

Name: _____ () Class: _____ Date: _____

You are looking for films to show during the Film Festival. You have found a film review. Read the review.

Text 2 Film review

Reviewed by: Dominic Walker



Arrival (2016)

A well-acted but unsatisfactory film about communicating with aliens

Rating: ★★☆☆☆

Suitable for: age 12 and above

- ① *Arrival* was directed by Denis Villeneuve and produced by Paramount Pictures. This American release is an adaptation of a short story called 'The Story of Your Life'. It opens with 12 extraterrestrial spacecraft arriving on Earth and floating above different countries. Governments from around the world discuss what to do. They soon come to a consensus that they had better investigate the spacecraft to find out what the aliens' true plans are. Twelve teams are formed. Each team goes into one of the spacecraft and attempts to learn about the aliens within.

- ② The film focuses on the American team composed of Louise Banks (played by Amy Adams) the linguist and Ian Donnelly (played by Jeremy Renner) the physicist. Banks attempts to make contact with the aliens. However, their language is extremely perplexing and she is unable to decode it at first. Banks gradually realizes that the aliens' thought processes are completely different from humans'. Instead of thinking of things sequentially as one event happening after another, they think of all events as happening at the same time. Meanwhile, governments around the world begin to grow impatient with the lack of progress. Then one of the other teams mistranslates the aliens' message as a declaration of war. Banks realizes that if she does not find the key to communicating with the aliens soon, there will be a potentially devastating world war. She then decides to take a considerable risk so that conflict with the visitors can be prevented.



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30 **3** In terms of quality, *Arrival* is all over the place. Sometimes it is brilliant and exhilarating while at other times it is mind-numbingly dull and never seems to end. *Arrival* is not an edge-of-your-seat action-packed thriller like *Independence Day: Resurgence*, in which humans have to battle bloodthirsty aliens. It is at its heart a rather moving and thought-provoking drama about Louise Banks and what the aliens teach her.

35 **4** Also to the film's credit, the special effects look absolutely out of this world. The set designers and prop makers did a splendid job, so the spacecraft feel very realistic despite their bizarre appearance. The aliens, which resemble gigantic flying squids, are unlike anything I have ever seen on the big screen before. They look very original. The soundtrack of deep mechanic sounds is very atmospheric. It helps draw the audience into
40 the story. Due to the amazing designs and music, it is easy to immerse yourself completely into the story. It makes you feel that you are on the alien spacecraft trying to crack the alien language alongside Banks.

5 The main problem with *Arrival* is the plot. While it is wonderfully philosophical at times, it tends to go way over most viewers' heads. One of the film's posters has the
45 tagline 'Why are they here?' You would expect the film to answer this question at the end, wouldn't you? However, *Arrival* does not really supply us with any explanation. It is never clear what the aliens' true purpose is or why the world governments behave so stupidly and rashly. Apart from Banks, most of the other characters' behaviours make little sense. Screenwriter Eric Heisserer has created some deep thought-provoking dialogue. Yet, he
50 has also failed to explain just what exactly is going on! In addition, the film is much too lengthy and the feel-good ending is extremely predictable. If *Arrival* were 30 minutes shorter and gave us an unexpected twist at the end, it would be a much better film.

6 *Arrival* is worth watching for Amy Adams' masterful performance and the captivating visuals alone. However, do not expect a fulfilling and well fleshed out story. Sci-fi fans
55 should buy a ticket. Everyone else is recommended to avoid this puzzling mess.

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Comprehension 2 Your sister wants to know more about the film 'Arrival'. Answer her questions using information from the film review. For multiple-choice questions, choose the best answer and blacken ONE circle only.

- 1 According to the information at the beginning and paragraph 1, are the following statements **True (T)**, **False (F)** or **Not Given (NG)**?

Statements	T	F	NG
i) <i>Arrival</i> is not suitable for children.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
ii) <i>Arrival</i> is Denis Villeneuve's directorial debut.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
iii) The film was made by a British production company.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

- 2 What is *Arrival* based on?

- 3 What does 'it' refer to in line 18?

- ☐ A the alien
☐ B the aliens' language
☐ C the aliens' thought process
☐ D the film

- 4 Which word in paragraph 2 means the same as 'confusing'?

- 5 According to the film review, what are the thought processes of humans and the aliens like?

Humans: _____

Aliens: _____

- 6 Based on the information from paragraphs 1 and 2, use ONE word to complete each blank. Make sure your answers are grammatically correct.

Twelve alien spaceships arrive on Earth. They hover above various (i) _____ around the world but then they do not do anything. The spaceships are (ii) _____ by the governments.

Louise Banks enters the spaceship above (iii) _____. Although she is a linguist, she does not understand the aliens' language. She eventually realizes that the aliens (iv) _____ in a totally different way from humans.

The governments feel that the teams are not progressing quickly enough and become impatient. A/An (v) _____ of the aliens' message is about to cause a war.

- 7 What does the reviewer mean when he says 'In terms of quality, *Arrival* is all over the place' (line 30)?

- ☐ A you need to find clues throughout the film to understand what is happening
☐ B some scenes look very sharp while others are blurry
☐ C the film features scenes in many countries
☐ D the quality varies greatly throughout the film

- 8 What do the aliens look like?

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- 9 According to paragraph 5, what is the main problem with the film? Provide evidence from the text to support your answer.

- 10 According to paragraphs 3–5, what are some positive aspects of the film? Tick (✓) THREE boxes.

<input type="checkbox"/>	The plot is thrilling throughout.
<input type="checkbox"/>	The costumes are incredible.
<input type="checkbox"/>	The aliens are well designed.
<input type="checkbox"/>	The set design is fantastic.
<input type="checkbox"/>	It has a great atmosphere.
<input type="checkbox"/>	The characters are well developed.

- 11 According to paragraph 6, who should watch the film?

- 12 What is the reviewer's attitude in paragraph 6?

- A indifferent
B critical
C favourable
D anxious

A B C D
○ ○ ○ ○

- 13 Complete the sentences with the correct form of words or expressions from Text 2. Use ONE word to complete each blank. Make sure your answers are grammatically correct.

- i) After a long discussion, the boys finally came to a/an _____ and decided to watch a war film. (n., paragraph 1)
- ii) I think *The Life of Pi* is really _____ as the audience is never sure which parts of Pi's story are real or made-up! (adj., paragraph 3)
- iii) This new 4-D theatre incorporates 3-D images, moving chairs and smells to fully _____ the audience into the film. (v., paragraph 4)
- iv) Dina asked for advice on how to _____ the characters in her story to make them more realistic. (phr. v., paragraph 6)