

## Learning and Teaching Resources for Learning English through Popular Culture

The resources presented here are meant to be examples to show the types of activities/materials that can be designed and developed to help students to work on the various focuses of the module in the *Suggested Schemes of Work for the Elective Part of the Three-year Senior Secondary English Language Curriculum (Secondary 4-6) (2007)* (hereafter referred to as “SoWs”). Teachers are encouraged to adapt, modify and develop their own resources or make use of other relevant materials to suit the needs and interests of their students.

### *Part 1: Module introduction*

**Lessons 1-2: Survey on popular culture** (please refer to SoWs pp.44-45)

#### Activity

Whatever is hip, trendy, popular, hot, cool, or “in” right now defines our popular culture. Popular culture, unlike high culture, is found in everything from the food we eat, the slang we use, the websites we visit, the celebrities we like, to the magazines we read, the cartoons we watch and the products we buy.

In groups, explore what you and your classmates think is hip, trendy and cool. Answer the following questions and be prepared to share your answers with the class.

1. Name one recently released movie that you like.
2. What kind of music is “in” right now?
3. What celebrities, entertainers or actors are popular lately?
4. What TV shows do you like to watch?
5. What cartoon characters or anime stories are popular recently?
6. What are the latest fashion trends for young men and women?
7. What websites or Internet functions do you like to visit or use the most?
8. What new eating or drinking trends do you and your friends enjoy?
9. What consumer items/products are very popular?
10. What would you buy if you had enough money?
11. What news, social or culture events are of interest to you?
12. What symbol might represent your generation (e.g. in the 1960s the peace sign was a symbol of the time; the late 1990s might be represented by an ampersand “@”)?
13. What English vocabulary such as slang or IT lingo do you think is unique to you and your classmates?
14. List 5 things that are “hot” right now.
15. List 5 things that are “not”.

*Teachers' notes*

*\*Teachers might like to select items from the list above which they deem appropriate for their students, considering their interests and abilities.*

### **Lessons 3-4: Stages of process writing** (please refer to SoWs pp.44-45)

In this module you will be producing a number of written texts. Listed below are the various stages of writing you are encouraged to take part in. Through them you will develop skills and strategies for developing and improving your writing.

#### **Selecting or being assigned a topic**

- The topic will affect what kind of brainstorming you do. For example, an essay about the drawbacks of the Internet would limit your brainstorming to the specific area defined by the topic. For a very general topic (e.g. kung fu movies in Hong Kong), your brainstorming and discussion will be broader and will include various ways that the topic can be discussed.

#### **Brainstorming**

- Brainstorming requires that you think of all possible ways that the topic could be looked at and consider who your readers are and what they might need to know about the topic.
- Keep notes as you brainstorm.

#### **Focussing**

- After brainstorming, consider how to limit the focus of your writing.
- After you have narrowed your focus, write a thesis statement that will guide your writing if this is appropriate for the text type you are working on. A thesis statement is a sentence that introduces a narrowed topic and contains a controlling idea. The controlling idea is the central idea that needs to be developed by the writer. Each of the following thesis statements includes a narrowed topic with a clear controlling idea. The topic is underlined and the controlling idea is italicised and emboldened.
  - iPods are ***an overrated technology.***
  - “Charlie and the Chocolate Factory” has ***all the elements of a great movie classic.***
  - A Hong Kong idol search show would be ***a great way to showcase young local talent.***
  - The newest fashion trends for spring show that ***retro is in.***

#### **Organising and outlining**

- After you have selected the content, consider what type of text you are going to produce (a movie review, a survey, an advice column, etc) and decide how it will be organised.
- Construct an outline that indicates how to order the content you have selected, if necessary.

#### **Drafting**

- As you draft, consider the following:
  - Does the text you are writing look like the type of text you are trying to produce in terms of content, style and format? (e.g. If you are writing an advice column, does it look like one?)
  - Is it appropriate to the context, audience and purpose?
  - Does your text have an introduction?
  - How are your paragraphs organised? Are they in a logical order?
  - Does your text have a conclusion? Does the conclusion reinforce the central message or idea of the text?

