Lesson Plan: Entertainment

Course:
ENG4U – Grade 12 University English

Lesson Title:
Producing and Reflecting On Media texts – Entertainment (Introduction)

Rationale:
More often then not, students skip to either the sports section or the fashion and entertainment sections without really understanding the process in which these articles are submitted. This specific lesson, while enhancing students literary skills, will also make them aware of a significant aspect of media literature. More specifically, the students will become aware of how to better understand and how to write media reviews of movies, music, and literature.

Reading and analyzing this type of literature will enhance the students ability to read and demonstrate an understanding in various pieces of writing. Their understanding of key concepts of the article will help them become aware of the issues surrounding our world.

Overall Expectations:

i. Reading for Meaning: read and demonstrate an understanding of a variety of literary, informational, and graphic texts, using a range of strategies to construct meaning;

ii. Understanding Form and Style: recognize a variety of text forms, text features, and stylistic elements and demonstrate understanding of how they help communicate meaning.

iii. Developing and Organizing Content: generate, gather, and organize ideas and information to write for an intended purpose and audience.

Specific Expectations:

i. Demonstrating Understanding of Content: identify the most important and supporting details in texts, including complex and challenging texts

ii. Making Inferences: make and explain inferences of increasing subtlety and insight about texts, including complex and challenging texts, supporting their explanations with well-chosen stated and implied ideas from the texts.

iii. Analyzing Texts: analyze texts in terms of the information, ideas, issues, or themes they explore, examining how various aspects of the text contribute to the presentation or development of these elements.

iv. Text Forms: identify a variety of characteristics of literary, informational, and graphic text forms and demonstrate insight into the way they help communicate meaning.

v. Elements of Style: identify a variety of elements of style in texts and explain how they help communicate meaning and enhance the effectiveness of texts.
vi. **Generating and Developing Ideas:** generate, expand, explore, and focus ideas for potential writing tasks, using a variety of strategies and print, electronic, and other resources, as appropriate.

**Learning Objectives:**
After lecturing on the structure of a media review students will be able to find their own entertainment articles and successfully analyze them. Also, after discussing the main elements that make up a published media review, the students will be able to create their own media reviews after following the necessary steps.

**Lesson Schedule: 75 Minutes**

1. Announcements

2. In their journals, students respond to the following question:
   - Other than its storyline, what elements make up a movie? Students should think about the final product and the process of making that product (e.g. acting, tone, cinematography, music and characterization). Students share their responses and the teacher creates a list of responses on the board.

3. Introduce to the students the elements of an entertainment review. Discuss with them the strategies to consider when writing a review for the public. Have them copy “The structure of a Review” (App. 1) sheet from the overhead projector.

4. Select a movie review (The Gladiator) to discuss and analyze as a class (App. 2). Through guided reading students will voluntarily read the selected article. During the reading, I will stop at significant points that exemplify the key ideas and messages.

5. Hand out the assignment to the class. See appendix 3 for details. If time remains, allot class time for students to begin the assignment and ask questions.

6. Debrief the class.

**Assignment/Assessment:**
The students will be asked to complete the assignment for homework. The questions will be taken up the next day.
Appendix 1

The Structure of a Review

A review is a specialized type of article and, like an article, needs all the elements discussed in other types of creative nonfiction.

A review needs a strong lead, a well-developed middle with vivid examples and details, and a powerful end.

The Lead
Has to:
• Catch the audience’s attention as well as convey something about the content of the article.
• Offers a description of the subject and explains whether it was a positive or negative experience to watch, read or listen to it. This is the reviewer’s thesis or the main argument they would like to make about this work.

The Body
Has to:
• Contain the information people need to decide whether or not they will spend their money on the product or production.
• Explain the author’s feelings. Give examples and use quotations if possible and if appropriate.
• If the subject is good, the reviewer will focus on elements that make it work so well, including characters, scenes, dialogue, description, pace, plot line and theme.
• If it was flawed in some way, the reviewer will try to establish that by offering evidence of those flaws.

The Conclusion
Has to:
• Briefly summarize your points.
• Give a recommendation.
• Refer back to the main idea suggested at the beginning of the review
Appendix 2

A Hero Will Rise: A Review of Gladiator

By: Ashleigh Viveiros, SNN Reporter, Garden Valley Collegiate, Winkler, MB.

