Achievement	Achievement with Merit	Achievement with Excellence
Produce a selection of crafted and controlled writing which develops, sustains, and structures ideas.	Produce a selection of crafted and controlled writing which develops, sustains, and structures ideas convincingly.	Produce a selection of crafted and controlled writing which develops, sustains, and structures ideas effectively.
Produce a selection of crafted and controlled writing using language features appropriate to audience and purpose to create effects.	Produce a selection of crafted and controlled writing using language features appropriate to audience and purpose to create convincing effects	Produce a selection of crafted and controlled writing using language features appropriate to audience and purpose to command attention.

Level 2 English - 2.4 Writing Portfolio
Film Review

In this activity you will write a critical film review of at least 600 - 1500 words on the film *The World's Fastest Indian*. The review will be suitable for publication in a school newspaper, with a readership of Year 12 students and your teacher.

Before you begin writing you will work through some introductory activities to prepare you to write your review.

You will be assessed on how well you:
- express, develop and support your opinions about the film
- your ability to use a writing style suitable to the task and audience
- how well you organise your material
- your accuracy in spelling, punctuation, grammar, syntax, paragraphing.

Introduction

Going to the movies, buying a book, choosing what to watch on Netflix, purchasing music online or buying a computer game all cost time and money. The number of choices you are presented with as a consumer is staggering. With the available number of streaming services alone, the endless choice can waste time. A good review can help people make an informed decision that will reduce the amount of time and money they waste on products that turn out to be less than satisfying.

Task 1: Reviewing what you already know

a) Reflect on the questions below about receiving opinions and making decisions:

- How do you usually decide which films or videos you want to see?
- Whose opinion would you trust if they recommended a film or video? Why?
- Whose opinion would you not trust at all? Why not?
- What would convince you to trust the judgement of someone you didn't know who recommended a film?
- Do you ever read, listen to, or look at reviews? Are there any reviewers whose opinion you particularly trust? Which TV shows, radio stations, internet sites, newspapers or magazines have reviews that you would trust? Why?

Task 2: Building a vocabulary 'toolbox'

a) Read at least three film reviews. Find some examples here on film reviewer Roger Ebert's site. As you read you will develop a vocabulary toolbox of typical words and phrases that describe different aspects of films by adding them to the table below.

Film Review Vocabulary Toolbox

Camera work	Lighting	Special Effects	Acting and Casting
visually stunning technically superb dull	sumptuous evocative atmospheric	over-the-top stunning budget state-of-the-art	wooden convincing believable accomplished inspired
Costume	**Plot**	**Dialogue**	**Pace**
award-winning period stylish	predictable original muddled climax	leaden stilted realistic contrived	drawn-out bum-numbing tightly-scripted fast moving

Task 3: Planning your review

a) Record important details about the film your class has viewed such as: the title, director, genre, date of production, country of origin, and names of main actors.
Record notes on these questions:
- what is the director's main aim?
- what type of film is it supposed to be?
- who is the target audience?
- how is the film intended to make them feel or think?

b) Decide whether your review will be positive, negative, or mixed.

c) Read the table below showing how one student evaluated different aspects of the film <u>Dracula</u> to prepare for his film review.

Aspect	Director's intention	Intention achieved?	Supporting explanation and examples
Acting	*For Dracula to be scary and repulsive, but somehow sympathetic at the same time.*	*Yes*	*Oldman is such a good actor that you really believe in his love for his dead wife. When he first sees the photo of Mina his eyes look sad and gentle even though the rest of him is so grotesque.*
	For Keanu Reeves to seem like an innocent hero.	*No*	*His performance is stilted. When he gets married to Mina it looks like he is reading his lines off an autocue. Next to Oldman and Anthony Hopkins he just looks useless.*
	Wynona Ryder is supposed to be the woman that Dracula gave up his immortal soul for.	*No*	*She's just like Keanu. You don't ever believe that she's English. Even when she is supposed to be feeling passionate (like when she got married to Jonathon and when she started getting attracted to Dracula) she's no different.*
Atmosphere	*To use colour and lighting to create the horror mood.*	*Sort of*	*Beginning is excellent – the blood-washed screen when he stabs the crucifix, the way the sky changed from blue to red when Jonathon left London and arrived in Transylvania, the screen is tinted red every time Dracula is around to create a mood of horror. It gets*

			boring because he doesn't use any different techniques after the first half hour.
Pace	*To keep us interested and to get us on the edge of our seats – will Dracula steal Mina's soul forever?*	*No*	*It's too slow and repetitive. It lasts for 130 minutes but it seems even longer.*

