

HOW TO WRITE YOUR PAPER:

Examine the topic question:

Is “Waltz with Bashir” successful as a **documentary film**, or does its reliance on **animation**, its depiction of **surreal images**, and its lack of **context** and **commentary** mean that it is instead, as Halkin implies, a film that **ignores the facts** in order to be anti-war (50)?

The topic question suggests that there are two ways to write this paper. Choose one, but remember that as you write your initial position may change.

- A. Either the film is a successful documentary (why?)
- B. Or it isn't. (why not?)

The components of your draft:

- You might have all of these components, including a teeny introduction and conclusion, in every single paragraph.
- Or you might have a cluster of paragraphs that work together and as a group contain all these components.
- THE COMPONENTS CAN APPEAR IN ANY ORDER.

INTRODUCTION: (Don't waste time writing an introduction first. Here is a perfectly workable “temporary” introduction that can hold the place until you're ready to write the real introduction.) This is my paper about *Waltz with Bashir* and whether it's an effective documentary film. I think it isn't, and here is why **OR** I think it is and here is why.

- If this is the introduction to a paragraph (rather than to the whole paper), you can make the introduction a little more specific by employing some key terms mentioned in the assignment prompt, such as documentary, surreal, context, commentary, factuality. For example: ***This is my paragraph about whether the lack of context makes Waltz with Bashir an effective documentary film.***

IDEAS: Relevant Halkin quotations. Talk back to him: you agree with him, or you disagree with him, or both. If you're doing well, you'll go from his idea to yours, and your ideas will be better than his.

EVIDENCE: Quotations and scene descriptions from the film, as specific and detailed as possible. Re-watch the scene, look at the scans of the book, and if necessary write to LM asking her to give you quotations (from the book). Instead of page number, give the scene number.

LOGIC: How the evidence is helping to make your point. You may not be sure what your point is, but the logic will help you to figure it out. When you get there, you'll say (or feel) AHA!!!!

CONCLUSION: I AM RIGHT.

Do you agree with Halkin's argument that the film's lack of context and commentary shows that "we have no patience for history"?

What are the positive and negative benefits of the use of animation in "Waltz with Bashir?" What does the animated approach make possible, that would not have been possible if Folman had simply composed the film out of the interviews he conducted with real people? Write about any three scenes in the film. Why would Halkin consider these scenes to be "intellectually shallow" or to show "no patience for history"? In your opinion, do these scenes successfully depict what actually happened, even though they present an altered view of reality? Does the use of animation and surreal imagery compromise its accuracy, or add to it? How much does it matter that the "context" is not adequately provided, which, according to Halkin, leaves out the historical facts, and therefore presents "visual bites" which he negatively compares to TV news.

Your essay should include the following:

The historical facts that the film is depicting.

Briefly describe and contextualize the scenes you're writing about.

Explore what aspects of the scenes are "documentary" (accurately depicting actual events)

Explore what aspects of the scenes are somehow altered by the use of animation.

Review several of Halkin's criticisms of the film's treatment of historical events.

Take a position in response to his ideas.

Groucho: Having innovated with this film, what, I guess, is the first animated documentary – is that right?

Ari Folman: This is what they say, you know.

G: I was sort of surprised to learn that, having done that, you had no particular interest in developing the form or doing something else, but I suppose this is sort of the ultimate expression for you of that form. Is that why?

AF: I think I was stupid to declare it was an animated documentary five years ago, because it gave me so many problems. And the film establishment is so narrow-minded. It is unbelievable. And sometimes they just – you know, I try to raise money, documentary funds – they told me it can't be a documentary if it's animated, you know? And then I went to animation funds and fiction funds – [they] said, "Okay, go back to documentary, because it's a documentary." So I realized how they're really not open to any new dimension of film. Today I don't care if it's declared a documentary or not – it's up to you. For me it's just a film. And this is it. It doesn't matter if it's the first one like this.

G: To tell this story in animation, it seemed to me when I was watching it that it was the right approach fit to the right story, that it was the only way to do it, in a way.

AF: That's right.

G: Of course, that's easy for us to see in hindsight, but it's kind of a stroke of genius to figure that out at the outset.

AF: I don't know. It was natural for me because I couldn't do it any way else, you know? It's like, do it like that or don't do it. And if you look at all the dimensions you have there, which were reality and dreams and subconscious and lost memories and stuff like that — hallucinations and war, which is probably the most real thing on earth: how can you do it in live action?