

Rated R, but why?

1 **G**iven the large role they play in shaping American culture, it is remarkable how little is known about U.S. movie ratings. Who decides whether a movie is rated PG (parental guidance suggested) or NC-17 (no one under 17 admitted)? What criteria do they use? How does the appeals process work? Those are some of the questions posed by an illuminating new documentary, “This Film Is Not Yet Rated,” directed by Kirby Dick. Dick’s film makes a compelling case that there needs to be greater transparency in the ratings process, and significant reforms.

2 The U.S. ratings system is operated by two industry groups, the Motion Picture Association of America (MPAA) and the National Association of Theater Owners. The system is private, but the public has a strong interest in it, since the ratings play a large role in shaping movie content. Films rated NC-17 can have a hard time attracting audiences. Producers are often willing to make substantial cuts or changes in movies to get a more commercially viable rating.

3 Dick’s documentary investigates how the ratings system works, and the picture is not pretty. Most of the raters are anonymous, so the public cannot assess whether they are qualified or impartial judges.

4 Dick also uncovers serious problems with the ratings procedures.

When he appealed the NC-17 rating first given to his own film, he was informed, remarkably, that he could not cite the ratings given to other movies in his argument.

5 “This Film Is Not Yet Rated” also argues that there are built-in biases – that studio movies are treated more leniently than independent films, that gay-themed movies are more likely than other movies to get NC-17 ratings for the same kind of content, and that the system deals more harshly with sexual content than violence.

6 The current MPAA president, Dan Glickman, said that the system is under review and that some aspects – like not allowing appealing parties to cite other movies – need to be changed. Glickman deserves credit for being open to reform, but he should think expansively. There is no legitimate reason, for example, for the raters to be anonymous.

7 It is questionable whether the movie industry should be rating movies at all. It might make more sense to simply make information about content available, and let parents make their own assessments. If there are going to be ratings, they should be done through a fair and open process. After the revelations of “This Film Is Not Yet Rated,” the burden is now on the MPAA to give its ratings system a serious upgrade. ■

Tekst 9 Rated R, but why?

- 1p **39** What is the main function of paragraph 1?
- A To criticise the subject matter of Kirby Dick's latest documentary.
 - B To give the writer's personal opinion on film-rating practices.
 - C To outline what Kirby Dick's latest documentary is about.
 - D To tone down negative comments on the film-rating system.
- 1p **40** What is the effect of film-rating, according to paragraph 2?
- A It allows parents to determine whether a film is suitable or unsuitable for children.
 - B It can strongly influence the final versions of the films that are released.
 - C It could lead to the MPAA demanding payment in exchange for good ratings.
 - D It tends to persuade people who prefer action movies to stay away from PG-rated films.
- 1p **41** What is the function of paragraphs 4 and 5?
- A To add to the arguments against current film-rating practices.
 - B To indicate the positive effect of film-rating on cult films.
 - C To introduce a promising alternative to film-rating.
 - D To show the devastating impact of film-rating on ordinary films.
- 2p **42** Geef van elk van de volgende beweringen aan of deze wel of niet overeenstemt met de inhoud van de alinea's 6 en 7.
- 1 The film industry should base its rating system on parental judgements.
 - 2 The film industry should review and classify films.
 - 3 The rating-system process should be made highly transparent.
 - 4 Using the ratings of other movies in appeal procedures should be permitted.
- Noteer het nummer van elke bewering, gevolgd door "wel" of "niet".

Bronvermelding

Een opsomming van de in dit examen gebruikte bronnen, zoals teksten en afbeeldingen, is te vinden in het bij dit examen behorende correctievoorschrift, dat na afloop van het examen wordt gepubliceerd.