

## Girl Scouts Junior Film Critics Patch



*Are you a film buff? Do you watch a lot of films or videos? Do you spend a lot of time online? Do you think that media influences kids? Do you wish you could make a movie yourself? What kind of a movie would you make?*

### 1. What's a Film Critic?

Learn about film critics. Identify three different local film critics whose reviews you have can find on the Internet, your local newspaper, or television. Select a current movie or video that's rated for your age and then read or listen to criticisms from all three critics about it. How are their reviews different or similar? How did they use words or images to get their message across? Which review could you relate to most and why? Go watch the movie yourself and compare your own thoughts about it with what the critics said. Do you agree or disagree with them? Is there something that you would add to their critique?

### 2. How Does Media affect Kids?

Create a journal with your own media viewing for one week. Write down every program that you watch on TV, every film you go see at the theater, every website you visit, every video you watch. Keep track of the time you spend watching, the title of the programs, and write a brief description of each program along with what you think about it. Search the Internet for "media literacy" and see if you can find out how what research has been done about media and kids - how much they watch, how it affects them, and what government regulations there are to protect young kids from watching the wrong kind of programs. Write a summary about what you learn and share it with someone else.

### 3. Media Violence

Research has shown that media violence affects us in many different ways: causing people to be mean-spirited and aggressive, making people less sensitive to violent acts, giving kids violent heroes they imitate, encouraging disrespect. Watch one hour of television and create a scorecard to record the number of violent acts you observe, both physical or verbal. Here's a list of things to look for:

physical violence: hitting, punching, kicking, pushing, shoving, shooting, knifing, killing, various martial arts acts, damaging property, causing bodily harm

verbal violence: put-downs, name-calling, screaming, lying, teasing, slapstick humor, foul language, disrespect

How many violent acts were in your hour of programming? Were you surprised by how much violence there was? Who did most of the violence? Men? Women? Young people? Old? People of color? Did the show seem real? Did it depict ways in which a situation would actually be handled in real life? How did you feel after you watched this show? What age would you recommend this show for? Go online to the American Medical Association's website and read their research on media violence.

### 4: Stereotypes and bias.

Look up the definitions of **stereotype** and **bias** in the dictionary. TV stereotypes people a lot because most programs are short so they want to establish the personalities of characters as quickly as possible. Describe how TV stereotypes the following characters: a librarian, a mom, a gangster, a smart person, a rock star. See if you can think of a person you know who's very different than the stereotype you've just described. Now, watch an hour of television, or a movie and look for stereotypes and bias. Here's some things to look for:

- 1) Look at the images of how people are portrayed. Do you see any stereotypes? Describe who is doing what.
  - 2) Describe the storyline. What is the standard for success? What is the role of women? Of minorities?
  - 3) Describe the lifestyles of the characters in terms of what group of people is living how.
  - 4) Look at the relationships between people. How would you describe them? Is anyone being treated unfairly?
  - 5) Describe who the heroes are and who they aren't.
  - 6) Are there any images or ideas that would affect the self-image of a child from a minority group? Describe.
- Discuss your answers to these questions with someone else.

### **5: Express your View.**

Write your own film or video critique. Include comments about the violence, stereotyping or bias that you see. Go the KIDS FIRST! website ([www.kidsfirstinternet.org](http://www.kidsfirstinternet.org)) and download an evaluation form to use as a guideline if you'd like some help. Share your critique with a friend, or see if your school paper or local girl scout council will publish it.

### **6: Start a Junior Film Critics Program**

Get some of your friends together and go to the movies together, then critique them as a group. Share some of the exercises you've done looking at violence, stereotypes and bias with them so that they're more aware of these in the movie. Encourage everyone to share their point of view and debate the pros and cons of the film.

### **7. Write and produce your own video script.**

Write a short film or TV program script. Think about how you will shoot it with the camera. Pay attention to camera angles, camera shots - close ups, long shots, and sets. Now video tape it with some of your friends or family. Talk afterwards about what worked and what didn't. What would you do differently the next time?

### **8. Make it public.**

Produce a mini film and video festival evening. Think about what kinds of programs you'd include in a festival for kids your age, or younger. Where would you hold the festival? How would you let people know about it? Would you charge a fee or make it free? Would you give awards? If so, for what. Would you show programs made by kids? Would you have a panel of kids critiquing the films? What would make your festival different from others?

### **9. Learn about the professionals.**

Visit one of the film critics you studied in exercise one and interview them. Ask them about their job, why they like it, what they feel about the films they watch, why they became a film critic. Visit a video or film editing facility or a local TV station. Spend some time with one of the editors and find out what kind of computer hardware and software they use for editing, how professional equipment differs from home equipment, where they learned how to do their job, and how many different kinds of people it takes to run their business.

### **10. Life long learning**

Learn more about careers in film and video - from critics to production. Choose one of the following and find out more about what it takes to do the job, what education you need to do it, and what makes it interesting and challenging.

- \* Film or video critic
- \* Film or video editor
- \* Film or video producer
- \* Film or video writer
- \* Television programmer
- \* Television news anchor
- \* Media researcher