

A C1 review could be of media, an event, or a place, and often will ask you to compare two examples. You should only choose the review if you think you have enough vocabulary that's connected with the task, as this is the key to doing this question well.

INGREDIENTS

A STRONG OPENING SENTENCE HOOKS THE READER

Rhetorical questions engage them with the topic  
*How often do you leave the cinema roaring with laughter?*  
Bold statements make them think about the topic  
*The horror genre has been broken since the 1980s.*

REPEAT THESE IDEAS IN THE FINAL SENTENCE of the recommendations section to leave the reader with something to think about:

*Go and see this movie and you too will be splitting your sides on the way home from the movies.*  
  
*It's not an Oscar-winner, but it might just be the start of a new era in scary movies.*

AVOID USING THE FIRST PERSON IN ANY PART OF A REVIEW.  
Starting the recommendations by saying *I thoroughly recommend this movie because...* will switch them off.

Dummy -it : *It is undoubtedly a great movie*  
  
Passive forms: *The album has been lauded as the best of its generation*

TALK DIRECTLY TO THE READER with YOU/WE/US

RECOMMENDATIONS  
Were I to sum up...in one word, it would be...  
...(more than) lives up to the hype  
... is by far and away the best... you will... this year.  
... really raises the bar / sets the benchmark for + noun  
... ticks all the right boxes  
... holds up well in comparison with...  
  
... leaves a lot of be desired  
... comes off badly in comparison with...  
... leaves you wanting more...  
... is a hot mess

TOPIC-SPECIFIC VOCABULARY is essential for a good review. Here are some words and expressions you can use to get yourself started...

FILMS/TV/NOVELS

an all-star-cast	production
director	photography
script	scenes (parts)
climax	sets (location)
a blockbuster	a b-movie
gripping	implausible
a(n) (un)convincing performance	
glowing/positive reviews	
lukewarm/damning reviews.	
bold	accomplished
experiment	actor
be on the edge	be like watching
of your seat	paint dry
the present day	a shocking twist
a slow start	a cliff-hanger
villain/hero/anti-hero/protagonist	

NOVEL ONLY

a page-turner	can't put it down
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RESTAURANTS

to feast / gorge on	to savour
to devour	to nibble (on)
aromas	tastes
textures	adventurous
gastro-bar	run-of-the-mill
service	pricey
costs an arm and a leg	good value for money

EVENTS

venue	atmosphere
the crowd	entrance-fee
queues	vantage point
catering	Stage-presence



Recipe for a great C1 Review

A CATCHY TITLE

Do this when you've finished

INTRODUCTION

Start with a rhetorical question or a strong statement that catches the reader's attention. Introduce the topic(s) of the review, and tease the reader of the information that's coming.

MAIN BODY

This is not a summary or description of the topic(s). Use the information from the question to evaluate (and compare/contrast) the thing(s) you're reviewing. The most effective way of organising your ideas is by theme; for example first evaluating the plot of the two movies, before comparing the effectiveness of the direction. Keep your tone in line with your attitude: a positive review should have more positive criticism than negative, and vice versa.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Don't start with an essay type phrase, but instead talk directly to the reader. Leave them with a clear recommendation, and try to use the same tone and/or synonyms of key ideas from the title or the introduction.

METHOD

1. Read the exam question carefully. Identify the topic, the question, and the style (neutral or informal).
2. Decide on the subject of the review.
3. Plan you ideas, focusing on how you will evaluate the review's subject and what your final recommendation will be.
4. Decide which idea you have the most to say about. This will be your penultimate paragraph.
5. Select some ambitious language from the ingredients to include in your writing, and think about how you can adapt the opening and closing paragraphs.
6. Slowly and carefully write your letter. Think about how you finished the previous paragraph, and how you can connect your ideas together.
7. Read the exam question again. Have you included all the necessary information?
8. Write a catchy title that reflects the contents of your review.
9. Check your work carefully for your typical mistakes. This will take about 5 minutes.