### **Seeking and collecting feedback**

- Here are some ways to collect feedback to help improve your writing:
  - Reflect on your own writing by asking yourself:
    - what seems unclear;
    - what seems too obvious; and
    - how it could be improved.
  - Ask your classmates to answer these questions:
    - What is the text about?
    - What do I like most about it?
    - What parts am I unclear about?
    - What suggestions can I make to improve this text?
  - Your teacher will also give you feedback.

### **Revising or redrafting**

- Be ready to redraft and revise your text as often as you need to improve it, focussing on matters such as content, paragraph structure, logical development and sequencing of ideas, language, style and register.

### **Proof-reading the product**

At this stage in the writing process, go over your text, mainly focussing on language (e.g. tenses and agreement) and mechanics (e.g. spelling and punctuation).

## ***Part 2: Examining and producing popular culture texts***

### **Lessons 5-10: Writing photo captions** (please refer to SoWs pp.46-47)

#### Activity

Form groups of 4 or 5. Each group will create a photo collection that represents popular culture. In order to do this, you will need to do the following:

1. Discuss and decide on a theme your group thinks best represents popular culture, e.g. celebrities, electronic gadgets.
2. Decide whether you will take photographs and/or where you will get photos.
3. Divide the work among the group members.
4. Discuss and select 20 to 25 pictures to include in your collection.
5. Write a caption for each picture. (Do **NOT** use any existing captions from pictures taken from the Internet or printed media.) Each student will need to write some captions **individually**. Refer to the handout on writing photo captions. (Place your name in parentheses after the captions you have written.)
6. Give feedback on each other's captions.
7. Arrange the photos and captions into a collection.
8. Make a group presentation of the collection to your class. In the presentation, justify the chosen theme and explain why the photos were selected to illuminate the theme.
9. Submit the collection to your teacher for feedback. Revise the captions and review the collection, if necessary.
10. Put the photo collection into the time capsule.

## Writing photo captions

### Content and features

- A photo caption is usually a one-sentence description that answers some of the following questions, usually in this order:
  - Who or what is being pictured?
  - What are they doing?
  - Where is it? (Sometimes this may be omitted, e.g. when writing a caption for a picture of an object)
  - When was it? / When was the picture taken?
- An additional sentence can be written to add more details if needed.

### Language and structures

- Appositives (words or phrases that define or provide a synonym for a noun or pronoun) often follow the subject of the sentence and provide information regarding the subject's significance.  
*Examples:*
  - *Tung Chee Hwa, former Chief Executive of the HKSAR,...*
  - *Nicholas Tse, Hong Kong screen star, ...*
- The present tense is almost always used  
*Example:*
  - *Jacky Chan, famed martial arts star, appears at the Tsunami Aid Concert ...*
- Active verbs are used  
*Examples:*
  - *Donald Tsang, Chief Executive of the HKSAR, addresses a Legco session...*
  - *Students from St. John's Middle School take part in a beach clean up...*
- Prepositions of place are used to describe where the subject was  
*Example:*
  - *Faye Wong, Canto pop diva, launches a spring/summer shoe collection at a department store in Causeway Bay, Hong Kong...*
- Prepositions of time are usually not used. The date is written at the end of the sentence  
*Example:*
  - *Faye Wong, Canto pop diva, launches a spring/summer shoe collection at a department store in Causeway Bay, Hong Kong, 12 April 2005.*

**Lessons 5-10: Feedback Form for Presentation (Group/Individual)** (please refer to SoWs pp.46-47)

<b>Feedback Form: Presentation</b>			
Give feedback on your own and/or your classmates' performance by circling the appropriate number. Not all items are relevant for every performance.			
	<i>Needs improvement</i>	<i>Satisfactory</i>	<i>Good</i>
<b>(I) Ideas and organisation</b>			
1. Can express relevant information and ideas clearly	1	2	3
2. Can elaborate points by providing additional details or explanation	1	2	3
3. Can link the main ideas and supporting details	1	2	3
<b>(II) Communicative strategies</b>			
1. Can use appropriate body language to engage interest	1	2	3
2. Can use the available time to adequately cover the essential points of the topic	1	2	3
<b>(III) Language</b>			
1. Can use appropriate words and expressions	1	2	3
2. Can use grammar structures accurately	1	2	3
<b>(IV) Pronunciation and delivery</b>			
1. Can project the voice satisfactorily	1	2	3
2. Can pronounce words clearly and accurately	1	2	3
3. Can speak at a measured pace	1	2	3
<b>(V) Collaboration with others (if applicable)</b>	1	2	3

