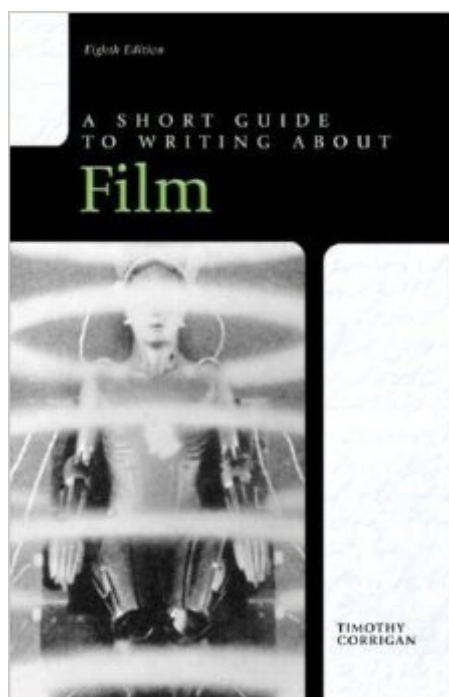


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# Short Guide To Writing About Film 8th (Eighth) Edition By Corrigan



## Book Information

Paperback

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## Customer Reviews

This book is an invaluable guide to writing about film. If you've never taken a film class, you need a book like this to get you used to the vocabulary, style and format of film criticism and theory. Numerous examples and lucid prose make this book easy to use and to read.

Corrigan's Short Guide has been around for some time, and I've noticed that students have decidedly mixed responses to it. My responses are mixed as well. It is true that Corrigan tends to wax a bit loquacious, letting wordy and meandering discussion often obscure the really important things he has to say. But speaking as a professor who teaches film courses and requires students to write critical essays about film, I must say that to date this is one of the best books on the market to address specifically the subject of writing about film (I think the best book is Tim Bywater's "Introduction to Film Criticism"--which, unfortunately, is also a ridiculously over-priced Longman title). But it bears noting that there simply aren't many books available which do address this specific subject, so my praise has to be understood in that context. And it's a shame that the book is priced over \$40, which is a lot of money for a thin, 196 page paperback with some arguably serious flaws. The book is divided into seven chapters: an introductory chapter explaining differences and similarities between movie reviews, theoretical essays and critical essays; a chapter about preparing to watch a movie and write about it; a chapter on film terms, concepts and writing topics; a chapter summarizing six approaches to writing about film (history, national cinemas, genres, auteurs, formalism, and ideology) with sample essays and exercises; a chapter on style and structure; and final chapters containing research advice (including internet research) and discussions of proofing, and using / citing sources. Appendices include a list of common editorial symbols, a glossary, and an index. Notable changes to the seventh edition include some helpful

advice about documentary and avante-garde films, an expansion of the internet resource section, and more information about film sound. These are all welcome and significant enhancements. There is a lot of sound advice in the text, and the sample essays are particularly helpful. But the book tries to do too many tasks (at least three big ones) and consequently, it does none of them as well as it could--or should. First, the text is part film appreciation guide, but its limited scope prevents it from effectively competing with books like Giannetti's "Understanding Movies" or Bordwell and Thompson's "Film Art: An Introduction," so any student serious about film criticism will need to read such books anyway, making Corrigan's contributions in this area paltry and often superfluous. Second, the text is part style, proofreading and writing guide, but again, cheap and much more comprehensive volumes like Hacker's "A Writer's Reference" do that task far better than can Corrigan so his effort here is mostly wasted. Third, the text is part film writing primer. This is the task on which Corrigan should have limited himself, given the obvious desire to keep the book small, and this is the aspect of the book that works best. Unfortunately, effort and space wasted on the other two tasks unnecessarily restrict what Corrigan does on this score. For example, his discussions (in the first and fourth chapters) of different approaches to film criticism and of different kinds of essays about film are each limited to a few meager pages. But these are the very subjects his book should have addressed in greatest detail. As already noted, the 7th edition includes improvements in this area, but not enough. In the end, Corrigan's book has lots of scattered insights and bits of advice that are great in and of themselves, but the more pertinent are sometimes under-developed and often lost in a sea of verbosity and diffusive aims. So, for the time being at least, while this may be one of the best available books on writing essays about film, it has its share of problems. It is thus almost as disappointing as it is helpful.

This a marvelous book, packed with information and much more accessible than far more expensive books. It's the perfect companion for almost any film course since it not only introduces students to the language and methods of film analysis (including how to take notes) but does so while guiding students through the work of writing a good essay (with great suggestions for doing research). The writing is clear and accurate (with none of the errors referred to by the Kenosha reviewer). I recommend it without hesitation to all students of film.

One thing I can say is I enjoy a good film. O.K. if it moves I'll watch it. But until I read this book I really was just looking with out seeing. It is nice to have this guide confirm what one knows as common sense. Probably because the guide is designed to take you from ground zero to a level of

appreciation and allow you to convey your opinion intelligently. If you have an earlier edition you will still get the essence of the book. Newer editions add different resources and research information. Some of the highlights are:

- \* A shot-by shot analysis of a sequence from the film "Potemkin"
- \* Suggestions on using the Internet
- \* Sample student writing

Some contents: Writing about the Movies Preparing to Watch and Preparing to Write Film Terms and Topics Six Approaches to writing about Film Style and Structure in Writing Researching the Movies Manuscript Form This guide is an eye opener.

This writing guide is an excellent tool for students of film criticism as well as for film critics and all others who write film criticisms. Corrigan very clearly and adeptly explains the thinking and methodology involved in reviewing and critiquing films. As a graduate student, I found this tool indispensable in my film criticism courses. In addition, it was recommended by professors of both film criticism courses.

I'm writing to second mitry's opinion of the book and to add to mitry's comment about kenosha's complaint of textual errors. I have the second edition of the book, and Corrigan speaks of Captain Willard and refers to Marlowe as "the other Captain Willard" (p. 43). It's clear from the context that he is comparing the film character with Conrad's protagonist. I doubt Corrigan would have revised the 2nd edition text here to make an error in the 3rd edition. Don't get turned off by an erroneous review!

I bought this trying to improve my skill on film reviews, but it's more of an student aid for writing essays about film. It is for people who is studying film and want to learn about the theory and language of film. It seems that is a good book on that, but the deceiving name and cover made me think that the book is about a different type of writing.

I used this textbook last semester in a "Critical Thinking About Film" class at college. It was such a help! The book explains the proper way to write movie reviews and critiques, as well as recognizing key formal elements and camera shots. I highly recommend for any kind of work on this subject!

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