

The point of a play review is to critique a play, not just to describe it. Thus, the review requires an overall thesis, just like in a regular essay. In this case, the thesis will be related to whether the play was an effective interpretation or well-executed version of the play. It needs to provide points throughout the review to support the thesis.

Be sure to obtain a program. Use it to correctly identify the play, authors, characters, etc.

The following questions will highlight some elements of the play that can be critiqued:

Basic Information

- What was the play?
- Who was the author?
- In what theatre is the play being performed?
- What date and time was the play performed?

Script - Identify the following:

- What was the major conflict, dramatic question, or unifying theme?
- What was the dominant tone of the play? Serious? Comic? Ironic? Explain.

Directing - Comment on the following:

- Was there an identifiable production concept, unifying metaphor, or interpretational approach? If so, what was it and how was it manifested in the production?
- Were all of the elements of the production compatible and coordinated? Explain.
- If not, what seemed out of place or inadequately integrated with the rest?

Acting - Choose at least two actors (male or female) to comment on in some depth:

- Were the roles appropriately cast?
- Were some actors inadequate to their roles? In what ways?
- Were some actors especially effective? If so, how and with what effect?
- Were the actors audible? Understandable?
- Were there any special skills (such as dancing, singing, fencing, playing a musical instrument) required of any of the actors? If so, how effectively were the demands met?

Scenic Design - Comment on the following:

- In what type of performance space was the production staged?
- What characteristics did the scenery embody? What did the scenery convey about the play?
- How did the scenery contribute (or fail to contribute) to the total production? What would have been lost if the scenery had been eliminated?

Costume Design and Makeup - Comment on the following:

- Were there any special costume needs? (Historical, fantasy? etc.) If so, how well were they handled?
- Were there any special makeup needs? If so, how well were they handled?
- Overall, how did costumes and makeup contribute (or fail to contribute) to the total production?

Lighting Design and Sound - Comment on the following:

- Were there any special lighting or sound needs? If so, how well was it executed?
- Overall, how did lighting and sound contribute (or fail to contribute) to the production concept and the total production?

Final Thoughts

- What was the overall impression of the performance?
- What was the overall impression of the experience?
- Any final thoughts?