

C1 Advanced (CAE) Review: Structure

Title + Introduction Name what you are going to be reviewing. Identify the book, restaurant or film
Main content:
Paragraph 1: Describe the first thing mentioned in the task Paragraph 2: Describe the second thing mentioned in the task
Recommendation Contain your general impression and your verdict.

Step 1: Briefly analyse your task...

The **first** thing is to find underline a **description part**, where we have to describe something like a film, book, restaurant or anything else. **Next**, find a **discussion part** where need to give opinion and or make a recommendation or suggestion.

On top of that, find the **target reader** who is **always specified** so you know exactly who you are writing for and who is going to read your review.

*You see the following announcement on a **website, Great Lives**:*

Reviews Wanted

Send us a review of a **book or film that focuses on somebody who has made an important contribution to society.***(to describe)*

Did you learn anything new about the person's life from the book or film? Did the book or film help you understand why this person made their important contribution?*(to answer/discuss)*

Thanks to this, we have all the elements we need to write a great review below:

You need to describe: Book or film that focuses on somebody who has made an important contribution to society

You need to answer/discuss:

1. Why this person made an important contribution?
2. Did you learn anything new about the person's life?

Who is the target reader: website, Great Lives

We know now that the target readers are **the users of the website**, so the writing style can be quite direct and informal (idioms, phrasal verbs).

Step 2: Title

The review should start with the title, and there are several ways to write it:

- imagine you're reviewing a **book** you can write **[Title] by [Author]**
- if you were reviewing a **hotel** you could write the **[name of the hotel] – a review**
- or you can just write something **catchy** but it has to **point to what** you are going to review

Title (book): *Green Lantern by Stephen King (by)*

Title (hotel): *Ibiza Hotel in Barcelona – a review (a review)*

Title (restaurant): *Taco Bell: Unforgettable experience (catchy)*

we will use **this title** in our **guide**:

Example:

TITLE: Mandela: Striving for Freedom – a review

Step 3: Introduction

Use the introduction to **identify the thing you are going to be reviewing**, and state its genre (i.e. a science fiction novel, a horror movie) or location (if it's a restaurant or a hotel).



The **other function** of your introduction is to **engage the reader**.

There are certain tools we can use to achieve that for example, we can **ask a rhetorical question**.

It is a question that doesn't really need an answer it is there as a stylistic feature that engages the reader and makes them interested in the topic

Make your introduction at least **2-3 sentences** long.

Example:

INTRODUCTION: Have you ever been so passionate about something that you would sacrifice your very best years for it? In the film *Mandela: Striving for Freedom* we get not only a glimpse of Nelson Mandela's life, but rather dive deep into who he was and how he changed a whole country. This autobiographical film, based on the book, and released in 2013, tells the amazing story of an even more extraordinary man.

– rhetorical question

– identification of reviewed item

💡 **TIP:** Don't waste your time looking for a **real book** or a **real movie** to match your review. **Make it up** or **change the facts** to suit the **review**, it doesn't have to be real.

Step 4: The body paragraphs (main content)

The body paragraphs can be used to **describe the points** you've found in *(Step 1)*

You need to answer/discuss:

1. Why this person made an important contribution?
2. Did you learn anything new about the person's life?



Unlike essays, your paragraphs don't have to be of the same length (however, should be longer than the introduction or conclusion).

Use **idioms**, **phrasal verbs** and colloquial language – informal language is appropriate for your target reader – *users of the website, Great Lives*

See the example below, in which we **dedicate one paragraph to one point...**

Example:

[Why this person made an important contribution?]

While the whole film captivated me throughout, there was one aspect that truly stood out to me. Nelson Mandela and his second wife Winnie had a one-of-a-kind relationship driving each other to continue and grow the anti-apartheid movement in South Africa even after Mr Mandela was captured and imprisoned. It is a testament to their dedication and partnership and something 'that a lot of us can learn from.

[Did you learn anything new about the person's life?]

Despite having a strong and driven partner in his wife, I still used to be astonished by the fact that someone would simply sacrifice themselves and give up a big part of their life to help others, but this biopic made me reconsider. Witnessing segregated society and all the racial abuse the black community had to endure during apartheid, there was no other option for Nelson Mandela than to stand up and fight for equality.

– topic-specific vocabulary

– engaging/interesting vocabulary

Step 5: Conclusion / Recommendations

It will contain your **general impression** and your **verdict/recommendation**.

Use this paragraph to make an **objective assessment** of the reviewed material. You may then **recommend or dissuade your readers** from seeing/attending it.

Example:

CONCLUSION: All in all, *Mandela: Striving for Freedom* gives some incredible insight into the life of one of the world's most famous and influential personalities of the 20th century. It would be a shame not to watch it so I highly recommend that you check your favourite streaming service as soon as you can and I promise you won't regret it.

– recap, what you like about the film

– recommendation

Mandela: Striving for Freedom – a review

Have you ever been so passionate about something that you would sacrifice your very best years for it? In the film *Mandela: Striving for Freedom* we get not only a glimpse of Nelson Mandela's life, but rather dive deep into who he was and how he changed a whole country. This autobiographical film, based on the book, and released in 2013, tells the amazing story of an even more extraordinary man.

