

Level Up Your Writing: Becoming a Pro Game Critic

Lesson Overview

In this lesson, Albie will transition from a gamer to a "Game Critic." He will learn how to analyze the games he loves—like *Minecraft*, *Fortnite*, and *Spider-Man 2*—and write a review that helps other players decide what to play next. By the end of this session, Albie will have produced a professional-style "Scorecard" and a written review of a game of his choice.

Materials Needed

- "The Critic's Notepad" (a notebook or digital document)
- Printed "Game Review Template" (or a blank sheet of paper)
- Access to a game for 5-10 minutes of "research play" (optional)
- Colored markers or pens for the "Star Ratings"
- A timer

Learning Objectives

By the end of this lesson, the student will be able to:

- Identify the four key parts of a game review (Hook, The Basics, Pros/Cons, Verdict).
- Use descriptive "power words" to explain gameplay experiences.
- Develop a fair rating system based on specific criteria like graphics, fun, and controls.
- Write a cohesive three-paragraph game review.

1. Introduction: The Hook (5 Minutes)

The Scenario: "Albie, imagine you have a friend who has \$20 to spend on one game. They are looking at *Goat Simulator* and *FIFA*, but they can't decide! If you give them bad advice, they waste their money. If you give them good advice, you're a hero. That is the power of a Game Critic!"

Discussion:

- What makes a game 'good'? Is it how it looks (Graphics), how it plays (Controls), or just how much you laugh (Fun Factor)?
- Do you always agree with reviews you see online or on YouTube?

2. Instruction: The "I Do" Model (10 Minutes)

Explain the 4-Part Structure:

1. **The Hook:** Start with an exciting sentence to grab attention. (e.g., "Do you want to swing through New York like a hero?")
2. **The Basics:** What do you actually DO in the game? (e.g., "In *Minecraft*, you build, mine, and survive monsters.")
3. **The Good & The Bad:** What was awesome? What was frustrating? (e.g., "The graphics in *Spider-Man 2* are amazing, but some missions feel a bit repetitive.")
4. **The Verdict:** A final score out of 5 stars and a "Buy" or "Pass" recommendation.

Modeling: The educator briefly reviews *Goat Simulator* out loud using the 4 parts, focusing on funny descriptive words like "chaotic," "glitchy (in a good way)," and "hilarious."

3. Guided Practice: The "We Do" Scorecard (10 Minutes)

Together, let's create a "Criteria List." If we were reviewing *Roblox* or *Fortnite*, what marks would we give them? Fill out this quick chart together:

Category	What it means	Score (1-5 Stars)
Graphics	Does it look cool or blurry?	□?
Gameplay	Is it easy to move and play?	□?
Fun Factor	Does it make you want to keep playing?	□?

4. Independent Practice: The "You Do" Review (20 Minutes)

The Mission: Albie picks one game from his favorites (*Spider-Man 2*, *FIFA*, *Minecraft*, etc.) and writes a "Mini-Review" for a gaming magazine.

Instructions:

1. **Research Phase (5 mins):** If needed, Albie can jump into the game or look at a 2-minute gameplay clip to find one specific detail to mention.
2. **Drafting (15 mins):** Use the 4-part structure to write the review.
 - *Challenge:* Try to use three "Power Words" (e.g., "Stunning," "Challenging," "Creative," "Smooth").
3. **The Star Rating:** Draw the final star rating at the bottom in bright colors.

5. Conclusion: Press Release (5 Minutes)

Recap: Albie reads his review aloud as if he is a YouTuber or a TV presenter.

Reflection:

- "What was the hardest part to describe—how the game looked or how it felt?"
- "Would your review change if you were writing for a 5-year-old vs. a grown-up?"

Success Criteria: Albie has a completed review that includes a title, a description of gameplay, one "pro," one "con," and a final star rating.

Differentiation & Adaptations

- **For More Support (Scaffolding):** Use "Sentence Starters" (e.g., "The best thing about this game is..." or "I think players will find it hard to...")
- **For a Greater Challenge (Extension):** Add a "Parent's Corner" section to the review where Albie explains if the game is safe or too violent for younger kids.
- **Kinesthetic/Tactile:** Instead of writing, Albie can record a "Video Review" using a tablet or phone, practicing his speaking and presentation skills.

Assessment

- **Formative:** Check-in during the "Scorecard" phase to ensure he understands the categories.
- **Summative:** The final written review. Does it follow the structure? Does it provide a clear opinion?