

Critical Review of a Sitcom

INTRODUCTION

Attention-grabbing opening

Background information

Thesis statement

BODY

First reason with support based on observations and examples

Double the Quality

What would you think if you ran into a person who looked exactly like you—and who turned out to be your long-lost sibling? You'd probably think you were on a TV show, and with good reason. That very situation launched the popular sitcom *Sister, Sister*, in which identical twins meet after being separated at birth. After several seasons, the banter and adventures of these twin sisters continue to brighten up an otherwise dull weekday afternoon lineup on local station ZYX-TV. You can tune in to the double serving of comedy every Monday through Friday at 5:30 P.M. If you do, you'll be delighted by this sitcom's appealing characters, talented actors, and credible themes.

Back in the sitcom's first episode, total strangers Tamera Campbell (played by Tamera Mowry) and Tia Landry (Tia Mowry) came together by chance in a department store. The girls' adoptive parents—Tamera's father Ray (Tim Reid) and Tia's mother Lisa (Jackée Harry)—did some detective work and discovered that the girls were in fact twins and had been separated at birth. The girls were determined not to be separated again, so Ray, Tamera, Lisa, and Tia brought their very different personalities together to create a lively household of four.

Each of the show's characters is likable and realistic, although only Tia and Tamera are truly well-rounded individuals. As they deal with everyday teen issues, the girls display a perfectly believable mix of fun-loving mischief and good-hearted compassion. Their parents Lisa and

Critical Review of a Sitcom *continued*

Second reason with support based on observations and examples

Ray, however, who are intended to be polar opposites, are less well developed and become somewhat predictable after several viewings. In the subplot of one later episode, the slightly stodgy Ray won't hear of adopting the little dog who has wandered into the kitchen and into Lisa's heart. The always flamboyant Lisa, however, proceeds to deck the dog out in a bright pink jacket with feathered trim that matches her own sweater.

Whether the character each plays is one- or multi-dimensional, though, the four main actors do an excellent job in front of the cameras. Considering the low level of acting found in many sitcoms, the competence with which these actors deliver their lines and play off each other is remarkable indeed. Tia and Tamera's relationship as real-life sisters probably contributes a great deal to their interactions on screen, which are fluid and fast moving. Jackée Harry perfects Lisa's lively, slangy language while Tim Reid matches his character's personality with more studied, conventional speech. Tia and Tamera, meanwhile, glibly move back and forth between each type of diction. In one scene, Tamera asks her boyfriend Jordan, "So, you down for the cause?"—the cause being their attempt to hook up their own TV cable in time for a party. Jordan answers, "I'm down," but Tamera shifts gears with "Now, what do we do?" All of the show's actors—the four leads and the many secondary actors alike—seem to be having a great time performing. The sense of onstage frivolity becomes all the more evident in the outtakes that play

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Third reason with support based on observations and examples

CONCLUSION

Restatement of most of thesis as a recommendation

while the final credits roll.

The themes that *Sister, Sister* deals with are neither sensationalistic nor too bland. Instead, the show presents down-to-earth, extremely credible situations spiced with enough plot twists to be engaging. In one episode, for example, Tamera and Jordan find themselves in an emotional battle as they give conflicting advice to callers on Tamera's radio talk show. In the end, both learn that their real-life relationship is more important than the sensationalized radio show. In another episode, Tia avoids contact with her ex-boyfriend, Tyreke, by asking a friend to be his partner in a drama class. The plot twists, however, when Tia's friend and Tyreke are attracted toward each other and Tia is forced to admit that she still has feelings for Tyreke—a surprising situation, perhaps, but still a realistic one.

Even though some of the characters aren't as well developed as they could be, *Sister, Sister* remains one of the most consistently engaging sitcoms in recent years. Mix interesting themes with likable and realistic characters, add competent actors who truly seem to enjoy playing their roles, and you've got a recipe for a sitcom with lasting appeal.

Critical Review of a Sitcom

Definition

A **critical review of a sitcom** takes a close look at certain elements of a television program. The reviewer offers an opinion and a recommendation based on standards for evaluating the effectiveness of the program's individual elements.

Many critical reviews use the structure illustrated in the framework below. Print this framework and use it as a guide when you write your own critical review of a sitcom.

Framework

Directions and Explanations

Introduction

- Grab your readers' attention.
- Give background information.
- Include a thesis that states your opinion and lists reasons for it.

Ladies and gentlemen of the jury What makes this sitcom stand out? To make your readers want to read your review, mention this element in an initial question or statement.

You have been selected to hear Include scheduling and channel information so that readers will know how to find the sitcom.

The charges for or against State your thesis—your opinion of the sitcom and the reasons you hold this opinion. Keep your list of reasons in mind as you complete your review.



Body

- Give first reason with observations and examples.
- Give second reason with observations and examples.
- Give third reason with observations and examples.

The evidence clearly shows Evaluate how successfully the sitcom measured up against the criteria you chose. Back up your observations with specific examples.



Conclusion

- Restate your opinion in the form of a recommendation.
- Bring review to a close.

And the verdict is Restate your opinion of the sitcom. Let your readers know whether you recommend they watch the show.