

Reviewing films and nuanced opinions

French 4 (high school) · Lesson

Quick answer: A French film review (une critique) names the film, summarizes the plot without spoiling the ending, then weighs strengths against weaknesses with connectors like certes... mais, bien que + subjunctive, and même si + indicative. Precise film vocabulary and shaded opinions make the review sound mature instead of simply good or bad.

Level: French 4 (high school, ACTFL Intermediate Mid) · **Standards:** ACTFL Intermediate Mid, WL 1.2 Interpretive, WL 1.3 Presentational, WL 4.1 Language Comparisons, WL 2.2 Cultural Products

What words do you need to talk about a film?

Start with the people and the stages of making a movie. Most of these words are masculine, even when the person is a woman: use une réalisatrice only when the job holder is female.

French	English
le réalisateur / la réalisatrice	director
le scénario	screenplay
le tournage	shooting
le montage	editing
la bande originale	soundtrack
l'intrigue (f.), le dénouement	plot, ending
un navet	a flop (literally, a turnip)

La critique en quatre temps

1. Titre
et genre

2. Résumé
sans la fin

3. Avis
nuancé

4. Conseil
au lecteur

The four parts of a critique.

How do you give a nuanced opinion?

Connectors of nuance

Certes admits a point before mais reverses it. Même si takes the indicative. Bien que takes

the subjunctive. Malgré is followed by a noun.

In a review

Certes, les décors sont splendides, mais l'histoire manque de souffle. — True, the sets are splendid, but the story runs out of steam.

Bien que le rythme **soit** lent, on ne s'ennuie pas. — Although the pace is slow, one is never bored.

Même si le héros **est** maladroit, il reste attachant. — Even if the hero is clumsy, he stays endearing.

Malgré un petit budget, la réalisatrice a signé un joli film. — Despite a small budget, the director made a lovely film.

How do you structure the evaluation?

Judge one element at a time, and give a reason for each judgment. A good critique usually follows this order:

1. Name the strongest element, such as la photographie or le jeu des acteurs.
2. Admit a weakness with certes or bien que.
3. Close with a verdict and a piece of advice: À voir absolument ! or À réserver aux curieux.

Verbs of taste help: ce film m'a ému (moved me), m'a fait rire (made me laugh), m'a laissé de glace (left me cold).

Common mistake

English speakers jump to a blunt verdict like C'est nul. A French critic softens it: Je suis resté sur ma faim. — I was left wanting more. Also remember that bien que never takes the indicative.



From harshest to warmest verdict.

The Nouvelle Vague

In the late 1950s, young critics who wrote for a film magazine became directors. They shot in real streets with light cameras, used natural light and let characters speak in a casual way.

Their quick, surprising editing influenced filmmakers around the world.

Zoé's tip

Keep one pair ready: certes... mais. It turns any plain opinion into a mature one.

Key points to remember

- Core film words: le réalisateur, le scénario, le tournage, le montage, la bande originale, un plan.
- Nuance with certes... mais, pourtant, malgré + noun, même si + indicative.
- Bien que always takes the subjunctive: bien que le rythme soit lent.
- A critique has four parts: presentation, summary, evaluation, recommendation.
- The Nouvelle Vague of the late 1950s changed how films were shot and edited.

Reviewing Films and Nuanced Opinions: frequently asked questions

How do you say that a film was boring in French?

Say Le film m'a paru long or Je me suis ennuyé. Critics often soften it with le rythme est inégal (the pace is uneven).

Which mood follows bien que?

The subjunctive, always: bien que le film soit long. Même si, by contrast, takes the indicative.

What is the difference between le film and la séance?

Le film is the movie itself. La séance is one showing at a set time, like the 9:15 p.m. screening.

What does VO or VOSTFR mean on a ticket?

VO means version originale, the original language. VOSTFR adds sous-titrée en français, so the film plays in its original language with French subtitles.

What was the Nouvelle Vague?

It was a film movement of the late 1950s and early 1960s led by young French directors. They favored location shooting, small crews and a free, personal style.