

Name:

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## 12 A.I. – Artificial Intelligence (STUDY SKILLS: analysing a film review + WRITING)

1 Read the following film review. Then tick the correct answer a), b), c) or d).



Can a robot be taught to love and be loved in return? This really fascinating subject is explored by world-famous director Steven Spielberg, who took over this film project from Stanley Kubrick after his sudden death. Based on the short story “Supertoys Last All Summer Long” by Brian Aldiss, “A.I. – Artificial Intelligence” (2001) is a great sci-fi drama, although in some scenes you can really feel that the film is the work of two totally different directors. In the not-so-distant future, humans have invented a new class of realistic robots called mechas. David, a prototype model created by Cybertronics, is the first artificial robot kid who has real feelings of love. His new “mother”, Monica Swinton, adopts him because her real son, Martin, is thought to be dying from a disease. When Martin’s disease is suddenly cured, the family

decides to return David to Cybertronics to be destroyed. On the way to Cybertronics Monica feels guilty and abandons<sup>1</sup> David in the forest. From now on, David tries to escape from the police and other people who consider hunting and killing mechas a kind of sport. He is helped by Gigolo Joe (a great performance by Jude Law), a male prostitute mecha who is on the run for a crime he did not commit. Together they start searching for the Blue Fairy, who David remembers from the story of Pinocchio. David is convinced that she will be able to magically turn him into a real human boy so that Monica will finally love and accept him.

“Artificial Intelligence” seems to reflect the minds of the two directors involved. Things move very slowly in the first hour or so, but once David has been abandoned, the story becomes really exciting and adventurous. The special effects are not only very impressive, but they fit well into the story instead of calling attention to themselves. The soundtrack by famous Hollywood composer<sup>2</sup> John Williams manages to create a dark, futuristic atmosphere.

But if you expect something like “Star Wars” or a Disney Movie, this sci-fi film is not for you. It may sometimes be a bit too sentimental, but the fate of the mecha child David (played fantastically by Haley Joel Osment) really gets under the skin. Is it right to treat an artificial being as we like, and where do we draw the line between life and non-life? And, although the ending is a major disappointment, it is worth challenging the regular popcorn movie-going audience with some food for thought.

- 1 The film “A.I.” was started by  
 a) Brian Aldiss.                      b) Steven Spielberg.                      c) Stanley Kubrick.                      d) John Williams.
- 2 The story is about  
 a) destroying robots.                      b) robot crime.                      c) robot emotions.                      d) robot prototypes.
- 3 The critic thinks the main actors are  
 a) very good.                      b) a bit artificial.                      c) too sentimental.                      d) boring.
- 4 One of the weaknesses of the film is  
 a) the story.                      b) the effects.                      c) the music.                      d) the ending.
- 5 Which of these features is not mentioned in the review?  
 a) the setting                      b) the acting                      c) the camera angles                      d) the director

2 Write a review of a film you didn’t like. Include the most important features of a film review.

<sup>1</sup> (to) abandon s.o. = *jmd. aussetzen*; <sup>2</sup> composer = *Komponist*