

Bridget Jones's Diary: Writing a Film Review
(Jurnalul lui Bridget Jones: Scrierea recenziei filmului)

Am folosit aplicația Canva: <https://www.canva.com/design/DAGoElwExkl/l-w0yEPeApaMBcr3Ch1OCg/edit>

Elevii din clasa a X-a Filologie (3h /săpt) audiaza interview video:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ivLNL10Pi-o>

Scriitoarea cartii, Helen Fielding spune în interview cum a creat personajele, ca mai apoi, pe baza cărții sale *Jurnalul lui Bridget Jones* (Bridget Jones's Diary) să fie turnat un film care a avut un succes extraordinar pe întreg mapamondul, fiind vizionat în toate țările.

Elevii își scriu impresiile despre ceea ce au auzit și compară cu recenziile care s-au scris în diferite publicații despre film și despre personajele principale:

Teme pentru elevi de nivel mediu

Topics for intermediate students (Writing)

A Review of Bridget Jones's Diary

2

The film tells the story of a year in the life of an average, single, thirty-something British woman, who, armed with only her wits and charm (and a diary), goes in search of the ever-elusive Mr. Right. Unlucky-in-love Bridget (Renee Zellweger) has two candidates: the fun and sexy Daniel Cleaver (Hugh Grant) and the dour Mark Darcy (Colin Firth), whom she overhears calling her a “verbally incontinent spinster” when they first meet at a party. Not surprisingly, she goes for Daniel, but he turns out to be a less-than-perfect catch. Thus, just when her interest in Mark begins to emerge (following his statement that he likes her just as she is), he hooks up with a man-eating lawyer Natasha (Embeth Davidtz), who is determined to marry him. Meanwhile, her parents' marriage is on the rocks and she embarks upon a

career in television news. (The line that gets her the position: “I got fired from my last job for sleeping with my boss”)

1

“*Bridget Jones’s Diary* is, quite simply, the finest motion picture released by Miramax Films since 1999’s *The Cider House Rules*. Based on the novel by Helen Fielding, the screenplay for *Bridget Jones’s Diary* (written by *Four Weddings and a Funeral* scribe Richard Curtis) successfully adapts the book into an easily-manageable 90 minutes chunk while retaining much of the humour and remaining faithful to the tone. *Bridget Jones’s Diary* is smart, sassy, and thoroughly enjoyable, and features one of the most endearing and believable characters to grace the screen this year.

3

In England, the casting of American Renee Zellweger was initially greeted with much resistance by the press and the public. It was argued that not only was Zellweger American, but she was also too skinny to play the chubby Bridget. Well, some time between casting and shooting, Zellweger put on a few pounds (she’s pleasingly plump – not fat by any means, but certainly of Kate Winslet proportions) and worked hard to perfect a British accent (there are a few slips, but they are mercifully rare). These qualities, coupled with her natural charm and screen presence, make her a flawless choice for the lead. Not since her breakthrough roles in *The World Wide World* and *Jerry Maguire* has she given a performance of this all-around quality. Zellweger embodies Bridget, and is a huge reason why the movie works.

4

Those who have read Jane Austen’s *Pride and Prejudice* will find some characters and elements in *Bridget Jones’s Diary*. It doesn’t take much deduction to determine that Helen Fielding is an Austen admirer, and that all of the nods to *Pride and Prejudice* are intentional. While it would be unfair to call *Bridget Jones’s Diary* a 20th-century re-interpretation of

Pride and Prejudice, there are some parallels – at least one of which the filmmakers have decided to emphasise.

5

The casting of Colin Firth as Mark Darcy is inspired. Firth, who played Mr. Darcy in the hugely popular 1995 BBC/A&E television production of *Pride and Prejudice*, plays this part exactly as he played the earlier role, making it evident that the two Darcys are essentially the same. He's a repressed snob who gradually unwillingly finds himself falling for the least suitable woman around him – Bridget (who upon closer examination, bears a passing resemblance to Elizabeth Bennet).

7

Bridget Jones's Diary is filled with moments of truth and flashes of humour (sometimes the two are the same. The direction, by newcomer Sharon Maguire, shows the deftness of a veteran. The energy level is consistently high and the characters (especially Bridget) don't take long to endear themselves to the audience. The result is worthy of exultation, especially the bleakness of the winter/spring cinematic landscape. I smiled at the biting one-liners, laughed at both the subtle and the overt comedic aspects, and nodded my head in sympathy with Bridget's all-too-familiar plight – and I'm a male. Imagine the female reaction. Congratulations to all involved. *Bridget Jones's Diary* is a triumph."

6

Hugh Grant brings all the charm he can muster to the oily role of Daniel – a man who enhances his chance with Bridget by telling a lie about Mark. Like Austen's Wickham, this guy is too good to believe, and proceeds to prove our suspicions correct. Grant who, like Firth, has appeared in an Austen adaptation (*Sense and Sensibility*), is at home in the role. Strong supporting performances are given by Jim Broadbent and Gemma Jones as Bridget's parents.

