

# Writing a Review Comparing a Novel to Its Film Version

## Lesson Plan

**Grade Level:** 9-12

**Curriculum Focus:** Literature

**Lesson Duration:** Two class periods

### ***Student Objectives***

- Understand the style and purpose of a critical review
- Use comparison and contrast in writing a review of the film *One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest*

### ***Materials***

- Discovery School video on *unitedstreaming: Great Books: One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest*. Search for this video by using the video title (or a portion of it) as the keyword.

Selected clips that support this lesson plan:

- Introducing Randle Patrick (R. P.) "Mac" McMurphy
  - Point-of-View: The Perspective of "Chief" Bromden
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- The novel *One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest*
  - The video release of the 1975 movie *One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest*, directed by Milos Foreman and starring Jack Nicholson and Louise Fletcher

### ***Procedures***

1. After students have finished reading *One Flew over the Cuckoo's Nest* and you have conducted your final lesson on the work as a novel, initiate a general class discussion about novels that have been made into movies. Give students an opportunity to share their opinions about when movies are more effective than novels and when movies do not capture the essence of a novel. Introduce the project of comparing and contrasting the movie version of *One Flew over the Cuckoo's Nest* to the novel.
2. Show the video *One Flew over the Cuckoo's Nest* in parts as best fits your class schedule, giving students a chance between parts to discuss differences and similarities with the novel.
3. Tell students they will be writing a critical review of the movie version of *One Flew over the Cuckoo's Nest*. They will include at least three points of comparison between the novel and the

film, and comparisons of two characters from the book with the way the actors portrayed them in the film –McMurphy and one or two others.

4. As a class, discuss the genre of review writing. What do critics review? In what venues do reviews appear?
5. As a class, discuss the stylistic aspects of review writing and what a review includes, such as -
  - A summary or description of the work under review with a general statement of the reviewer's opinion about the work
  - An evaluation of specific elements (for a movie, the elements include, among others, plot, script, acting, directing, camera work, scenery and costumes, and special effects)
  - A conclusion that recommends whether or not the reader should experience the work of art
  - Comparison/contrast using the block method, in which the writer gives all the information about one item (the movie) and then all the information about the other item (the novel)
  - Comparison/contrast using the alternating method, in which the writer focuses on one feature – say, humor – of each item before going on to focus on another feature – say, narrative technique.
  - Transition terms used in comparison-contrast writing: also, although, however, likewise, on the contrary, similarly, etc.
6. Encourage students to apply the writing process to their reviews. They will first go through the prewriting process (perhaps using a chart to collect notes about the movie). Then they will draft their review (selecting a tone). Finally, they will revise their review (making sure enough details support each generalization; replacing vague words such as *good*, *poor*, *weak*, and *strong*).

### **Discussion Questions**

1. Discuss the conflict in the book as represented by McMurphy and Big Nurse. What might these characters represent? What kind of larger conflicts (“the battle of the sexes,” the rebel vs. “the establishment,” etc.) do their clashes symbolize?
2. Describe Chief Bromden. Why do you think that Kesey chose him to be the narrator of the book?

### **Assessment**

Use the following three-point rubric to evaluate students' work during this lesson.

- 3 points: Student’s review is very well organized and highly coherent; more than enough examples to support overall opinion of the movie; no errors in grammar, usage, and mechanics.
- 2 points: Student’s review is well organized and coherent; enough examples to support overall opinion of the movie; some errors in grammar, usage, and mechanics.
- 1 point: Student’s review is weakly organized, lacking coherence in parts; not enough examples to support overall opinion of the movie; many errors in grammar, usage, and mechanics.

## Vocabulary

### **combine**

*Definition:* A combination especially of business or political interests. Also, a harvesting machine that heads, threshes, and cleans grain while moving over a field.

*Context:* In Chief Bromden's mind, the world is run by an all-powerful, all-seeing secret group—the Combine.

### **existentialism**

*Definition:* A philosophical movement embracing diverse doctrines but centering on analysis of individual existence in an unfathomable universe and the plight of the individual who must assume ultimate responsibility for his acts of free will without any certain knowledge of what is right or wrong or good or bad.

*Context:* The Merry Pranksters and the hippies had some ideas of what existentialism was about.

### **lobotomy**

*Definition:* Surgical severance of nerve fibers connecting the frontal lobes to the thalamus for the relief of some mental disorders.

*Context:* Lobotomy was the ultimate horror in Psychiatry. During one procedure common in the 1940s, a long tool, very much like an ice pick, was driven through the top of the eye sockets into the brain, into the frontal lobes, and then wiggled about to disconnect the cellular wiring.

### **psychotic**

*Definition:* Affected with a fundamental mental derangement characterized by defective or lost contact with reality.

*Context:* Releasing mental patients from hospitals led to the bizarre phenomenon of having the street full of psychotic, untreated people.

### **schizophrenia**

*Definition:* A psychotic disorder characterized by loss of contact with the environment, by noticeable deterioration in the level of functioning in everyday life, and by disintegration of personality expressed as disorder of feeling, thought (as in hallucinations and delusions), and conduct.

*Context:* Both schizophrenia and LSD impair the brain's ability to distinguish whether impulses are coming from outside—out there in reality—or from inside—from the workings of one's own mind.

## Academic Standards

### **Mid-continent Research for Education and Learning (McREL)**

McREL's Content Knowledge: A Compendium of Standards and Benchmarks for K-12 Education



addresses 14 content areas. To view the standards and benchmarks, visit <http://www.mcrel.org/compendium/browse.asp>.

This lesson plan addresses the following national standards:

- Language Arts – Reading: Uses reading skills and strategies to understand and interpret a variety of literary texts.
  - Language Arts – Writing: Uses the general skills and strategies of the writing process; uses the stylistic and rhetorical aspects of writing
  - Language Arts – Viewing: Uses viewing skills and strategies to understand and interpret visual media
  - Behavioral Studies: Understands conflict, cooperation, and interdependence among individuals, groups, and institutions.
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## Support Materials

Develop custom worksheets, educational puzzles, online quizzes, and more with the free teaching tools offered on the [Discoveryschool.com](http://www.discoveryschool.com) Web site. Create and print support materials, or save them to a Custom Classroom account for future use. To learn more, visit

- <http://school.discovery.com/teachingtools/teachingtools.html>