

## APSU Writing Center

### Play Review

#### Play Review

- a **critical analysis** that includes a brief summary of a production or play.
- an **evaluation** of the staging, acting, directing.
- written in the **present tense**.

#### Differences

- The terms play, production, and performance are often used interchangeably.
  - Example: “I went to see a play last night, the performances were outstanding and the production was executed well!”
  - Example: “I love going to plays. The performances and productions are outstanding!”
- **play**: written script or text that includes dialogue, stage directions, descriptions of characters, and setting.
- **production**: encompasses the entire process of bringing a play to life (directors, set design, costume design, lighting, sound, and directing)
- **performance**: the actual presentation of the entire show.

#### Things to consider

- Title
- Genre
- Director
- Time period
- Playwright’s biography
- Language
- Themes
- Plot
- Characters
- Mood
- Costumes
- Venue

#### Before writing

- Read the entire play before watching to consider theme and atmosphere.
- Write a brief summary of the plot.

#### Structure

- **Introduction**
  - Title of the play
  - Director name, venue
  - Thesis Statement going over 2-3 major concepts you will discuss
- **Thematic Summary**
  - The message the author is trying to convey.
- **Body**
  - the major concepts mentioned in your thesis, these could include:
    - Technical Elements (costumes, make-up, props, lighting, music, sound effects, set design, etc.)
    - Non-technical Elements (Acting, directing, script, emotion, theme, audience engagement, etc.)
  - Evaluation and Analysis of how the elements created mood, contrast, reactions, etc.
- **Conclusion**
  - restate your thesis statement
  - sum up your main points and arguments about the show
  - give personal opinions and takeaways
  - recommendations (or not)

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#### Potential Questions to Answer:

- Make a list of five or six specific words, images, or moments that caught your attention while you were sitting in your seat and elaborate on them.
- What is the central theme or message of the play, and how effectively was it conveyed?
- How would you describe the plot and its structure? Did it engage and captivate the audience?
- What were your impressions of the characters? Were they well developed, relatable, and convincingly portrayed by the actors?
- How was the acting quality in general? Were there standout performances or any weak links in the cast?
- How effective were the set designs, costumes, and props in creating the atmosphere and setting?
- Would you have liked to have seen more attention paid to what you perceived as critical passages, passages the director seemed less interested in?
- Were there any memorable scenes, lines, or moments that stood out to you?
- What is your overall reaction to the performance? Would you recommend it to others?

#### Example Phrases

- **Introduction:**
  - “In [play title], the stages comes 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...”
- **Comparisons**
  - “Fans of [playwright’s name] will appreciate...”
  - “While not without flaw, [play title] holds its own against...”
- **Conclusions**
  - “Overall, [play title] offers an...”
  - “I wholeheartedly recommend [play title] to...”

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Play Review Outline

**Introduction**

<b>Play Title:</b>	<b>Date attended:</b>
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<b>Director:</b>	<b>Playwright:</b>
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**Your opinion of the play:** *(amazing, thrilling, thought-provoking, etc.)*

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

**Body**

**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)*