

Critique Assessment Task

Writing a Performance Critique

In Drama, writing a critique is presenting your point of view on the different elements of a dramatic work. Therefore, you need to write your critique as though you were presenting an argument, and you use specific examples from the performance to support your point of view.

So, think about your critique like an argumentative essay that is broken into three main sections:

1. Introduction – When, where, who, brief statement of your opinion.
2. Main body – where you comment on all different theatrical aspects of the performance and state your opinion.
3. Conclusion – closing statement on your overall opinion.

Aspects to comment on in your main body of your critique:

Directing - Did all the elements of the performance (costumes, lights, blocking etc) work together? Was the cast disciplined, ready to perform, visually unified? Answers to these questions can help you decide if the directing was, in fact, competent. Once you've decided that issue, then you can consider specific examples (remember, you're to pick a specific example for your critique).

CASTING - (related to directing) were the actors the right types for the right roles? Age, sex, energy, etc. Remember that school productions will have difficulty casting the correct ages of characters – you may need to take this into account.

Acting – Could the actors be clearly heard and understood? Did they remember all their lines? Were they vocally pleasing or appropriate to character? Did the actors possess a quality of movement, gestures, ensemble work, that was charismatic, interesting, etc.? Again, answers to these questions can help you decide if the acting was good or not, and from there to decide what specific examples may best help you show why you concluded a specific actor was good or bad.

Costuming and Makeup- Did the costumes fit, match, and compliment the actor's body? Are the costumes appropriate to character? Did it suit the setting of the play? Were actors wearing appropriate makeup? Did it make the character more/less believable?

Set Design/Props - Did the scenery create an appropriate environment? Was the set design effective in conveying the time and place in which the performance was set?

Lighting - Could you see the actors and the set when you were supposed to see them--neither too bright nor too dark? Did the design create focus, create mood, and atmosphere? Was the design (colors and angles) integrated into/with the set and costumes?

Music and Sound - Was the music integrated well into the performance? How did it add (or detract) to the mood of the performance?(If it is a musical, discuss the actor's singing ability and acting the song in the 'acting' section). Were the sound effects employed appropriately? Were they imaginative or realistic?

A good performance critique is NOT:

- a plot summary
- an evaluation of the play's or the author's significance
- a regurgitation of the opinions of others
- an overbearing rant containing pages of unjustifiable opinion (being overly critical for the sake of it).

A good performance critique IS:

- well-written
- honest
- fair
- one which contains appropriate and sufficient examples from the performance to justify a reasonable point of view.

Critiques should be at least two written pages in length in order to provide appropriate detail on all the aspects of the performance.