

## WRITING A PLAY REVIEW

### ASSIGNMENT

Write a seven paragraph play review.

Type your review.

Double space your review.

Use *Times New Roman* normal size 12 font.

Use 1" margins.

Title your review and place your name under the title, "by..."

### TIPS

\*Don't say how the audience felt, because you don't know—but it's fine to say how the audience reacted.

\**Spell everybody's names correctly*—performer names, character names, and the names of the playwright and composer.

\*Don't criticize the playwright or composer. Focus on the production itself.

\*The best place to state a criticism is near the end of a review, but not in the last paragraph. It's often good to make them near the end of a paragraph, but not in the last clause.

### USE THE FOLLOWING GUIDELINES FOR WRITING YOUR PLAY REVIEW:

#### PARAGRAPH 1: LEAD

Start your first paragraph with an attention getter.

You could write a catchy, one-sentence grabber that plays off the production, title, or content of the script.

Or, you could write a brief but vivid description of a moment in the play that created a specific mood or set the tone of the production.

Whatever you choose, make sure it is clear, concise, correct, and grabs the eye. Conclude the first paragraph summarizing information about the play; ie: who produced it, who performed, where, when, etc.

#### PARAGRAPH 2: HISTORY/THE STORY

Write a bit about the history of the show. When was the play written? How long was it on Broadway? Has it won any notable awards?

Write two or three well-crafted sentences that cover the major plot. Mention major characters, and key settings and timeframes as well as what happened in the plot. Don't give away the ending; give just enough information to understand what the story is about.

### **PARAGRAPH 3: THE OVERALL PRODUCTION**

Write about your overall impression of the production. What worked well? What production element anchored the show? Was there an inventive or unusual concept? How was the cast's energy? How was the choreography? How were the technical elements or effects? How were the actors?

### **PARAGRAPH 4: THE LEADS**

There are three options for writing about leads: (1) Mention each of them separately (if there are more than one), (2) Combine mentions (if in your opinion their performances were of equal standing), or (3) Not mention all of them. Write about their specific performances and how they did.

### **PARAGRAPH 5: THE SUPPORTING CHARACTERS AND ENSEMBLE**

Here you can comment on supporting actors and ensembles. Write about their performances and how they did. You don't have to mention everyone, but you should mention those that stood out.

### **PARAGRAPH 6: TECH**

Pick two or three technical elements (Sets, Costumes, Lights, Sound, Props and Effects, Stage Crew, Makeup) which were most integral in the success (or problems) of the production, describe their major facets (for example, what costumes were most notable), and explain why they were successful (or problematic).

### **PARAGRAPH 7: CLOSER**

Write your overall impression of the production, and then conclude.

Some options to consider: if the emotional content of the script was particularly difficult, commend the performance on a successful production; if the production has social, political, or emotional implications attached to it, mention those. Using references to the show (i.e. puns) can be extremely helpful here. Try to write a punchy "squib" lines, a strong "sound bite" phrase of the kind you often see quoted in newspaper ads for shows.