The Secret life of Walter Mitty

Walter Mitty (Ben Stiller), an employee at Life magazine, spends day after monotonous day developing photos for the publication. To escape the tedium, Walter inhabits a world of exciting daydreams in which he is the undeniable hero. Walter fancies a fellow employee named Cheryl (Kristen Wiig) and would love to date her, but he feels unworthy. However, he gets a chance to have a real adventure when Life's new owners send him on a mission to obtain the perfect photo for the final print issue.

Pre-movie discussion:

1. Based on the title and the poster, what do you think the movie is about?
2. Based on the casting of the film, what genre does this movie belong to?
3. Knowing that the lead actor is also the director, how do you think the movie will turn out? And how do you feel about directors who cast themselves as the main actors in their movies?

- **Try to take notes every time something sticks out to you, whether it's good or bad.** This could be costuming, makeup, set design, music, etc. Think about how this detail relates to the rest of the movie and what it means in the context of your review.
- **Take note of patterns you begin to notice as the movie unfolds.**

- **Analyze the mechanics of the movie.** Analyze the different components that came together in the movie as you watch. During or after your viewing, ask yourself what impression the movie left with you in these areas:

  - **Direction.** Consider the director and how he or she choose to portray/explain the events in the story. If the movie was slow, or didn't include things you thought were necessary, you can attribute this to the director. If you've seen other movies directed by the same person, compare them and determine which you like the most.
Movie watching session

- Cinematography. What techniques were used to film the movie? What setting and background elements helped to create a certain tone?
- Writing. Evaluate the script, including dialogue and characterization. Did you feel like the plot was inventive and unpredictable or boring and weak? Did the characters’ words seem credible to you?
- Editing. Was the movie choppy or did it flow smoothly from scene to scene? Take note of the use of lighting and other ambient effects. If the movie has computer-generated graphics, think about whether or not they looked realistic/fit in with the rest of the film.
- Costume design. Did the clothing choices fit the style of the movie? Did they contribute to the overall tone, rather than digressing from it?
- Set design. Consider how the setting of the film influenced its other elements. Did it add or subtract from the experience for you? If the movie was filmed in a real place, was this location well-chosen?
- Score or soundtrack. Did it work with the scenes? Was it over/under-used? Was it suspenseful? Amusing? Irritating? A soundtrack can make or break a movie, especially if the songs have a particular message or meaning to them.

Points of discussion for the second session:

- What is the morale of the story if there is any?
- Does the story connect with you on a personal level?
- How do you feel about Walter Mitty? How would you describe him in few words?
- Is this movie similar to any movie you have seen before?
- If you were to give it a ranking of 5 stars, how many stars would you give it?
- What other aspects of the movie would you like to change?
- Think of an alternate ending for the movie.
- Think of alternate soundtracks to be added to the movie.
Suggestions on how to write a well written movie review:

1. **Start with a compelling fact or opinion on the movie.** You want to get the reader hooked immediately. This sentence needs to give them a feel for your review and the movie -- is it good, great, terrible, or just okay? -- and keep them reading such as *Comparison to Relevant Event or Movie, Review in a nutshell* or *Context or Background Information*.

2. **Give a clear, well-established opinion early on.** Don't leave the reader guessing whether you like the movie or not. Let them know early on, so that you can spend the rest of the time "proving" your rating.

3. **Back up your opinion with specific evidence.** This is where taking notes during the movie really pays off. No one cares about your opinion if you can't give facts that support your argument.

4. **Move beyond the obvious plot analysis.** Plot is just one piece of a movie, and shouldn't dictate your entire review. Some movies don't have great or compelling plots, but that doesn't mean the movie itself is bad.

5. **Bring your review full-circle in the ending.** Give the review some closure, usually by trying back to your opening fact. Remember, people read reviews to decide whether or not they should watch a movie. End on a sentence that tells them.

**Possible Morale of the story:**

- Corporate greed and how it could affect middle class life and future.
- The importance of a balance between daydreaming and accepting reality.
- Anybody has the potential to be a somebody given the right motive.