*Teachers' notes*

*\*Teachers are encouraged to adapt this form by making additions or deletions where appropriate, to suit students' needs and level.*

**Lessons 17-24: Writing an advice column** (please refer to SoWs pp.46-49)

Activity 1

Form groups of 4 and do the following:

1. Read examples of advice columns and take notes of the content, features and language structures found in these columns with the help of the handout on writing an advice column.
2. Discuss the kinds of problems that young people such as you and your classmates may have.
3. Discuss and decide on scenarios you can use to write an advice-seeking and an advice-giving letter. Take notes during the discussion, if necessary.
4. Divide up the problems so that each member of your group can write one letter seeking advice and one offering advice.
5. Write the letters seeking advice first.
6. Get and give feedback to each other on your letters.
7. Write responses to the letters.
8. Get and give feedback to each other on your letters.
9. Submit these letters to your teacher for feedback.
10. Select some of the letters to include in the time capsule.

Activity 2

Each group role-plays the advice-seeking/advice-giving scenario on which the letters are based. In your group, do the following:

1. Decide on what roles should be included in the role-play.
2. Draft dialogues for the scenario.
3. Get feedback from teachers and revise the dialogues accordingly.
4. Rehearse the dialogues, if necessary.
5. Role-play the dialogues in the class. Your performance will be evaluated by peers and the teacher in terms of fluency, pronunciation, audibility, eye contact, facial expression and gesture.



## Writing an advice column

### Content and features

#### *An advice-seeking letter*

- A salutation
  - *Dear Problem Solver, Dear Miss Know It All*
- A purpose statement detailing why you are writing
  - *I am writing because lately my best friend has been asking me to smoke cigarettes with her.*
- Information about what you have done or have not done to try to solve the problem on your own
  - *I have told her that I don't want to ...*
  - *I am scared to tell her anything, so I have been avoiding her...*
- Information about why you have not been successful at solving the problem yourself may be added
  - *No matter what I say, she still asks me...*
- A closing that makes a final request for help
  - *Could you tell me what to do?*
  - *I really need your help*
  - *Tell me what to do*
- Signature – usually a fake name that summarises your problem
  - *Tired of Being Pushed Around*
  - *Wishing I Had More Money*
- Usually a letter to an advice column can be written in 3 paragraphs:
  - the first explains the problem
  - the second gives detail
  - the third restates the problem and asks for help

#### *An advice-giving letter*

- A salutation using the fake name
  - *Dear Don't Want To Smoke, Dear Tired of Being Pushed Around*
- A restatement of what the advice giver thinks the problem is
  - *So your friend wants you to do something that you don't want to do.*
- A reaction to the problem
  - *It doesn't sound as if she is a true friend.*
- A concrete solution
  - *Tell her no and that if she keeps asking you, you will have no other choice but to...*
  - *Get some self-confidence.*
- A closing that wishes the reader good luck or encourages them
  - *Be brave and face your problem...*
  - *Good luck with...*
- Usually, a letter of response can be written in 3 to 4 paragraphs:
  - the first restates the problem
  - the second tells the advice seeker what the problem is and provides a specific solution
  - the third may provide additional support

- the last usually summarises the suggested solution and wishes the advice seeker good luck

### Language and structure

- Informal language is used in advice columns:
  - Contractions
    - *don't, isn't, haven't*
  - Colloquial language
    - *guy, on top of that, it is kind of*
- Commonly used structures:
  - Adverbs and adverbial phrases are used to describe when events occurred.
    - *recently, lately, the other day, last Saturday*
  - Reported speech is used to indicate who said what.
    - *She said that..., He told me to...*
  - Modals are used to give advice.
    - *you should/shouldn't ...*
    - *you ought to...*
    - *you need to/needn't ...*
    - *you could ...*
    - *you must/must not...*
  - Conditionals are often used to show what might happen.
    - *If you don't tell her, she might...*
    - *If I tell my parents, they will...*
    - *If you need help, ask your...*
  - The present perfect progressive is used to describe an action that has recently started and is continuing.
    - *She has been seeing this older guy ...*
    - *She has been skipping class ...*
    - *He has been smoking...*
  - The simple past tense is used to describe completed actions in the past.
    - *She told me that...*
    - *He cheated on the ...*
  - The present tense is used to ask for and to give advice.
    - *I don't know what to do.*
    - *You should tell her as soon as possible that...*
  - Imperatives are often used in advice letters.
    - *Don't get involved.*
    - *Try not to make any hasty generalisations.*
  - The 1st person is used in the advice-seeking letter.
    - *I don't know what to do.*
  - The 2nd person is used in the advice-giving letter.
    - *You should...*

