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## Weaving whimsy and wonder in film: A Wonka review

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Directed by Paul King, *Wonka* is a prequel to Roald Dahl's 1964 novel *Charlie and the Chocolate Factory*. The book has already spawned its fair share of movie adaptations, and King's *Wonka* builds on those films.

Despite scoffing at the underwhelming trailer and being on the fence about Timothée Chalamet being cast as Willy Wonka, I think much of the movie's feel-good appeal has to be attributed to the casting. Chalamet remains wide-eyed and earnest throughout the entire runtime without veering into naivete. His performance successfully captures some of the unpredictability behind the eyes of Gene Wilder's Wonka portrayal in *Willy Wonka & the Chocolate Factory*.

The film feels whimsical. However, it is also gentle in its entirely wholesome world where every frame looks like a page from a beloved picture book. The cartoonish sets, enchanting musicals, and costumes create an environment that feels magical yet safe. The colour grading and cinematography allow for beautiful emotional transitions and storytelling. Given that it is a prequel, knowing that Willy Wonka will ultimately succeed in building his chocolate empire makes the viewing experience feel less like a thrill ride and more like a comforting stroll.

However, *Wonka* disappointed far too many people who went in expecting more. Besides the joys of reading, the value of hanging onto dreams, and the evil nature of corporate monopolies, the film felt forced when it tried to string together plot complications and themes that were unnecessary. The musical numbers might stress the importance of dreams, wonder, and friendship but fail to achieve much beyond reminding us how important those things are. Moreover, the film relies too heavily on a child actor to carry the entire storyline and despite its two-hour runtime, the film felt more show than tell.

While *Wonka* is not the perfect film we looked forward to, the ending is moving and reinforces the core message of the importance of relationships. At the end of the day, I would still argue *Wonka* is a warm watch as long as you're accompanied by friends and family – people who grew up enchanted by the thought of coming across a golden ticket one day.



# The whoas and woes of BUNKING CLASSES

## Bunking classes may seem fun, but they do come with repercussions.

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As I attempted to silence my friend's panting, I looked around the corner to see if the coast was clear. Not a single soul was in sight. With a final glance around the place, I pulled myself into the empty hallway with my friend. It must have been another hundred metres, and we would have been there. All the junk food of the world would be at our feet, the canteen would be our stage. Just as the final stretch came in sight, an enemy sprang to our periphery, blocking our path with his unconquerable vastness. Alas, Kuddus Sir had beaten us at our own game.

Thus, concluded our pathetic first attempt at bunking classes. And yet, we never forgot the thrill of evading authority, the feeling of freedom that comes with not having to sit through classes where time passes at half the speed. Our eyes alternated between the clock's motionless hands and the lush, verdant fields outside our classroom where classmates who were done with their classes had been frolicking about and playing badminton.

The ever-present Fear Of Missing Out (FOMO) tempted us like never before towards a life of carefree lethargy. And so, we followed the siren's call to the blissful realm of bunking.

With each new class skipped, our skills at eluding teachers sharpened, and our love for the life of crime deepened. Our escapades even attracted the interest of our classmates, who became eager to dip their toes into the dark world of dilly-dallying. We simply couldn't find a reason to give up this extravagant life of excess for the miserable boredom that awaited us inside the classrooms.

Over the years, we have realised that bunking is an art form on par with hyper-realistic oil painting or writing a French epistolary novel. To be able to survive school without butting

heads with school authority while also making the best of your school experience, bunking has to be done selectively. You simply cannot afford to skip your tyrannical Physics teacher's class and expect to finish the term unscathed. But what about your Geography class where your snores go unnoticed by the teacher? The world might not end if a few students are missing in that particular class.

It is also a good idea to pull out the Marauder's Map, track the movements of the strictest faculty members, and make a beeline in the opposite direction. The trick, after all, is to never get caught in the act.

All of this is not to say we condone or encourage bunking. Yes, it can lead to unbelievably fun times and you might end up making unforgettable memories. But that doesn't take away from the fact that bunking is, essentially, wrong. You never know what you might have learned had you resisted the urge to skip classes. As students who have extensive experience with the art of bunking, we can assure you that the costs do add up. In our case, we spent one too many periods in relaxation and found ourselves ousted from the exam hall, clutching a letter addressed to our parents.

Everything should be done in moderation. Sure, you could bunk a class or two but be smart about it. See how it is going to impact your percentage attendance at the end of the year and strategically, spread out when you skip classes. Start a spreadsheet if need be, and construct a bunking routine. But be sure to catch up with all the coursework.

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