While the whole film captivated me throughout, there was one aspect that truly stood out to me. Nelson Mandela and his second wife Winnie had a one-of-a-kind relationship driving each other to continue and grow the anti-apartheid movement in South Africa even after Mr Mandela was captured and imprisoned. It is a testament to their dedication and partnership and something 'that a lot of us can learn from.

Despite having a strong and driven partner in his wife, I still used to be astonished by the fact that someone would simply sacrifice themselves and give up a big part of their life to help others, but this biopic made me reconsider. Witnessing segregated society and all the racial abuse the black community had to endure during apartheid, there was no other option for Nelson Mandela than to stand up and fight for equality.

All in all, *Mandela: Striving for Freedom* gives some incredible insight into the life of one of the world's most famous and influential personalities of the 20th century. It would be a shame not to watch it so I highly recommend that you check your favourite streaming service as soon as you can and I promise you won't regret it.

Useful phrases for a review

Introduction:

Personal anecdote to grab attention. Introduce name of book/film, restaurant + location, course, TV show etc.

- **Seldom do** I find the time to..., however when I do take time out of my hectic schedule, I like nothing more than...
- **Being a bit of a book worm**, the news that ... had released a new book had me **dying to read it**.
- **Being a bit of a film buff**, the news that ... had filmed a new movie had me **itching to see it**. So last week I **popped down** with a friend **to check it out**.
- **Being a bit of a foody**, the news that ... had opened a new restaurant had me **desperate to try it**. So last week I **put on my Sunday best and went to the restaurant with some friends**.
- **Having never seen/read/tried...** before I approached ... with a sense of trepidation, not knowing what to expect. Soon however, all my fears were allayed.

Book and Film reviews:

Vocabulary to describe the book in general:

- A page-turner
- I couldn't put it down.
- Glowing reviews
- Brought a tear to my eye
- Like watching paint dry (boring)
- I was on the edge of my seat (exciting)
- Gripping (exciting)

Vocabulary to describe a film/TV series in general:

- An all-star cast
- An accomplished actor
- An unmitigated disaster (bad film)
- A dazzling display of his/her talents
- Brought a tear to my eye
- Like watching paint dry (boring)
- I was on the edge of my seat (exciting)
- A blockbuster (big commercial film eg Superman)
- Gripping (exciting)
- Capture the audience's imagination.
- Spectacular set-pieces (main action scenes)
- Meryl Streep is cast in the role of...
- Brad Pitt gives a(n) (un)convincing performance as...
- The film is let down by a clichéd script.

Vocabulary to describe specific parts:

- A slow start
- A gentle introduction
- Gripping climax
- Nail-biting conclusion
- Cliff-hanger ending
- A shocking twist in the tail

Setting:

- The book/film is set in _____(place/time)
- The action takes place in _____(place/time)
- The present day (now)
- An alternate reality where vampires / wizards walk the earth
- A sleepy village in the USA
- The bustling city of New York

Plot:

- The plot centres around / focuses on (the adventures / lives of _____)
- The plot follows the adventures of _____(character name)

Characters:

- Villain / hero / heroine / anti-hero / main character / protagonist
- The characters are believable / well-crafted / a bit 2 dimensional.

Killer Lines when concluding

- Were I to sum up ... in one word, it would be...
- ... left a lot to be desired (wasn't good enough)
- ...more than lives up to the hype (is as good as everyone says it is)
- ... is by far and away the best ... you're likely to ... this year
- ... really raises the bar (sets a higher standard)
- ... sets the benchmark for other (others will be judges against how good it is)
- ... ticks all the right boxes
- ... holds up well in comparison with ...
- ...comes off badly in comparison with ...

Different ways to say...

Important/ Necessary

- Key
- Vital
- Paramount
- Imperative
- Essential
- Critical

Important/ Necessary

- Crucial
- Fundamental
- Required

Advantage

- Benefit
- Boon
- Asset
- Plus point (inf)
- Positive

Disadvantage

- Drawback
- Downside
- Flaw
- Pitfall
- Weakness
- Shortcoming

Bad

- Awful
- Appalling
- Dreadful
- Wretched
- Terrible
- Sub-par
- Rubbish

Shocked

- Taken aback
- Astonished
- Astounded
- Speechless
- Stunned
- Staggered
- Lost for words

Angry

- Irrate
- Cross
- Infuriated
- Seething
- Indignant
- Enraged
- Mad

Problem

- Complication
- Issue
- Obstacle
- Controversy
- Pickle (inf)
- Mess (inf)

Good

- Splendid
- Outstanding
- Tremendous
- Stupendous
- Wonderful
- Superb
- Marvellous

Nice

- Courteous
- Likeable
- Cordial
- Considerate
- Cordial

Happy

- Cheerful
- Merry
- Jovial
- Joyful
- Delightful

Thing

- Aspect
- Element
- Feature
- Detail
- Matter
- Point