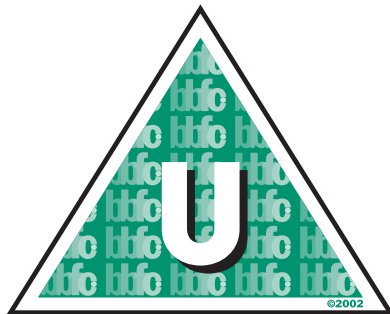


The Categories

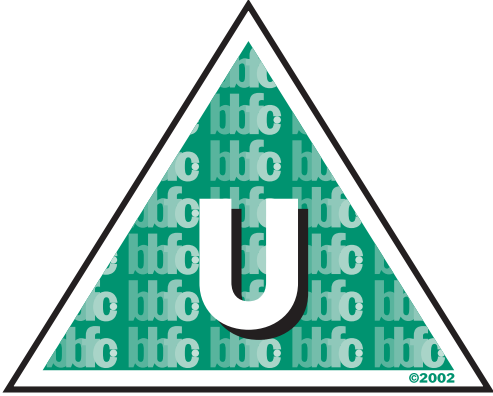
The BBFC endeavours to classify submitted works in one of the following categories:



The following pages set out guidance on how the main issues (for example, sex and violence) are specifically applied from 'U' through to 'R18'. The criteria should be read in the light of the general approach set out earlier under 'General Principles', 'Overarching Factors' and 'Main Issues'.

Because works from time to time present issues in ways which cannot be anticipated, these criteria will not be applied in an over-literal way if such an interpretation would lead to an outcome which would confound audience expectations.





U Universal – Suitable for all

It is impossible to predict what might upset any particular child. But a ‘U’ film should be suitable for audiences aged four years and over. ‘U’ films should be set within a positive moral framework and should offer reassuring counterbalances to any violence, threat or horror.

If a work is particularly suitable for a pre-school child to view alone, this will be indicated in the Consumer Advice.

Discrimination

No discriminatory language or behaviour unless clearly disapproved of.

Drugs

No references to illegal drugs or drug misuse unless they are infrequent and innocuous, or there is a clear educational purpose or anti-drug message suitable for young children.

Horror

Scary sequences should be mild, brief and unlikely to cause undue anxiety to young children. The outcome should be reassuring.

Imitable behaviour

No potentially dangerous behaviour which young children are likely to copy. No emphasis on realistic or easily accessible weapons.

Language

Infrequent use only of very mild bad language.

Nudity

Occasional natural nudity, with no sexual context.

Sex

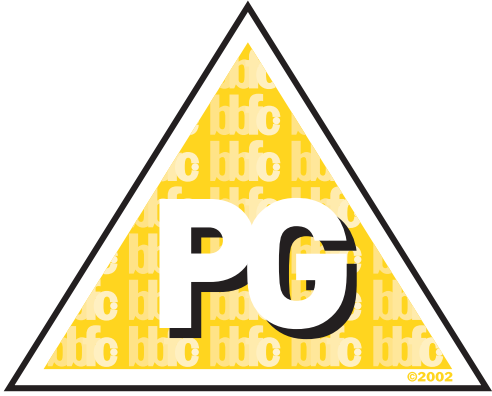
Mild sexual behaviour (for example, kissing) and references only (for example, to ‘making love’).

Theme

While problematic themes may be present, their treatment must be sensitive and appropriate for young children.

Violence

Mild violence only. Occasional mild threat or menace only.



**PG Parental Guidance –
General viewing, but some
scenes may be unsuitable
for young children**

**Unaccompanied children of
any age may watch. A ‘PG’
film should not disturb a child
aged around eight or older.
However, parents are advised
to consider whether the content
may upset younger or more
sensitive children.**

Discrimination

Discriminatory language or behaviour is unlikely to be acceptable unless clearly disapproved of or in an educational or historical context. Discrimination by a character with which children can readily identify is unlikely to be acceptable.

Drugs

References to illegal drugs or drug misuse must be innocuous or carry a suitable anti-drug message.

Horror

Frightening sequences should not be prolonged or intense. Fantasy settings may be a mitigating factor.

Imitable behaviour

No detail of potentially dangerous behaviour which young children are likely to copy. No glamorisation of realistic or easily accessible weapons.

Language

Mild bad language only.

Nudity

Natural nudity, with no sexual context.

Sex

Sexual activity may be implied, but should be discreet and infrequent. Mild sex references and innuendo only.

Theme

Where more serious issues are featured (for example, domestic violence) nothing in their treatment should condone unacceptable behaviour.

Violence

Moderate violence, without detail, may be allowed, if justified by its context (for example, history, comedy or fantasy).



12A/12 – Suitable for 12 years and over

Exactly the same criteria are used to classify works at ‘12A’ and ‘12’. These categories are awarded where the material is suitable, in general, only for those aged 12 and over. Works classified at these categories may upset children under 12 or contain material which many parents will find unsuitable for them.

