

# CAE Writing Review

## Paper 2 Part 2 - Review

**A REVIEW** may be about a book, magazine, film, play or concert; it may also be about a product or a service. A review in the *Cambridge English: Advanced Writing* paper does not merely ask for a general description of the thing reviewed, but requires an evaluation of its suitability for a particular purpose or audience. The target reader is specified in the task, and candidates should be encouraged to use this information when choosing appropriate ideas and language to include in their response.

### Hints

- A **title** is advisable.
- Think what you are trying to achieve and, in the introduction, **DO give your reader and indication of the structure** of your review. You should also **raise a question in your reader's mind**.
- Start a new paragraph for every item/aspect you are addressing in your review.
- Try to **make it interesting by using a wide range of vocabulary**: colourful, lively language; comparisons to describe something; specialised topic vocabulary.
- **DO give your assessment** of what you are reviewing and **DO NOT forget to cover all the points** mentioned in the task input.
- **DO include a final recommendation or evaluation** in the final paragraph.

### Don't forget!

- The target reader is specified in the question, so the candidate knows not only what register is appropriate, but also has an idea about the kind of information to include.
- Language of opinion (positive, negative), recommendation, description is necessary.

### Useful language for a review

#### What I liked

- What I liked most was .....
- The thing I liked most was ....

- I was pleasantly surprised by .....
- ..... would appeal to .....
- If you get a chance to ....

### What I disliked

- What I disliked most was .....
- I was disappointed by/with .....

### Reviews of books

- main character
- is set in
- Fiction: science fiction / thriller / fantasy / mystery / historical / romance ...
- Non-fiction: cook book / travel book / textbook / manual / coffee-table book ...
- atmosphere / plot
- author
- written by
- chapter
- factual
- unbelievable
- bestseller
- ending

### Reviews of concerts

- artist / band / musician / (bass/lead/rhythm) guitarist / (backing/lead) singer / drummer / soloist / trio / orchestra
- auditorium / hall / venue / lyrics / (catchy) tune / score / gig

### Reviews of exhibitions

- painting / sculpture / handicrafts
- gallery / catalogue / display

## Reviews of films

- lead role
- star role
- star
- star actor/actress
- starring
- secondary role
- He plays a .....
- written by ....
- cast / director / producer
- is set in .....
- based on a true story .....
- believable
- true to life
- not very believable
- far-fetched
- (As for fiction books +): animation / adaptation / comedy
- Costumes / design / photography / script / special effects / soundtrack
- ending

## Reviews of plays

- scene / act / set / stage / interval

## Reviews of TV programmes

- Chat shows / current affairs programme / debate / documentary / series / soap opera/ sitcom (situation comedy)
- Host / presenter

## Reviews of hotels, restaurants, etc

- location
- service

- setting
- attractive / disappointing setting
- owned by
- run by
- head chef (restaurant)
- waiters (restaurant)
- staff .....
- staff at reception .....(hotel)
- hotel facilities ....
- reasonable prices .....
- good/excellent/poor value for money .....
- (a bit/somehow) expensive
- overpriced
- not worth the money
- always fully booked
- book in advance

### Criticism

- The script seemed rather conventional/predictable to me.
- The plot struck me as completely bizarre/absurd/incomprehensible
- The characters are appealing and true to life
- The dancers were quite brilliant/amateurish

### Recommendations

- I would strongly encourage you not to miss/not to waste your money on...
- I would definitely recommend seeing/visiting/reading/having a look at ...

## Model questions and answers

### Review - Model question 1

#### TASK



You see this announcement in an international magazine called *Cinefilia*.

***The most UPLIFTING and the biggest DOWNER.***

*It's sometimes hard to choose a film that fits your mood purely on the basis of the poster or the description on the cover of the DVD. That's why we want to publish reviews of the most uplifting and the most depressing films our readers have seen, so that others know what to watch and what to avoid.*

*Send in a review which describes the most uplifting film you've ever seen and the one you found the biggest downer. Make sure you give reasons for your choices.*

Write your **review** in **220-260 words** in an appropriate style.

### ***Review - Model answer 1***

In this review I am going to compare two contrasting tales about overcoming adversity. Whereas *The Blind Side* (2009) left me with a huge grin on my face, sadly, *Doctor Zhivago* (1965) left me feeling the weight of the world on my shoulders.

*Doctor Zhivago*, directed by five-time Oscar winner David Lean, is set in the Bolshevik revolution and follows the title character, who must adapt to the new order while pining for Lara, the beautiful wife of a political campaigner. The director succeeded in creating a film that is thoroughly engaging but full of gritty realism, cruelty and tragic irony. Take the tissues!

*The Blind Side*, which is based on a true story, is also a bit of a tearjerker, in a completely different way. Starring Sandra Bullock, who won an Academy Award for her portrayal of a rich white mother in Tennessee who takes a homeless black teenager under her roof. Understandably, the gentle giant thinks he isn't good at anything but his new mother sees his potential to become a football star and part of the family. The plot is based on a true story, making it all the more touching.

I would strongly recommend *The Blind Side*. It will appeal to a range of people and is a great choice for a movie night. Although *Doctor Zhivago* is a classic, I think it has more of a niche audience and is best saved for when you want a dose of gloom!

[+/- 245 words]

## Review - Model question 2

### TASK

You see the following advertisement in a music magazine.

***Ever fancied yourself as a music journalist? Now's your chance.***

*We're looking for enthusiastic music lovers to write a review of their favourite album of all time. We want to know why you love it and why you think everyone should listen to it. It doesn't matter who the artist is or how old or new the music is.*

*Send in a review of your favourite album of all time giving reasons for your choice.*

Write your **review** in **220-260 words** in an appropriate style.

## Review - Model answer 2

### ***A thrilling album***

I'm certainly not alone in my choice of favourite album. In fact, Michael Jackson's "Thriller" has sold over 50 million copies worldwide since being released in 1982, and still currently holds the much coveted title of "best-selling album of all time". A toe-tapping blend of pop, funk and R&B, it's sure to get everyone grooving at a party, yet also contains unexpected emotional power in the lyrics.

Jam-packed full of catchy melodies such as the opening "Wanna be startin' something" and the famous "Beat it", almost every song makes you want to hum along. It's like a feast for the ears, with a range of styles from the soft duet ballad with Paul McCartney "The Girl is Mine" to the rock/pop of the title track. The album will leave you with no doubt of the unique and extraordinary talent of the King of Pop. What disco would be complete without a few of his renowned numbers?

Unlike much of today's modern pop, this album actually deals with a huge number of deep themes such as jealousy, loneliness and obsession. The song "Billie Jean", for example, chronicles a story of a crazed fan who insists that she has his baby. Not hard to imagine that the artist was channelling some real experiences in his writing.



**CL GRANADA, S. L.**  
C/ Puentezuelas, nº 32, 1ª Planta - 18002 Granada  
Teléf.: 958 53 52 53 – 958 52 12 91  
Fax: 958 25 15 46  
E-mail: [info@clgranada.com](mailto:info@clgranada.com)  
Web: [www.clgranada.com](http://www.clgranada.com)

It doesn't surprise me at all that this remains the best-selling album of all time and I challenge even the most cynical listener to play "Thriller" without tapping along.

[+/- 245 words]



Adapted from Ruben Valero Learning English  
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