

How to Critique a Play

In a well structured essay you will critique three plays each semester (two school productions and one outside production). The following outline will guide you through the process of critiquing a play. It is critical that you follow each step exactly how it is laid out for you. Your grade depends on it. As long as you follow the critique format, use strong examples to defend your points, and **turn in your ticket (signed by me) with your critique** this assignment can be completed with ease.

Remember your YLHS critique due dates are as follows:

Complete Works of William Shakespeare [Abridged]

Performance Dates: September 24-26th *****Critique Due Tues. 9/29/15**

The Diary of Anne Frank

Performance Dates: November 12-14 & 19-21*****Critique due Mon. 11/30/15**

Legally Blonde

Performance Dates: March 17-19 & 24-26 *****Critique Due Mon. 4/4/15**

(Please Note: Legally Blonde will be performed at the District Performing Arts Center, located on the El Dorado HS campus at 1651 Valencia Ave)

*****Outside Productions – Due one week from the day you saw the production.*****

Staple your **signed ticket** to the top right of your critique. (Outside plays do not need a signature.) **I will not accept your critique without a signed ticket...again...I WILL NOT** accept your critique without a signed ticket!

MLA Format - Can be found at: <https://sites.google.com/a/pylusd.org/library/style>

(I will not accept critiques that are not in this format)

- **Must be 2 complete pages – no more, no less! (I will stop reading at the bottom of page 2)**
- Include a title (*Play Critique* is not a title...be creative!)
- Name, Date, Period in the upper left hand corner (please don't staple your ticket here)
- 12-point font
- 1-inch margins
- Times New Roman
- Double Space

Paragraph 1: Introduction

- Include the location of the play, title of the play and its writer(s), director's name, choreographer's name, and the musical director's name. Here is a tip for you: I am not a playwright, please do not write that I am in your critique!
- Briefly summarize the plot in 6-8 sentences. Please do not use Wikipedia, or some other internet source (and trust me, I've seen them all!) I want a summary in your own words. You're in high school...you've got this! ☺

Paragraph 2: Acting. Include **specific** examples.

- Explain the characterization of the actors on stage? Describe their movement and ask yourself if it is appropriate for their characters? Why or why not?
- Do you see the actors listening and reacting truthfully to each other and the action occurring on stage? Explain.
- Is there a specific acting style in the production and are the actors consistent in these choices? Explain.

Paragraphs 3: Set Design

- Discuss the creative quality of the set. Does anything unique or specific stand out to you? Explain.
- Discuss the use of color on the set. Is it appropriate to the production? What type of emotional response does the color palette communicate to you?
- Explain if the set reflects a specific social class that is pertinent to the production?
- What information does the set tell you about the characters in this world?

Paragraph 4: Costumes and Make-Up (Choose either to discuss)

- Costumes
 - Discuss how the costumes show social class, personality, and age in the characters.
 - Explain how the costumes reflect the era of the production?
 - Do the choices of the costumes work for you or do you disagree? Why?
 - Does the costume designer use a specific color palette through out the production? What does this tell you about the show or the characters?
- Make-up
 - Discuss how the hair and makeup show social class, personality, and age in the characters
 - Explain how the makeup design reflects the time period of the production.
 - How do the hair and makeup communicate the time era to the audience?

Paragraph 5: Choreography (Only to be completed for musical reviews. If you are critiquing a regular play proceed to paragraph 6.)

- Choreography
 - Describe your overall impression of the dancing? What did you like and what did you not like? Explain.
 - Describe how the dancing moved the story in a forward direction. If you do not think it moved the story forward explain why.
 - How well did the dancers handle the choreography? Did they dance with ease or did they make it look difficult? Explain.
 - If someone made a mistake describe how they handled the mistake. Explain how this made you react as an audience member.
 - Explain whether the dancers were fully committed to the choreography or simply going through the motions. How did this make you feel as an audience member?

Paragraph 6: Conclusion

- Summarize your impression of the over all production in a few sentences.
- Grade the play with a percentage (90%, 72%, etc.) and briefly explain why you gave it that grade.
- Tell whether or not you would recommend the play someone else to see it. Why or why not?