

Play Review Instructions

Paper Format: Papers should be a minimum of two pages typed, double-spaced, with a 12-point Times or Arial font. Margins should measure one inch on all four sides. Structure, grammar, and spelling will all be included in the final grade. You **must** have a ticket stub or a program attached to your paper.

Assignment Description: A good play review is a personal analysis of the play performance; it is not a breakdown of the plot or a description of the production elements. You are to apply critical thinking skills to evaluate the performance, to consider its objectives then judge its effectiveness. All opinions must be supported and substantiated with specific examples from the performance.

Paper Organization: Your paper should resemble the basic structure outlined below.

- I. **Introduction:** Begin with an introductory paragraph listing key information: play title, playwright, director, theatre, performance date and time. Discuss any prior knowledge of the play, playwright, theatre, and/or your expectations of the production. A thesis statement should end the paragraph.
- II. **Production Successes:** In four separate paragraphs, discuss the *four* most successful elements or moments in the production. With thorough and specific examples, describe the four best parts of the performance in your opinion; be sure to explain *why the elements worked* for the play and why you liked them. These elements can be any part of the production; possible elements to consider are...
 - Play, the story, plot, and/or play script of the performance.
 - Theme, the lesson or moral of the play and/or production.
 - Mood and tone, the atmosphere of the play and/or production.
 - Acting, the portrayal of the characters. (Include names of any actors you discuss.)
 - Directing, the artistic vision of the production.
 - Set, the physical world of the production.
 - Lighting, the visibility and mood of the production.
 - Costumes and make-up, the look of the characters.
 - Sound, the effects and music used in the production.
 - Special effects, additional and/or exceptional technical elements.
 - Scene changes, the movement of time and place within the production.
- III. **Production Problems:** After you discuss what worked in the performance, you can discuss any elements or moments that did not seem successful to you or that did not fit the play in your opinion. Describe the element, why it did not work for you, and how it affected the performance. Most importantly, you should offer possible solutions or changes that would correct the listed problem(s).
- IV. **Compare, Contrast, Recommend:** In this paragraph, compare and contrast this performance with others you have seen. Use specific examples to discuss how this production was different or similar to others. Make recommendations of who you think would best enjoy this production. Always provide specific and detailed support for your recommendations and opinions.
- V. **Conclusion:** Bring the review to a proper close. Determine whether your expectations and/or initial reactions were confirmed or denied. Share anything you may have learned from the performance.

Houston Area Theatres

Professional Theatres: Alley Theatre; Broadway in Houston; Theatre Under The Stars (TUTS); Society for the Performing Arts; Stages Repertory Theatre.

Community Theatres: KVPAC; Country Playhouse; Ensemble Theatre; Masquerade Theatre.

College Theatre Departments: Houston Community College; University of Houston.

High School Theatre Departments: Katy ISD, Spring Branch ISD, Fort Bend ISD, and Alief ISD.

Check the listed theatre's websites for specific production and performance information, or go to www.theatreport.com for additional theatre information.

Play Report Instructions

Assignment Details: A good play report is a personal analysis of the play and your understanding of the indications for its performance: it is not a book report. Apply critical thinking skills to evaluate the plot, characters, and theme of the story; consider the playwright's objectives and judge their effectiveness; and to imagine the performance of the play and its possibilities. Also choose one monologue or duet scene that best exemplifies the performance opportunities of the script.

Paper Format: Your paper should resemble the basic structure outlined below.

- I. **Introduction:** Begin with a proper introductory paragraph that established the tone and direction of the paper. Include the pertinent play information: title, playwright, year of publication, and original production information, which can be found in the text or on-line. Include any prior knowledge of the play and/or playwright and your expectations of the play before you read it.
- II. **Play Analysis:** The next few paragraphs of your report must be devoted to each of the following categories. When necessary, a list or chart can be used to more effectively deliver the requested information, like character descriptions.
 - A. Plot Summary of the entire play. This will be lengthy, a minimum of three paragraphs; it should include a complete breakdown of the action and conclusion of the play.
 - B. Setting of the play. Discuss the time and location of the play. How does the setting affect the story? Could it work in other settings? How would this change the action or theme?
 - C. Theme of the play. Consider the message or lesson of the play. What is the playwright's overall goal in telling the story? Was it successful? How could it have been improved? Be sure to substantiate your opinion with specific examples from the play.
 - D. Character descriptions. Write a three sentence description of each main character in the play. Include a brief group description of all other minor characters. What kind of people make up the world of this play? Who are they?
- III. **Conclusion:** Bring your report to a proper close. Compared to your final thoughts on the play, determine whether your expectations and initial reactions were confirmed or denied. Share anything you may have learned from the play. Revisit your most or least favorite part of the play.
- IV. **Monologue/Scene and Analysis:** In addition to your paper, you must choose a scene or monologue to showcase from the play as well. *Provide a clean Xerox copy of a 3-5-page duet scene or a full page monologue to analyze and turn in with the play report.* Write an *additional*, one-page analysis and introduction to this scene or monologue to turn in with your paper as well. Your analysis should be written to assist another student to perform the scene, assuming that student has not read the play. Your introduction will be kept in a classroom file to assist future students in performing it. Your one page intro should include the following information:
 - Previous action. Write one paragraph describing the action in the play leading up to the scene or monologue and occurring directly before the piece begins. You should detail major plot points and key character development points that make the scene or monologue clear to someone who has not read the play. Set up the action of the scene for a future actor.
 - Character analysis. Write a one paragraph description for each character involved; those speaking and those spoken of. Who are they and where are they in their journey through the story? Include any details from the play regarding physical characteristics, personality, age, occupation, etc. The more detail the better.
 - Subtextual information. Write one paragraph describing the subtext of the piece. Explore what they are really saying, what is really going on between the characters, how they feel, and what they want. Do they achieve their goals? Do they make any decisions or discover any new feelings or information by the end of the piece? Is a theme exposed during the piece?