Task 4: Read the review below and take notes on the structure used:

Deadly Dull Dracula
Review of <u>Bram Stoker's Dracula</u> directed by Francis Ford Coppola

I am the Count and I luvvvve to count. Anyone who has taken on the huge job of counting all the Dracula and vampire stories which have been made now has one more to add to their list – <u>Bram Stoker's Dracula</u> directed by Francis Ford Coppola. We all know how it goes: nocturnal, neck-biting, blood-sucking, castles, coffins, garlic, stakes through the heart. We already know every Dracula cliché there is. We've seen Buffy. And Sesame Street. Do we really need another vampire film? Does it add anything? Does it really, count? I don't think so.

The story begins in 1462. On finding his wife has been tricked into killing herself, Vlad takes his revenge on the world by turning himself into the blood-sucking vampire Dracula (Gary Oldman). 400 years later Jonathon (Keanu Reeves, a real estate agent, visits his castle. Dracula sees a photo of Keanu's fiancée, Mina, (Winona Ryder) who looks just like his dead wife, and decides to travel to London to see if they can patch things up.

There are some strong performances, and some which really need to be laid to rest - preferably six feet under. Gary Oldman is excellent as Dracula. He is totally believable as a handsome young hero at the beginning and as a love-sick vampire later. When his wife dies and he goes into a rage and stabs the cross I felt sorry for him and shocked that he could do such a terrible, blasphemous thing. When he sees the photo of Mina I felt scared for her and Jonathon. His love for her, even though perverted and murderous, was believable. On the other hand Keanu Reeves is as wooden as one of Dracula's

Writing is crafted, controlled and commands attention: effective varying of sentence lengths for emphasis. Sustained use of humour / puns throughout.

Writing is clearly and effectively structured: introduction indicates the tone of the review.

2.4

coffins, and it is hardly believable that anyone would give up their immortal soul for someone as inexpressive and irritating as Wynona Ryder.

Coppola creates a strong vampirish atmosphere, but to the point of overkill. Take his use of colour. As you might expect there is quite a bit of red and black in the film. When he stabs the cross, blood pours not just from the cross itself but from the sides and top of the screen to show the extent to which he had turned on God. When Jonathon leaves London the sky is bright blue but as he approaches Transylvania the sky is awash with red. Whenever Dracula is in the frame everything is tinted with red to create a real sense of blood and danger. This had me fascinated at first but unfortunately Coppola uses this one technique so much that you are soon longing to see a few other colours as well, and you begin to see it as an unoriginal and annoying gimmick.

The biggest fault in this film is the pace. The first half hour is great. I found the elaborate period costumes, the set design, and the excellent camera work all riveting. It was different from any film I had ever seen before. Unfortunately the film keeps on going, very, very slowly for another 100 tedious minutes. The pace was so slow that it gave me too much time to think, and what I began to think was boring, boring, boring!

<u>*Bram Stoker's Dracula*</u> *is based on a famous novel, made by a famous director, and stars famous actors. There are aspects of the film that are very good when you think about them by themselves. Unfortunately, when you put them all together, you've got a film that deserves a stake through its heart.*

2.4

Task 5: Write your review

a) Write a catchy title for your review.

b) Write an introduction that grabs the reader's attention and clearly states:
- the title of the film, director, principal actors
- the genre and the director's intention
- your opinion of the film.

c) Write a short paragraph giving an entertaining overview of the film.

d) Write one paragraph for each aspect that you have chosen to evaluate.

e) Write a concluding paragraph that restates your opinion of the film and ends your review strongly.