

Exercise walk-through

7.1

Purpose: describing and giving opinions

IGCSE English

Worked example – a balanced review

Improve this review line: “The film was good. I liked it. You should watch it.”

- “Good” and “liked” give **no information** – a review must say **why**.
- A good review is **balanced**: praise **and** criticism make it trustworthy.
- “The acting is superb – Chen makes every silence count – though the ending is rushed and left me unconvinced.”
- Finish with a clear **recommendation**, and say **who** would enjoy it.

Replace every “good” with a **reason** and an **example**. A review that praises everything reads like an advert; **one honest criticism** makes the praise believable.

A review describes and judges

Last week I tried the new Star Café ...

★ ★ ★ ★ ☆

describe what it is like _____ _____ _____	judge your opinion + reasons _____ _____ _____
recommendation "I would recommend it to anyone who ..."	

start by saying **what**
you are reviewing

balance the two: facts
about it, then what you
think, with reasons and
examples

end with clear **advice**:
try it, or not?

A review describes and judges, then ends with clear advice

A model review

Notice how each sentence either
or .

Skyward is an adventure film about a girl who builds her own aircraft. (describes)

*The story is simple, but the flying scenes are **breathhtaking** and the music suits them perfectly.* (judges)

The main character is played by a young actor in her first film. (describes)

She is convincing in the quiet scenes, though less so when the plot asks for anger. (judges)

I would recommend it to anyone who enjoys a story about not giving up.

Readers want a **clear, helpful** review. Learn a few phrases for each job – describe, praise, criticise, recommend – and you never stare at a blank page.

Exercise 2.1

2.1 Rewrite this retelling as description.

[2]

The book starts when the family moves house. Then the boy finds a box in the attic. Then he opens it and finds the letters.

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2.1

- orient without retelling
- e.g. “The story begins with a house move and a box of letters in an attic, but the discovery matters far less than what the family decides to do about it, which is where the book actually lives.”

Exercise 2.2 (a)

2.2 Turn each assertion into an opinion with a reason.

[2]

(a) “The restaurant was good.”

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[2]

(a) “The restaurant was good.”

(a)

- e.g. “The food was better than the room suggested – the noodles came in a broth that had clearly been cooking all day.”

Exercise 2.2 (b)

2.2 Turn each assertion into an opinion with a reason.

[2]

(b) “The game is boring.”

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2.2 Turn each assertion into an opinion with a reason.

[2]

(b) “The game is boring.”

(b)

- e.g. “The game is repetitive: every level asks you to do the same three things in a different order.”

Exercises 2.3-3.1

2.3 Write one honest criticism of something you like.

[1]

3.1 Write a review of a book, film or restaurant for your school website. Describe it, give your opinion with reasons, include one criticism, and say who would enjoy it. Write about 180 words.

[8]

Exercises 2.3-3.1

2.3 Write one honest criticism of something you like.

[1]

2.3

- any specific, honest criticism
- a criticism that is really praise (“it was too exciting”) does **not** count

3.1 Write a review of a book, film or restaurant for your school website. Describe it, give your opinion with reasons, include one criticism, and say who would enjoy it. Write about 180 words.

[8]

3.1

- **content (4)**: description without spoiling, an opinion with reasons, at least one genuine criticism, and a targeted recommendation
- **language (4)**: appropriate register for a website, precise vocabulary, varied sentences, accurate writing

Exercise 3.2

3.2 Explain why “I recommend this to everyone” is a weaker ending than “I recommend this to anyone who is willing to be patient”. [2]

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3.2

- “Everyone” says nothing about the thing being reviewed and cannot be true
- naming **who would enjoy it** (and who would not) gives the reader something to act on