*Advice-seeking letter: an example*

Dear Miss Know It All

I'm writing to you because recently my friend's been trying to get me to smoke with her. I don't want to, and I don't know what to do.

My friend's been smoking for two months now and she says that it's a good way to lose weight. She keeps asking me to join her. Unfortunately, when she started I never really told her that I thought it was stupid. In fact one time I even said that it was cool.

The other day she said that she thought I looked fat and that I should smoke a little just to curb my appetite. I don't want to smoke, and I don't think I am fat. I keep trying to change the subject when she asks me. What should I do?

Yours truly  
Don't Want to Smoke  
Kowloon Tong

*Advice-giving letter: an example*

Dear Don't Want To Smoke,

So your friend wants you to do something that you don't want to do and that you know isn't good for you. On top of that, you haven't been exactly honest with her about how you really feel.

You need to get some confidence and tell your friend how you really feel. Don't wait until she asks you again. Let her know how you feel and tell her you regret you weren't honest with her from the start. Let her know that you're concerned for her health if she continues to smoke and that there're better ways to lose weight than smoking.

You might even give her some pamphlets about the ill effects of smoking. But don't lecture her as I doubt she'll react well to that. If she says you're fat, be confident and tell her you feel good about your weight.

You need to be more confident with your friend and with yourself. Good luck.

Miss Know It All

**Lessons 25-34: Producing advertisements and commercials** (please refer to SoWs pp.48-49)Activity 1

Work on the following in groups of 4.

1. Watch several TV commercials and examine several print advertisements.
2. Discuss and take notes (using the table below) on the following points:
  - Determine what each advertisement/commercial is selling.
  - Determine the intended audience/readers.
  - Identify strategies used to promote the product. (Refer to the handout on “Strategies used in advertising”.)
  - Identify what language and features are used to sell the products. (Refer to the handout on “Language and features of advertisements and commercials”.)
  - Comment on how well it achieves its purpose.
3. Report to the class the findings of your group. Use the table below to help organise the content of your presentation:

<b>Advertisement</b>	<b>Product</b>	<b>Intended Readers/Audience</b>	<b>Strategies</b>	<b>Language &amp; Features</b>	<b>Comment</b>
<b>#1</b>					
<b>#2</b>					
<b>#3</b>					
<b>#4</b>					
<b>#5</b>					
<b>#6</b>					

### Activity 2

Individually, select an advertisement\* that sells a product that is representative of popular culture and do the following:

1. Write an analysis of the advertisement that describes the product it is trying to sell (its purpose), identify the intended reader/audience, analyse the strategies it uses, identify and analyse the language and features it employs and comment on how well it achieves its purpose.
2. Submit your analysis to your teacher for feedback.

### Activity 3

In your group, carry out the following task:

1. Discuss and select a product that is representative of popular culture.
2. Create a print, radio, or TV commercial for the product.
3. Consider the strategies, language and features you will use in your advertisement.
4. Produce a draft of the advertisement or the script you will use.
5. Present the advertisement or perform the commercial to the class and get feedback.
6. Revise your work as necessary.
7. Put the print advertisement or the advertisement script into the time capsule.

---

\* If it is a print or Internet advertisement, attach a printed copy. If it is a radio or TV advertisement, write a brief description of it.

### Strategies used in advertising

Advertisements use a number of strategies to sell products or images.