If you want to see a truly spectacular epic that takes place in Ancient Rome, this is definitely the one to see. Set in the time when Rome was the world, this movie gives you a sense of what it was like to be a Roman. Directed by Ridley Scott (Blade Runner) and with a group of actors that truly fit their parts, Gladiator is destined to be a box office hit.

Starting off with a fast-paced battle scene between the famous Roman army and the Germanic tribes, this movie starts right off by showing you that it isn't for the squeamish. With heads and other body parts flying around, it can at times be disgusting, but the camera angles are expertly done in such a way so that you really only get a sense of the bloody battle as opposed to an "in your face" bloodbath. Enter Maximus, a brilliant warrior and a beloved leader of his troops. Russell Crowe is perfectly cast as this Roman war hero who just wants to get home to his farm. Emperor Marcus Aurelius (played by Richard Harris) joins Maximus after the battle, and tells him that he wants Maximus to succeed him. Aurelius feels that only Maximus can lead Rome back to the Republic it once was.

This decision upsets Aurelius's son, Commodus (Joaquin Phoenix). A wicked, spoiled brat who feels that because his father sees that he isn't capable of being emperor it means he doesn’t love him. So Commodus kills Aurelius and sends Maximus to be executed. Maximus escapes, only to find upon returning home that Commodus also had his wife and son murdered as well.

After being captured by a slave merchant and trained to be a gladiator, Maximus soon finds himself fighting in the Coliseum right in front of Emperor Commodus. I won't give anymore of the story away, but let's just say that rest of the movie is great. The fight scenes in the Coliseum are both fascinating and disturbing as you watch thousands of people cheering for the slaughter of innocent men and animals.

The visual effects in Gladiator are amazing. Suddenly the ruins in Rome become massive structures, like the Coliseum. While watching Maximus travel through the city, you can't help but find yourself in awe of the scale of it.

Gladiator is definitely a movie for history buffs, and one of the best movies I've seen in awhile. It is the first really good movie of this century.
Appendix 3

**Reading and Understanding the Movie Review**

1. What is the plot of this film, and what are the reviewer’s views of the plot?
2. How did the reviewer feel about the actors’ and actresses’ performances?
3. How would the film be classified? (drama, comedy, horror, science fiction, documentary)
4. What specific descriptive words are used in the review to illustrate the writer’s opinions of the plot, acting, or other elements of the film?
5. Had you heard of this movie prior to reading this review? If so, did this review change your opinions of the movie, and why? If not, does this review encourage you to see the movie, and why?
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Reading and analyzing this type of literature will enhance the students ability to read and demonstrate an understanding in various pieces of writing. Their understanding of key concepts of the article will help them become aware of the issues surrounding our world.

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ix. Analyzing Texts: analyze texts in terms of the information, ideas, issues, or themes they explore, examining how various aspects of the text contribute to the presentation or development of these elements.
x. Text Forms: identify a variety of characteristics of literary, informational, and graphic text forms and demonstrate insight into the way they help communicate meaning.
xi. **Elements of Style:** identify a variety of elements of style in texts and explain how they help communicate meaning and enhance the effectiveness of texts.

xii. **Generating and Developing Ideas:** generate, expand, explore, and focus ideas for potential writing tasks, using a variety of strategies and print, electronic, and other resources, as appropriate.

**Learning Objectives:**
After lecturing on the structure of a media review students will be able to find their own entertainment articles and successfully analyze them. Also, after discussing the main elements that make up a published media review, the students will be able to create their own media reviews after following the necessary steps.

**Lesson Schedule: 75 Minutes**

1. Announcements

2. Begin class by taking up the previous day's homework questions.

3. Discuss some do's and do not's with the class when writing an entertainment review. Have them copy "How Strong Should Your Opinion Be" (App. 1) sheet from the overhead projector.

4. Hand out the Entertainment Review guide sheet (App. 2) and the Book Review guide sheet (App. 3) and through *guided reading* students will voluntarily read the selected article. During the reading, I will stop at significant points that exemplify the key ideas and messages.

5. Once discussion is completed, each student selects a movie, either currently in the theatre or an old favorite, for the focus of a movie review modeled after the samples provided. The teacher should make sure that students should select different movies. In class, students should "prewrite" their reviews. Assignment details on App. 4

6. Debrief the class.

**Assignment/Homework**
Students write and edit their movie reviews, making sure that their language is descriptive and their opinion is apparent in the analysis of the plot, characters, and other elements of the film.

