

INTO FILM FESTIVAL

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Top Five Tips From A Top Film Critic

It's always great to hear from experts and learn from the best so we asked a leading film critic for her 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 she has to say...and of course, good luck!

Anna Smith

Anna Smith is a film critic and broadcaster. She is President of the UK Critics' Circle and a regular film critic for BBC News, Sky News, BBC Radio, Time Out, Metro, The Guardian, Sight & Sound, Empire and more. A writer, pundit and Q&A host, she regularly interviews actors on stage, on screen and in print.

- 1 Consider your reader: what information might draw them in? What key words would make them sit up and take notice of this film? It could be the genre, the star, the director, a related news story... Put these in your opening paragraph.
- 2 Avoid spoilers. Even if it's an event that happens early in the film, if it has a major dramatic/surprise impact, don't give it away. If in doubt, check the film's synopsis on its official website to see what's included.
- 3 Be fair. Don't dig the knife in simply for comic effect - think about the pros and cons of all aspects of the film. Does it achieve what it sets out to achieve?
- 4 Keep it chatty: a conversational writing style works well for most publications, so if you're aiming at a mainstream audience, don't try to be too academic/formal.
- 5 Check your facts: every name spelling, location, everything - especially in the online age, you can't always rely on sub editors to correct your work.