Strategy	Definition	Example of how the strategy is used
<b>Association</b>	Making a connection with something in order to sell a product	The people who sleep on these sheets have a flat that has hip and trendy things in it. I should buy these sheets if I want to have a hip and trendy flat too.
<b>Authority or celebrity appeal</b>	Making use of a well known person or figure to sell a product or an image	If I go to that KTV bar I might just see that famous actor who says it is where he goes for a good time.
<b>Bandwagon</b>	Putting peer pressure on people; if they don't do what the advertisement suggests, they will be left out	All my friends are using this new type of mobile phone to send text messages. If I don't buy one I won't be able to be part of the group.
<b>Biased sample</b>	Using a survey sample that is biased and so the result of the survey is skewed	I can see that 4 out of 5 dentists say this teeth whitener is the best. They, however, don't tell me that they only surveyed 5 dentists and 4 of them were involved in making the product.
<b>Brand appeal</b>	Using a brand name to sell a product	They aren't telling me anything about the product, but rather just showing some images and putting the brand name on the TV screen. The brand is so good that it just speaks for itself.
<b>Credibility</b>	Using science, facts, figures, statistics, charts, graphs to prove what is being said about the product	These figures and charts show me that I can lose weight at their slimming salon. Numbers don't lie.
<b>Common practice</b>	Since most people do this it must be a good thing.	If everyone is rushing to a certain department store to take advantage of the massive sale, I should too.
<b>Emotion</b>	Making a connection between good emotions (happiness, love, family togetherness) and the product that is being promoted	As I watch the smiling baby, a happy family and a woman and man getting married, it makes me want to buy a particular brand of digital camera so I can capture all the precious moments in my life.
<b>Ethical</b>	Making an appeal to people based on what is seen as right	If I want to be a good person, I shouldn't throw my rubbish on the ground.
<b>Fear</b>	Creating fear to make people do or believe something and	If I don't buy their home security system, a burglar might just steal all my

	that if people don't buy the product, something bad will happen	possessions.
<b>Flattery</b>	Complimenting people so that they will want to buy the product	You are so pretty. You should come to our salon and we will help your natural beauty come out for the entire world to see.
<b>Fooling the eye</b>	Making use of visual images that fool the reader or viewer into looking at the ad because they don't realise it is an ad	This is a music video. No, it isn't. It is selling me an MP3 player.
<b>Foreign appeal</b>	Making a claim that because something is unique, foreign or different, it must be good	If that restaurant makes real Italian pizza, it must be good.
<b>Misleading vividness</b>	Taking a few dramatic examples and using them to prove something even though the statistical evidence doesn't prove the claim	The advertisement describes how a particular alcoholic drink transforms the mundane life of ordinary people into excitement.
<b>Novel</b>	Making a claim that because something is new it must be good or better than what came before it	If this product is new, it must be good because updated technology and products are always better.
<b>Patriotism</b>	Making a claim that because doing/buying something is patriotic, it must be good; or associating the product to a patriotic image	If I love my country, I should support its bid to host the Asian Games.
<b>Pity (create pity so that people agree)</b>	Creating pity so that people will want to do or buy something	Looking at these pictures of poor people reminds me I should donate to this charity.
<b>Popularity</b>	Since most people approve of this, it must be good	If 8 out of 10 people think this fitness centre is best, it must be good.
<b>Reinvent, improve or change yourself</b>	Making a claim that if you do something you will be a better person in some way	Just look at those before and after pictures. If I go to that slimming salon, I could lose weight too.  If I use that teeth whitener, I will have better-looking teeth.
<b>Ridicule</b>	Making fun of something or making something seem silly, useless or ridiculous	If I don't wear these cool jeans, people are going to laugh at my silly looking pants.
<b>Sex</b>	Making something seem sexy	If I get those sunglasses, girls will think I

	and making the claim that if you do it or buy it you will be sexually appealing	am sexy; if I wear that short skirt, boys will turn their heads and notice me.
<b>Social ladder appeal</b>	Making an implied claim that using/buying a certain product will give the image that you are from a higher class	If I buy this watch, I will be like the rich people who wear these watches and other people will think I am rich too.
<b>Tradition</b>	Making use of tradition or custom to sell a product	If this bank has been serving the HK community for 100 years, it must be a good bank.
<b>Uniqueness</b>	Making a claim that doing/buying something is unique, and will let you stand out of the crowd	If I get this car, I will be different from everyone else.

