



## Top Five Tips From Top Film Critics

It's always great to hear from experts and learn from the best so we asked two leading film critics for their top five tips for aspiring young film reviewers. These should help you when preparing your entries for the Into Film Festival Review Writing Competition. Have a read and see what they have to say...and of course, good luck!

### Anna Smith

**Anna Smith** is Contributing Editor at ELLE and Chair of the Critics' Circle Film Section. She is a regular critic for the Metro, Sky News Sunrise, BBC News, BBC Radio, The Guardian, The Telegraph, Sight & Sound, Empire, Time Out, Heat and more.

- 1 Be sure to establish the genre: e.g. is this a comedy, a drama, a horror?
- 2 Think about all aspects of the filmmaking: directing, writing, editing, acting and so on.
- 3 Imagine your readers know nothing about the film: it's your job to introduce it to them and to paint a picture. How would you describe it to a friend in one sentence?
- 4 Avoid spoilers. If there is a dramatic event that comes as a surprise, don't reveal this in your review.
- 5 When summarising, think about who would enjoy this film, and in what circumstances. Are there any famous movies this reminds you of?

### Charles Gant

**Charles Gant** is the Film Editor and chief film critic of Heat magazine and has regular features in Sight & Sound and Guardian.co.uk. He regularly reviews films for Screen International, Grazia and Picturehouse Cinemas' magazine and Radio 4's "The Film Programme".

- 1 Never, ever, review a film you have not seen.
- 2 Write concisely, convey all the necessary information, but try to keep it sparky.
- 3 Try to avoid big chunks of plot description. Ideally, drip feed the expository information you need to convey in sentences that are also offering critical insight, opinion and analysis.
- 4 Before submitting, reread the review from the perspective of someone who has not seen the film: is everything you have written clear and unambiguous to that person?
- 5 Don't submit a review with any grammatical or spelling errors, especially in the name of an actor or filmmaker – always double check your work!