

## **Play Review**

### **APSU Writing Center Handout**

**Play:** The written script, including dialogue, stage directions, characters, and setting.

**Production:** The entire process of bringing the play to life includes directing, set and costume design, lighting, sound, and other technical elements.

**Performance:** The actual live presentation of the show.

### **Things to Consider**

Before writing your review, think about:

- Title, genre, and director
- Time period and playwright biography
- Language and dialogue style

### **Preparation:**

Read the play before watching it to understand its theme and tone.

Take notes during the performance and identify moments that stand out.

Write a brief plot summary to reference in your review.

### **Structure of a Play Review**

#### **Introduction**

Title of the play

Director and venue

**Thesis statement:** A preview of 2 or 3 major concepts you will analyze (acting, staging, theme)

## **Thematic Summary**

What is the central message or theme of the play?

How effectively does the production convey it?

## **Body**

Discuss the major concepts from your thesis. Common categories include:

### **Technical Elements**

Costumes, make-up, props, lighting, music, sound, and set design

How do these create mood, setting, or atmosphere?

### **Non-Technical Elements**

Acting, directing, script, emotion, audience engagement

Were characters well-developed and convincingly portrayed?

Did the pacing, blocking, and direction enhance the story?

### **Evaluation and Analysis**

How did the elements work together to create impact or tension?

Did any scenes, lines, or moments stand out?

Consider both strengths and weaknesses of production.

## **Conclusion**

Restate your thesis

Summarize key points and arguments

Offer personal opinions and takeaways

Make a recommendation (or not) to potential audience members

### **Questions to Guide Your Review**

What five or six words, images, or moments stood out, and why?

What is the central theme, and how well was it conveyed?

Did the plot engage the audience?

How were the characters and performances? Any standouts?

Were technical elements effective in creating atmosphere?

Did the director emphasize the critical passages well?

What is your overall reaction? Would you recommend it?

### **Example Phrases**

#### **Introduction**

“In [play title], the stages come alive with...”

“As the curtain rises on [play title], I was immediately captivated by...”

#### **Plot and Story**

“The narrative unfolds with a perfect blend of...”

“The plot is rich with unexpected twists and...”

#### **Characters and Performances**

“Each character in the play is well-crafted and...”

“The cast of [play title] delivers exceptional performances, particularly [actor name], who...”

### **Stage Design and Set**

“The use of lighting and props creates a sense of...”

“The set transitions are seamless and enhance...”

### **Direction and Pacing**

“The director’s vision for [play title] is evident in...”

“The blocking and movement on stage are choreographed with...”

### **Dialogue and Script**

“The dialogue in [play title] is...”

“The language used by the character is both...”

### **Emotional Impact**

“The play leaves a lasting emotional impact, promoting...”

“The powerful climax of [play title] left the audience...”

### **Conclusions**

“Overall, [play title] offers an...”

“I wholeheartedly recommend [play title] to...”

## **Introduction**

Play Title:

Playwright:

Date attended:

Director:

Your opinion of the play: (amazing, thrilling, thought-provoking, etc.)

Brief Plot Summary: (One key moment/turning point/your reaction)

## **Body**

Paragraph 1: Describe one main concept: (costumes, make-up, props, emotion, theme, etc.)

Paragraph 2: Describe one main concept: (costumes, make-up, props, emotion, theme, etc.)

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## **Conclusion**

Provide a summary: (offer recommendations on who would enjoy the play)