*Teachers' notes*

*\*Teachers might like to exercise their discretion as to how many of the advertising strategies described above students should be exposed to, taking into consideration their ability level.*



## Language and features of advertisements and commercials

Below is a list of common characteristics of advertising language:

- A selling point (e.g. price, taste, environmental friendliness)
- An image (e.g. traditional, contemporary, scientific)
- Apt language (e.g. trendy slang, beautiful old words)
- Catchy phrases
  - Memorable phrases  
(e.g. *Come to the store that has more, Impossible is nothing, For the times of your life*)
  - Celebrity endorsement
  - Commands (e.g. *Buy it today!*)
  - Direct address to the consumer  
(e.g. *This is the car you have always dreamed of.*)
  - Evocative language - the words bring to mind visual images.  
(e.g. *Sleek, shiny, healthy hair, it's what every woman wants.*)
  - Graphically interesting letters
  - Graphics
  - Guarantees  
(e.g. *Satisfaction guaranteed, or your money back. 10 pounds in one month, we guarantee it, or one month free.*)
  - Music (e.g. Song lyrics create images that help sell products.)
  - Poems/songs/rhymes (e.g. *Drink some milk/Smooth as silk*)
  - Promises (e.g. *You'll feel stronger in minutes!*)
  - Questions (e.g. *Could you do better?*)
  - Reader friendly layout for print advertisements  
(e.g. Short phrases and bullet points making reading the advertisement easy.)
  - Rhetorical questions  
(e.g. The questions are not intended to be answered but rather are used merely to bring up topics or points: *Are you tired of wasting time because of outdated Internet connection?*)
  - Sentence fragments (e.g. *Absolutely cool!*)
  - Slogans (e.g. *There are noodles and there are Wongs*)
  - Special offers
  - Word play  
(e.g. *Pot noodles that are not poodles! (A certain brand of pot noodles is claimed to taste good), Moore is less (A certain brand of apparel now costs less), A diamond is forever (Reference to a James Bond movie is made when selling diamond), AMI – what you need to shrink the world (An airline provides very good connections to different parts of the world)*)
  - Words beginning with the same letter (i.e. alliteration)  
(e.g. *tasty tangy tomato juice*)

### Feedback Form: Performing a commercial

Give feedback on your own and/or your classmates' performance by circling the appropriate number. Not all items are relevant for every performance.

	<i>Needs improvement</i>	<i>Satisfactory</i>	<i>Good</i>
<b>(I) Content</b>			
1. The commercial is original	1	2	3
2. The commercial is persuasive	1	2	3
3. The commercial is memorable	1	2	3
4. The commercial is attractive	1	2	3
<b>(II) Performance</b>			
1. Lines are memorised	1	2	3
2. Pace of speech is appropriate	1	2	3
3. Speaking is clear	1	2	3
4. Timing of lines creates a good flow of action	1	2	3
5. Eye contacts with one another are appropriate	1	2	3
6. Body language is used to convey meaning	1	2	3
7. Stress and intonation is used appropriately to convey meaning	1	2	3
8. Props/costumes create the desired effect	1	2	3
<b>Overall comments:</b>			

#### *Teachers' notes*

*\*Teachers are encouraged to adapt this form by making additions or deletions where appropriate, to suit students' needs and level.*

### Feedback Form: Creating an advertisement

Give feedback on your own and/or your classmates' performance by circling the appropriate number. Not all items are relevant for every performance.

	<i>Needs improvement</i>	<i>Satisfactory</i>	<i>Good</i>
<b>(I) Ideas and organisation</b>			
1. The advertisement is original	1	2	3
2. The advertisement is persuasive	1	2	3
3. The advertisement is memorable	1	2	3
4. The advertisement is visually attractive	1	2	3
<b>(II) Language</b>			
1. Words/expressions used are effective in bringing out the message	1	2	3
2. Language used is appropriate for the target audience	1	2	3
3. Grammar is accurate	1	2	3
4. Spelling and punctuation are correct	1	2	3
<b>Overall comments:</b>			

*Teachers' notes*

*\*Teachers are encouraged to adapt this form by making additions or deletions where appropriate, to suit students' needs and level.*

**Lesson 35-46: Writing a movie review** (please refer to SoWs pp.50-51)

Activity

Work on the following in groups of 4.