(www.unite.it)

I. Understanding the Review

1. a. Arrange the paragraphs' review into the correct order;

b. Read the review and underline the key words, then answer the questions.

Your school newspaper has asked students to submit reviews of films that they have recently seen which have as a topic relationships. Write your review, giving a brief summary of the plot and saying why you think it might interest other people.

1. Who is going to read the review?

2. Which of the following should you include?

- The end of the story
- Recommendation
- The main points of the plot
- Type of film/ name of director
- When and where you saw the film
- Main characters / names of actors
- Awards the film has won (if any)

3. Which tenses should you use?

b. Read the model and match the paragraph to the topics.

a. recommendation

b. general comments

c. main points of the plot

d. background information

Answers:

1. It is done above

2. The key words are:

- Motion picture
- Humour
- Single
- Spinster
- Diary

- Unlucky-in-love
- Renee Zellweger
- Huge Grant
- Colin Firth
- Fun
- Sexy
- Party
- Less-than-perfect
- Jane Austen
- Pride and Prejudice
- Marriage
- Career
- The public
- Casting
- British woman
- Screen
- Charm

c. *Write your own review using the key words (no more than 10 lines)*

d. Re-read the previous review and answer the following questions:

1. Does the writer give a detailed account of the story, or a brief summary?
2. What background information does the writer give?
3. Is this a positive or a negative review? What phrases does the writer use to recommend or not recommend the film?
4. Is the end of the story revealed?
5. Has the writer used:
 - Passive voice?
 - A variety of adjectives?
 - Colloquial expressions?
 - Complex sentences?
 - Linking devices?

- Abbreviations?

Answers:

1. The writer gives a detailed account of the story.
2. The background information refers to the plot, the characters, the actors that played in different scenes. Renee Zellweger embodied Bridget very well and the male actors Hugh Grant and Colin Firth played excellent roles using their charm and skills in rendering unique images of the characters who were very much adored by the public.
3. This is a positive review showing the struggle of the actors to give an original display of the movie by following the patterns of the novel. In the end the movie was a triumph being appreciated by both the critics and the public.

Phrases used to recommend the film:

- the screenplay for *Bridget Jones's Diary* successfully adapts the book into an easily-manageable 90 minutes chunk while retaining much of the humour and remaining faithful to the tone.
 - *Bridget Jones's Diary* is smart, sassy, and thoroughly enjoyable.
 - the fun and sexy Daniel Cleaver (Hugh Grant) and the dour Mark Darcy (Colin Firth).
 - coupled with her natural charm and screen presence, make her a flawless choice for the lead.
 - Zellweger embodies Bridget, and is a huge reason why the movie works.
 - *Bridget Jones's Diary* is filled with moments of truth and flashes of humour.
 - The energy level is consistently high and the characters (especially Bridget) don't take long to endear themselves to the audience.
 - I laughed at both the subtle and the overt comedic aspects.
 - Congratulations to all involved. *Bridget Jones's Diary* is a triumph.
4. The end of the story is not revealed.
 5. The writer used a variety of *adjectives* like: the finest, smart, sassy, enjoyable, the most endearing, believable, manageable, man-eating, sexy, chubby, skinny, flawless, breakthrough, the least, oily, high, worthy, less-than-perfect, all-around, all-too-familiar; *colloquial words and expressions*: sassy, thirty-something British woman, unlucky-in-love Bridget, man-eating, less-than-perfect, her parents' marriage is on the rocks, the chubby Bridget, newcomer, the

biting one-liners, all-around quality, nodded my head in sympathy, all-too-familiar plight, *complex sentences* (time clauses and relative clauses), *one abbreviation*: don't take long.

II. Useful Language: Vocabulary / Phrases / Expressions

1. Background

- The film/ story is set in ...
- The well-written/ informative/ fascinating book...
- The original first novel ...
- The film/ book tells the story of ...
- The book/ the novel was written by ...
- The film is directed by ...
- This work is based on ...
- It is a romantic comedy/ horror film/ love story.

2. Main points of the plot

- The plot focuses on ...
- The story begins/ concerns/ is about ...
- The plot has an unexpected twist ...
- The film reaches a dramatic climax ...
- The plot is (absolutely) thrilling/ (rather) boring.

3. General comments and opinions:

- It is rather confusing/ long/ slow/ boring.
- The cast is excellent/ weak/ awful/ unconvincing.
- The script is dull/ clever/ exciting.
- It has a tragic/ surprising/ dramatic end.
- It is beautiful/ poorly/ badly written.
- It doesn't come across as ...
- The arrangements are simple/ effective/ complicated.
- Rich/ dull sound
- Catchy tune
- Features a variety of musical instruments
- Powerful/ weak voice

- Musically satisfying

Teacher asks individual students to read their sentences.