The ‘12A’ category exists only for cinema films. No one younger than 12 may see a ‘12A’ film in a cinema unless accompanied by an adult, and films classified ‘12A’ are not recommended for a child below 12. An adult may take a younger child if, in their judgement, the film is suitable for that particular child. In such circumstances, responsibility for allowing a child under 12 to view lies with the accompanying adult.

The ‘12’ category exists only for video works. No one younger than 12 may rent or buy a ‘12’ rated video work.

Discrimination

Discriminatory language or behaviour must not be endorsed by the work as a whole. Aggressive discriminatory language or behaviour is unlikely to be acceptable unless clearly condemned.

Drugs

Any misuse of drugs must be infrequent and should not be glamorised or give instructional detail.

Horror

Moderate physical and psychological threat may be permitted, provided disturbing sequences are not frequent or sustained.

Imitable behaviour

Dangerous behaviour (for example, hanging, suicide and self-harming) should not dwell on detail which could be copied, or appear pain or harm free. Easily accessible weapons should not be glamorised.

Language

Moderate language is allowed. The use of strong language (for example, ‘fuck’) must be infrequent.

Nudity

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

Sex

Sexual activity may be briefly and discreetly portrayed. Sex references should not go beyond what is suitable for young teenagers. Frequent crude references are unlikely to be acceptable.

Theme

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

Violence

Moderate violence is allowed but should not dwell on detail. There should be no emphasis on injuries or blood, but occasional gory moments may be permitted if justified by the context.

Sexual violence may only be implied or briefly and discreetly indicated, and must have a strong contextual justification.



15 – Suitable only for 15 years and over

**No one younger than 15 may
see a '15' film in a cinema.
No one younger than 15 may
rent or buy a '15' rated
video work.**

Discrimination

The work as a whole must not endorse discriminatory language or behaviour.

Drugs

Drug taking may be shown but the film as a whole must not promote or encourage drug misuse. The misuse of easily accessible and highly dangerous substances (for example, aerosols or solvents) is unlikely to be acceptable.

Horror

Strong threat and menace are permitted unless sadistic or sexualised.

Imitable behaviour

Dangerous behaviour (for example, hanging, suicide and self-harming) should not dwell on detail which could be copied. Easily accessible weapons should not be glamorised.

Language

There may be frequent use of strong language (for example, 'fuck'). The strongest terms (for example, 'cunt') may be acceptable if justified by the context. Aggressive or repeated use of the strongest language is unlikely to be acceptable.

Nudity

Nudity may be allowed in a sexual context but without strong detail. There are no constraints on nudity in a non-sexual or educational context.

Sex

Sexual activity may be portrayed without strong detail. There may be strong verbal references to sexual behaviour, but the strongest references are unlikely to be acceptable unless justified by context. Works whose primary purpose is sexual arousal or stimulation are unlikely to be acceptable.

Theme

No theme is prohibited, provided the treatment is appropriate for 15 year olds.

Violence

Violence may be strong but should not dwell on the infliction of pain or injury. The strongest gory images are unlikely to be acceptable. Strong sadistic or sexualised violence is also unlikely to be acceptable.

There may be detailed verbal references to sexual violence but any portrayal of sexual violence must be discreet and have a strong contextual justification.



Suitable only for adults

**No-one younger than 18 may see an '18' film in a cinema.
No-one younger than 18 may rent or buy an '18' rated video.**

In line with the consistent findings of the BBFC's public consultations and The Human Rights Act 1998, at '18' the BBFC's guideline concerns will not normally override the principle that adults should be free to choose their own entertainment. Exceptions are most likely in the following areas:

- where the material is in breach of the criminal law, or has been created through the commission of a criminal offence
- where material or treatment appears to the BBFC to risk harm to individuals or, through their behaviour, to society – for example, any detailed portrayal of violent or dangerous acts, or of illegal drug use, which may cause harm to public health or morals. This may include portrayals of sexual or sexualised violence which might, for example, eroticise or endorse sexual assault
- where there are more explicit images of sexual activity which cannot be justified by context. Such images may be appropriate in 'R18' works, and in 'sex works' (see below) would normally be confined to that category.

In the case of video works (including video games), which may be more accessible to younger viewers, intervention may be more frequent than for cinema films.

Sex education at '18'

Where sex material genuinely seeks to inform and educate in matters such as human sexuality, safer sex and health, explicit images of sexual activity may be permitted.

Sex works at '18'

Sex works are works whose primary purpose is sexual arousal or stimulation. Sex works containing only material which may be simulated are generally passed '18'. Sex works containing clear images of real sex, strong fetish material, sexually explicit animated images, or other very strong sexual images will be confined to the 'R18' category. Material which is unacceptable in a sex work at 'R18' is also unacceptable in a sex work at '18'.