

How to Write a Review for B2 First (FCE) & C1 Advanced (CAE)

By EnglishExam.eu Team | 3/5/2026

Learn how to write a perfect review for Cambridge exams. Whether it's a book, film, or restaurant reviews, master the structure and vocabulary to get top marks.

WHAT IS A REVIEW?

A review is often found in English-language magazines, newspapers, or websites. The main purpose is to describe something (like a film, book, restaurant, or gadget) and express a personal opinion about it. Finally, you usually give a recommendation to the reader.

Reviews appear in both the B2 First (FCE) and C1 Advanced (CAE) Writing papers.

KEY FEATURES OF A GOOD REVIEW

- **Semi-formal or Informal Style:** You are writing for readers of a magazine or website, so you should be engaging and personal, but not too casual.
- **Clear Structure:** You need an introduction, body paragraphs dealing with specific aspects, and a conclusion.
- **Descriptive Vocabulary:** Examiners look for a wide range of adjectives and specific vocabulary related to the topic (e.g., "plot," "cast," "service," "atmosphere").
- **Opinion & Recommendation:** Don't just list facts. Say what you liked or disliked, and tell the reader if they should try it.

STRUCTURE OF A REVIEW

1. TITLE

Give your review a catchy title. It can be the name of the thing you are reviewing, or something more creative.

Example: "Inception: A Dream You Won't Want to Wake Up From"

2. INTRODUCTION

Identify what you are reviewing. Give some basic facts (genre, author, location) and a hook to grab the reader's attention.

Example: "If you're looking for the perfect Italian dinner in London, look no further than 'Luigi's Place'."

3. BODY PARAGRAPHS (DESCRIPTION & ANALYSIS)

Break the review down into specific aspects. For example, for a restaurant, one paragraph could be about the food, and another about the service and atmosphere.

Don't just describe—evaluate. Use contrasting linkers like "Although the service was slow, the food was worth the wait."

4. CONCLUSION & RECOMMENDATION

Summarize your main view and give a clear recommendation. Who is this suitable for?

Example: "I would highly recommend this film to anyone who loves action, but be warned: it's not for the faint-hearted."

USEFUL LANGUAGE FOR REVIEWS

Describing Films/Books:

- The plot is... (fast-paced, gripping, predictable)
- The cast is... (superb, talented, unconvincing)
- It tells the story of...

Describing Restaurants/Places:

- The atmosphere is... (cozy, vibrant, tense)
- The service was... (impeccable, slow, friendly)
- The highlight of the menu was...

Comparing & Contrasting:

- On the one hand..., but on the other hand...
- Unlike his previous novels, this one...

Making Recommendations:

- I wouldn't hesitate to recommend...
- It's well worth a visit/read/watch.
- If you only see one film this year, make it this one.
- I wouldn't recommend it to people who...

SAMPLE REVIEW QUESTION (B2 LEVEL)

You have seen this announcement in an English-language magazine: "REVIEWS WANTED - A Film You'll Never Forget. Write a review of a film you have seen recently. Tell us about the story and the characters, and explain why you would (or wouldn't) recommend it to others."

EXAMPLE REVIEW

THE MARTIAN: SCIENCE FICTION AT ITS BEST

Have you ever wondered if you could survive alone on another planet? That is exactly the situation Mark Watney faces in Ridley Scott's masterpiece, *The Martian*. It is a film that will keep you on the edge of your seat from start to finish.

The story follows an astronaut, played by the brilliant Matt Damon, who is accidentally left behind on Mars. Instead of giving up, he uses his scientific knowledge and sense of humor to survive. The plot is gripping and full of suspense, but what I loved most was the tone. Despite the terrifying situation, the script is full of funny moments that make the main character incredibly likeable.

Visually, the film is stunning. The red landscapes of Mars look terrifyingly real. The special effects are seamless, making you

feel like you are right there in space with him.

I would absolutely recommend *The Martian* to everyone, even if you are not usually a fan of science fiction. It is an inspiring story about human resilience that you won't forget easily. Don't miss it!

FINAL TIPS

Make sure you answer the specific question asked in the exam task. If it asks about "characters," mention them. If it asks about "special effects," describe them. And always leave the reader with a clear final thought!