**Evaluation/Assessment**
Students will be evaluated on written journal responses, participation in class discussion, and thoughtful, descriptive movie review modeled after those discussed in class.

**Appendix 1**

**How Strong Should Your Opinion Be?**

While it is probably more fair to a product of production to present a balanced view of it (stating the positives and stating the negatives), it’s not as much fun to write or read.

Reviewers are known for stating their opinions. As writers, we want our readers to have a reaction to what we’ve written, not fall asleep as they read.

You can, however, alienate readers with a tone that is know-it-all, lecturing, or superior.

When you have finished your review, read it out loud. Listen for those words that may push the review into the “distasteful” or “offensive” category. Have a peer editor read it and give you feedback on tone.

Having a strong opinion and expressing it is fine; being insensitive to word choice is not!
Appendix 2

Entertainment Reviews

There are many topics or categories you can discuss when reviewing a movie or play. Reviewers need to become fast category experts, knowing each category thoroughly. Following are some aspects of a production that you might choose to write about:

- Actors
- Background/history of production
- Camera work
- Computer generated images
- Content
- Costumes
- Dialogue
- Editing
- Intended audience
- Producer(s)
- Set
- Special effects
- Theme
- Tone
- Animation
- Characters
- Comparisons with other productions (by same director, with same lead actor, or with similar themes)
- Director(s)
- Hair/makeup
- Music
- Script/screenplay
- Sound
- Structure (flashbacks, framing devices, play within a play)
- Type of movie

Naturally, you aren’t going to write about all the topics above. You need to decide whom you are writing for and the purpose of your review. Every newspaper and magazine has its own audience. What you write about will depend on whether this audience sees a production because of its production values, its story, its actors, its director(s), or a combination of these. If your readers know nothing about cinematography, they may not want to read a review that discusses the technical
aspects of camera work and editing, but they may want to hear something about cinematography so they can watch for it and become more knowledgeable.

Appendix 3

Book Reviews

Probably you are familiar with writing books in form of book reports. Book reviews are similar to book reports in that they include summary of the book, however, reviews focus mainly on analysis and opinion. Like entertainment reviewers, book reviewers can discuss a number of things. Most often, book reviews examine big themes in the work – what the author is saying and how well he or she is saying it. What you discuss will depend on the genre, the purpose of the writing, and the audience for whom you are writing. Following are some aspects of a book that you might choose to write about:

- Anecdotes/interviews with
  Author, editor, or publisher
- Bibliography/references/
  Glossary/index
- Comparison between
  current book and another
  by same author
- Genre
- Language/imagery/symbolism
- Objectivity
- Plot
- Publication details
- Readability
- Subject
- Usefulness
- Writing style

- Author
- Author’s expertise and
  research
- Characters
- Comparison between
  books on similar theme
- Dialogue
- Form
- Illustrations
- Perceived audience of
  book
- Point of view
- Purpose of book
- Structure
- Theme
If you are a book reviewer, it is assumed that you enjoy reading and enjoy thinking about what you read. It is also assumed that you have read extensively and (for literary reviews) that you have studied literature, journalism, or media. When you read in order to review a book, you read with a pencil in hand. Take notes on any or all of the topics listed above. Be aware of the parts in the book that kept you interested and those parts in the book that lost your interest. Don’t simply read on those parts, but examine how the author involved you in the content, characters, facts, or language or why the author lost your interest. When you evaluate a book, you need to support your judgments with examples. With well-documented notes, this job is easier.

When reviewing novels, stay away from simply retelling the story. While you will have to discuss the content, it shouldn't be the focus of the review unless the plot line is the one aspect of the novel that detracts or makes the book.

As with entertainment reviews, how much technical information you include in your review will depend on your readers.

Appendix 4

Writing Your Own Review!

Select a movie, either currently in the theatre or an old favorite, for the focus of a movie review modeled after the samples provided.

All reviews should include the following:

6. Names of stars of the movie
7. Name of the director
8. Rating
9. Length of movie
10. Evaluation of the plot of the movie
11. Evaluation of actors' performances
12. Any other elements of the movie that make this film unique (soundtrack, famous cinematographer or producer, etc.)
13. Clear opinion of the film illustrated throughout the review, apparent in the analysis of the plot, characters, and other elements of the film
14. Use of descriptive language throughout the review (use a thesaurus!)

No more than 100 words (excl. names of stars, director, rating, and length)