compare the film version to the book. Write a review discussing the book and the film.
- Use a video camera and movie making software to create your own movie.

Web Resources

- www.rottentomatoes.com
- www.metacritic.com

Suggested Readings

The following books have been adapted into movies that school-aged children may enjoy:

[Hugo](#), Brian Selznick

[Mr. Popper's Penguins](#), Richard and Florence Atwater

[Judy Moody and the Not Bummer Summer](#), Megan McDonald

[Nim's Island](#), Wendy Orr

[How to Eat Fried Worms](#), Thomas Rockwell