

## Reviewing

A guideline for reviewing productions, possibly for a log book in Drama or as a journal entry in English.

If you attend a play, film, concert, opera, musical, school production etc. - write about it critically.

1. Did you enjoy it? Why?
2. What was good or effective? What was bad or didn't communicate with you?
3. How is a good production, and this one in particular, achieved?
4. Did the rest of the audience enjoy it?
5. Was the plot communicated clearly?
6. Was the acting good? (What is good acting?)
7. Set and costumes: Credible? Bad or good? Too much or too little? If the set and costumes play too much of a part in the drama, this is considered an imposing or negative thing.
8. Was the play convincing, dull, funny, hilarious, dark, mediocre? Why? Why not?
9. Was the script/play credible?

## Writing a Review – The Nuts and Bolts...

The following information and activities are drawn from *Centre Stage* (2004 rev. ed).  
By Mathew Clausen, Heinemann (pp. 104-1108)

The subheadings and questions are intended to be used as a guide for students in the post-viewing phase, to support their synthesis of knowledge and appreciation.

After watching a performance, you will have quite a strong sense of whether or not it was effective. This is usually reinforced through your feelings of whether or not you were engaged, moved, excited or disinterested in the performance. The following categories and questions may assist students in writing a review.

### INTRODUCTION

Include the name of the play you are reviewing, the name of the playwright, the theatre where the performance was held and the date of the performance; if you choose, you may also indicate your overall impression of the play.

### PLOT

This is the actual action that happens on stage. Try to reduce the whole story into a brief paragraph that includes all the main events.

### DISCUSS THEMES AND ISSUES

Outline the themes and issues that you feel were important in the play. The themes and issues carry the message of the play and are important in helping the audience gain meaning from the performance. You should also discuss your impression of the directorial concept in your review. Comment on the director's interpretation of the play, and how the choice of dramatic form and performance style helps to communicate the play's themes and issues.

### ANALYSE CHARACTER OBJECTIVE AND MOTIVATION

Describe and analyse the characters. (Two is sufficient). To find the character's objective, ask yourself the question: What does the character want to achieve by the end of the play? To find the character's motivation, ask yourself the question: Why does the character want to achieve their goal?

#### EVALUATE THE PERFORMER

(Give examples wherever possible – Choose two performers to evaluate).

How well did the actors use body language to express their character?

Were their movements and gestures appropriate for their character?

How well did they use their voice to express character and deliver lines?

How focused did they seem during their performance?

How convincing did the performer seem in their portrayal of their character?

#### COMMENT ON THE USE OF THE ELEMENTS OF PRODUCTION

Discuss how effective you think the use of sound; lighting, set and costume were in the performance. Were the costumes suitable for the characters? How did the choice of colours and designs suit the overall look of the performance? How?

Was the set an effective use of space? Was the set easy for the actors to manoeuvre around? In terms of colour and layout, did its design enhance the performance?

How did the elements of production support the directorial concept?

Did the signs and symbols used within the production enhance meaning?

Was special lighting used at any time for a particular effect?

Did the use of live or recorded sound enhance or detract from the performance?

How did lighting and sound establish location and create atmosphere?

#### CONCLUSION

Sum up the overall success of the play.