1. Read several movie reviews and identify the content, features, language and structures typically found in them.
2. Discuss and select movies that are popular and that you would like to review.
3. Each member needs to write a review for one of the movies.
4. Seek feedback from your groupmates on your review.
5. Submit your review to your teacher for more feedback.
6. Select some of these reviews to be put into the time capsule.

*Teachers' notes*

*\*For the activity, teachers might like to familiarise students with the content, features, language and structures typically found in movie reviews using the handout "Writing a movie review" on pp.22-23 of the resources. Teachers are also encouraged to adapt the handout to suit students' needs and level.*

*\*Teachers might want to refer students to the websites below for examples of movie reviews and/or additional information about writing movie reviews:*

- <http://www.hkedcity.net/english/watch/film/review/>
- <http://www.bbc.co.uk/movies/>
- <http://www.hkfilms.com/?http://hkfilms.com/Reviews.shtml>

*\*Teachers might deploy other learning and teaching resources they see fit in helping students learn about and produce other kinds of reviews (e.g. TV show reviews, music reviews, video game reviews). Please refer to SoWs p.51 for a list of useful websites.*

## Writing a movie review

### Content and Features

#### 1. *A description of the movie*

- The type of movie it is (e.g. a comedy, a romantic comedy, a biopic, a drama, a mystery, action, fantasy) and a brief description (e.g. *... is a romantic comedy set in New York during a long hot summer.*)
- The main plot, but not necessarily the ending (e.g. *The story is about the weekend before Jack and Sally's wedding. Both Sally and Jack are visited by former lovers and each must decide whether their hearts belong to each other or to their former lovers.*)
- A list of the performers and the director (e.g. *Starring; Directed by...*)
- Any age restrictions (e.g. *The movie is rated... and does contain a lot of violence.*)
- Where the movie is playing (e.g. *Currently showing at the...*)
- A rating system for making a recommendation of whether to see it (e.g. stars\*\*\*, thumbs up or down)

#### 2. *A commentary on whether the movie is worth seeing*

- If yes, why. (e.g. *This feel-good romantic comedy is worth seeing.*)
- If no, why not. (e.g. *You won't want to waste your money on this cheesy, sappy Hollywood fare.*)
- Who might like seeing the movie (e.g. *If you are into kung fu, this is your movie.*)

### Language and Structure

#### 1. *Informal*

- Contractions
  - *Don't wait...*
- 2nd person – the writer speaks directly to the reader.
  - *You will love the scene where...*
- Colloquialism
  - *Will these love birds have a happy ending?*

#### 2. *Humour*

- sarcasm
  - *If you like watching typical Hollywood drivel, then this is for you; Don't waste good popcorn money; Haven't we seen this before; Just wait for the DVD.*

#### 3. *Technical vocabulary*

*actor, actress, acting, action, adventure, animation, anime, art house film, biopic, cartoon, character(s), chick flick, cinematography, comedy, commercial, dialogue, director, Disney, documentary, fantasy, flick, Hollywood, horror, genre, language, Oscar, plot, plot twist, prequel, rating, role, romantic comedy, scene, sequel, sound track, violence*

**4. Descriptive adjectives and adverbs**

*amusing, boring, cheesy, comical, complex, corny, entertaining, exciting, horrifying, lighthearted, predictable, realistic, rehashed, romantic, sad, sappy, scary, slow, suspenseful, unbelievable, violent*

**5. Commonly used phrases and clauses**

*Visually appealing*

*A must-see*

*A nail-biter*

*A tear-jerker*

*Directed by...*

*Produced by...*

*Feel-good*

*The role of... is played by ...*

*From the director who brought us ...*

*...is based on the novel by...*

*...is based on the real life story of...*

*I would recommend this*

*I would not recommend this*

*I strongly recommend this*

*Go and see this movie*

*Don't waste your time*

**6. Commonly used structures**

• Tenses

- The present tense is often used

*The movie starts with images of a ...*

*...plays the younger brother.*

*I recommend this movie...*

• Kinds of sentences

- Imperatives are often used in the review portions

*Don't waste your time*

*Don't forget to bring some Kleenex*

*Wait for the DVD*

• 1st, 2nd, 3rd person

- All voices are used within one review

*1st - I hated this movie.*

*2nd - You will love this movie.*

*3rd - The movie is the director's latest attempt at action-adventure.*