The next activity is a listening activity for 10th grade intermediate students. They listened to each video twice and then they are given some handouts to check the understanding.

Bridget Jones: The Edge of Reason - Interview

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QjDn0u4x2-o>

I. Choose the correct answer after you have listened to the interview:

1. What is Renee's opinion on gaining and losing weight?

- A. She thinks it's harder to lose weight
- B. She believes it's not difficult to gain weight
- C. Nutritionist must bring you high calorie food
- D. The weight game is part of the whole process of realizing Bridget's character

2. When the reporter asks Renee what men want, her answers are:

- A. Love
- B. To find an attractive woman
- C. She doesn't know
- D. She doesn't answer the question

3. When the reporter asks Huge Grant what men want, he answers by saying that:

- A. They want a wife
- B. They want a mother
- C. They want an easy woman
- D. They want a little bit of everything

4. When the reporter asks Colin Firth what men want, he answers by saying

that:

- A. A perfect woman
- B. A good listener
- C. A smart woman
- D. He has absolutely no idea

5. *What does Colin Firth believes is the most difficult part to play in a drama or comedy:*

- A. To perform emotional scenes
- B. To actually become the character
- C. To portray happiness
- D. To play scenes of peace and happiness

6. *Colin Firth said that Renee made a gesture that impressed him. What was the gesture that she made:*

- A. She kissed him
- B. She embraced him
- C. She stared at him
- D. She said goodbye to him

7. *What does her gesture meant for him?*

- A. Arrogance and distance
- B. Sympathy and respect
- C. Love and familiarity
- D. Tenderness and kindness

8. *How is the fight scene between Daniel Cleaver and Mark Darcy:*

- A. Violent

- B. Weird
- C. Funny
- D. Pathetic

II. Watch the video and decide whether the following statements are True or False

A. The Skiing Scene

1. Bridget went on a ski holiday in Austria and took skiing lessons.
2. Bridget participated in a skiing contest.
3. Bridget meets Rebecca at skiing.
4. Bridget goes to a drugstore to buy some pills for the headache.
5. Bridget does not know German language and she has difficulties when speaking to the druggist.

B. The Fight Scene

1. Director Beeban Kidron told the actors that they do not have to fight.
2. Mark Darcy provokes Daniel Cleaver to the duel/ fight.
3. Daniels accepts to fight with Mark.
4. They fight in a museum.
5. The fight scene looked very real.
6. They in a violent way.
7. During the fight both actors fall in the water.

Answers:

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<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QjDn0u4x2-o>

I. Choose the correct answer after you have listened to the interview:

1. What is Renee's opinion on gaining and losing weight?

- A. She thinks it's harder to lose weight
- B. She believes it's not difficult to gain weight
- C. Nutritionist must bring you high calorie food
- ✓ The weight game is part of the whole process of realizing Bridget's character

2. *When the reporter asks Renee what men want, her answers are:*

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II. Watch the video and decide whether the following statements are True or False (Constituirea grupelor de 4 elevi)

A. The Skiing Scene (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9d5UueNLEp8>)

1. Bridget went on a ski holiday in Austria and took skiing lessons. **F**

2. Bridget participated in a skiing contest. **F**

3. Bridget meets Rebecca at skiing. **T**
4. Bridget goes to a drugstore to buy some pills for the headache. **F**
5. Bridget does not know German language and she has difficulties when speaking to the druggist. **T**

B. The Fight Scene (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hYrIw4CukKg>)

1. Director Beeban Kidron told the actors that they do not have to fight. **F**
2. Mark Darcy provokes Daniel Cleaver to the duel/ fight. **T**
3. Daniels accepts to fight with Mark. **F**
4. They fight in a museum. **F**
5. The fight scene looked very real. **T**
6. They fought in a violent way. **F**
7. During the fight both actors fall in the water. **T**

The success of the movie comes mainly from the actors who gave a very good image of the characters in the way that they are funny but at the same time serious and complex. The public literally loved the actors. Their performance received many appreciations and everybody wanted to see how the movie was made and how the roles were performed. Mass media did its part and took a glimpse from the background of the scenes.

I extracted some parts of the interview with the actors. (<http://movieweb.com>)

Writing activity:

Students must write a composition about a scene from the movie that they liked the most and give reasons for their choice. (10 lines)

Activitate pentru scriere:

1. Elevii trebuie să scrie un paragraf despre o scenă din film care le-a plăcut cel mai mult și să argumenteze alegerea.
2. Elevii sunt îndrumați să creeze, cu ajutorul aplicației Canva, o broșură prin care să încurajeze vizionarea filmului. Broșura trebuie să includă o recenzie a filmului utilizând vocabularul învățat și o părere personală. Broșura trebuie să includă și fotografii cu actorii din film și să aibă un format atractiv. (constituirea grupelor de 4 elevi)