

## Guidelines

Here are the rules or Guidelines that BBFC Examiners use to help decide if a work is suitable for being passed out at U, PG, 12A or 12.



### **U - Universal Suitable for All**

Different children are upset by different things, so it is sometimes difficult to say what might upset a particular child. However, U films should be suitable for audiences aged four years and over. If there is any violence, threat or horror in a U film, it should be over quickly and the film should tell children that everything will turn out okay. Films and DVDs for children

should make clear to them the difference between right and wrong.

- **Theme/Topics** - Films and DVDs should be about subjects which are generally suitable for younger audiences.
- **Language** - There should be very little mild bad language.
- **Nudity** - There can be occasional glimpses of people who have no clothes on, as long as they are not linked to romantic activities.
- **Sex and relationships** - Only mild references (e.g. to 'making love') and mild behaviour (e.g. kissing) are allowed.
- **Violence and Threat** - Mild violence only. Some mild threat and menace are allowed.
- **Dangerous Behaviour** - There should be no dangerous behaviour that can be easily copied by young children.
- **Weapons** - There should be no focus on weapons that are realistic or easy to get hold of.
- **Horror** - Moments with ghosts, witches and monsters should be over quickly and not be too scary. Nothing at U should really frighten or disturb young viewers. The film or DVD should tell children that everything is okay.
- **Drugs** - Drugs should not be mentioned, unless the film or DVD teaches that drugs are dangerous.
- **Discrimination** - There can be no language or behaviour shown that would offend a person's religion, colour, gender, sexuality or disability, unless the film or DVD teaches it to be wrong.

Examples of films passed U include *Hannah Montana: The Movie* and *High School Musical 3: Senior Year*.



### **PG - Parental Guidance**

**Can be viewed by all ages, but some scenes may be unsuitable for young children.**

Children of any age may watch a PG rated film or DVD, with or without an adult. A 'PG' film should not trouble or worry a child aged eight or older. However the PG does tell parents that the content of the film may upset younger or more sensitive children.

- **Theme/Topics** - Films and DVDs may be about more grown up topics such as crime, racism, bullying or violence in the home. There must be nothing which suggests these are good things.
- **Language** - Mild bad language only.
- **Nudity** - Some nudity is allowed, but not if it is linked to romantic activities.
- **Sex and Relationships** - Sex can be mentioned, suggested or joked about, but only discreetly.
- **Violence and Threat** - There can be stronger violence than at U, but without detail. Violence which takes place in a comedy, fantasy, or historical film may be treated less strictly.
- **Dangerous Behaviour** - There should be no detail of fighting techniques or other harmful and dangerous activities that children might easily copy.
- **Weapons** - There should be no focus on weapons that are realistic or easy to get hold of. Weapons should not be made to look attractive.
- **Horror** - Frightening scenes should not be too long or scary. Horror scenes which are part of a fantasy film may be treated less strictly.
- **Drugs** - There should be no mention of illegal drugs or drug taking unless completely harmless, or the film carries an anti-drug message.
- **Discrimination** - There can be no language or behaviour shown that would offend a person's religion, colour, gender, sexuality or disability, unless the film or DVD teaches it to be wrong or is presented within an educational or historical context. Discrimination by a character who is seen as a hero by the audience is also unlikely to be allowed.

Examples of films passed PG include *Night at the Museum 2* and *Race to Witch Mountain*.

## *The 12 Categories*

**The 12A rating is only used for films shown in cinemas.** It is given to films that are best suited to those aged 12 or older. However, people younger than 12 may see a 12A so long as they are accompanied by an adult! In such circumstances, responsibility for allowing a child under 12 to view lies with the accompanying adult.

**The 12 rating is only found on videos and DVDs.** No one younger than 12 may rent or buy a 12 rated video or DVD. Exactly the same rules are used to classify films at 12A as used to classify videos and DVDs at 12.



Suitable for 12 years and over. No-one younger than 12 may see a '12A' film in a cinema unless accompanied by an adult. No-one younger than 12 may rent or buy a '12' rated video or DVD. Responsibility for allowing under 12s to view lies with the accompanying or supervising adult.

**Theme:** Mature themes are acceptable, but their treatment must be suitable for young teenagers.

**Language:** The use of strong language (eg 'f\*\*\*') must be infrequent. Racist abuse is also of particular concern.

**Nudity:** Nudity is allowed, but in a sexual context it must be brief and discreet.

**Sex:** Sexual activity may be implied. Sex references may reflect what is likely to be familiar to most adolescents but should not go beyond what is suitable for them.

**Violence:** Violence must not dwell on detail. There should be no emphasis on injuries or blood. Sexual violence may only be implied or briefly and discreetly indicated.

**Imitable techniques:** Dangerous techniques (eg combat, hanging, suicide and self-harming) should not dwell on imitable detail or appear pain or harm free. Easily accessible weapons should not be glamorised.

**Horror:** Sustained moderate threat and menace are permitted. Occasional gory moments only.

**Drugs:** Any misuse of drugs must be infrequent and should not be glamorised or instructional.

**Discrimination:** The film or DVD as a whole must not approve of language or behaviour that would offend a person's religion, colour, gender, sexuality or disability. Aggressive use of this type of language and behaviour is unacceptable unless clearly not approved of.