Student:

Harriet

Topic:

How would I create a screen play inspired by the work of Woody Allen?

What is your name?

Hi, I’m Hattie.

What was your research question?

My research question was ‘How would I create a screen play inspired by the work of Woody Allen?’

How did you decide that would be your question?

Well I’ve always taken a keen interest in films and film making and I wanted to choose a topic that would improve my knowledge and understanding within that field and I’d seen Midnight in Paris and I found it very intriguing and so I looked more into Woody Allen and found that a lot of his films had recurring themes and ideas and characters and locations that were considered stereotypical to his style so I wanted to investigate what made his mind work and his creative process. I knew from the beginning that I wanted to look into something within the film world because I’d been inspired by some past students who’d looked at Tim Burton and Martin Scorcese and I always knew I wanted to do something in that area but I wanted to make sure that I chose something that I didn’t really know much about.

How did you plan to answer your question?

Originally my plan was to write a small part of a screen play as part of my project but as I went on I sort of realized that that was probably a bit too ambitious and so I refined my topic, back to instead of actually writing a screen play how one would go about writing a screen play. So rather than learning about the actual screenplay process I learnt all the aspects of a Woody Allen film that someone who would consider writing an Allenesque screen play would need to know.

Where did your information mainly come from?

I took a lot from his films. I watched about ten, eleven, twelve of his films and, which not only helped me learn specifically what he had put into his films but it also helped me gain some critical film analysis skills. I spent a lot of time at the State Library and local libraries, scanning through general film history books and specific Woody Allen books and highlighting all the information I needed. I did a little bit of internet research but that was mainly subjective information of people’s opinions so I could gain a general understanding of people's own interpretations of his work. I was very keen to talk to some people so I spoke to family and friends and people I knew who had…who were able to give me contacts for people for film directors and producers and writers. And I also spent some time looking around for film experts and film buffs which I really wanted to speak to but in the end I realised that my research didn’t need…it wasn’t necessary to speak to people to complete my research so I didn’t really have time in the end.

How did you present your research outcome?

My research outcome was an informative report and I wrote that with the intention that anyone who wanted to learn about Allen’s work without any prior knowledge would be able to pick it up and it would be easily accessible for them. My report began with a bit of an outline as to Woody Allen’s background because I think it’s really important that people understand that his past has had quite a heavy influence on his work as in where he grew up and his religious and cultural background. And then I went through all the themes and ideas and stereotypical characters and visuals and music. Basically everything, every sort of aspect that is used within a Woody Allen film to create a wide portrait of what brings all of them together to create his work.

What challenges came up whilst undertaking the Research Project?

I didn’t have too many issues except that at the beginning I thought I’d chosen quite a challenging topic, so it took me a while to understand what I needed to look for and how to go about it but I think that was really useful because I gained new problem solving skills that are really useful now and will be in the future.

What would you say to students about to start their Research Project?

Make sure you choose a topic that you’re not only interested in, as in something that you don’t know much about so you’re motivated to do it. Pick something that’s challenging so something that won’t be solved in a simple google search, something that requires a bit of problem solving and also not to leave everything until the last minute because it sort of looms over you.

How did your Research Project prepare you for what you are doing now?

It’s definitely helped with my problem solving skills and my researching skills which have been really useful in Year 12 and will be next year in uni. I’ve also gained a deeper understanding, not only of Woody Allen but just of the general film industry and the creative process and how a director brings their creative visions to life. As someone who wants to go into the film industry within the future that’s valuable information.