

HOW TO WRITE A REVIEW

What is a review? A review is a written account of your experience at a theatrical event, recounted from your unique perspective, and for the purpose of advising someone else who has not seen the event and might want to go. (What a review is **not**: a summary of the story told by the play, musical, ballet, or opera.) It reports what you saw and heard.

What follows is a five-paragraph "recipe" for writing a good review:

- I Identify the play, playwright, theatre, city, and date seen. End the paragraph with a general statement reflecting its theme or purpose. (For a musical, include the composer, lyricist, and the choreographer, if there is dancing. In opera, the composer and librettist get first mention. In ballet, the choreography is the focus.)
- II Here are some questions you may want to answer:
 - What is the issue the playwright has set forth? (Theme)
 - How has the playwright presented this issue? (Character and Plot)
 - What side of the issue does the playwright favor? Has more than one side of the issue been presented? Give some evidence.
 - Does the issue seem important and worth discussing?
- III Characters and the actors who portray them:
 - Who are the main characters, and who portrays them?
(Two accepted methods of identification are:
Willy Loman (Dustin Hofman) . . . , or
Willy Loman, played by Dustin Hofman, . . .)
 - Evaluate the actors' performances as you perceived them, using language that is expressive and thoughtful. Use these guidelines:
 - Is he or she believable as that character? (Give an example.)
 - Does he or she interact with others on stage? (Again, give an example.)
 - What, specifically, has she or he done to support (or detract from) the world of the play?
- IV The visuals: Time, place, and scenery.
 - How does the set design support (or fail to support) the world of the play?
(Give some specifics.)
 - Do the costumes reveal character traits? (Give evidence either way.)
 - Does the lighting create the mood of the world of the play? (Evidence.)
 - Are there special design features that are worth mentioning?
- V Recommendation:
 - What have you taken from this experience that bears on your own thinking? (Be as specific as you can.)
 - Would you recommend this event to some one who had not seen it?
(If so, explain why; if not, why not?)

SPECIFICATIONS: 400 (min.)-500 (max.) words, double spaced, 1½" margins, top and left. Title your work (the title of the play is not sufficient). Submit, with program, in a horizontally-pocketed folder. Grammar, spelling, and mechanics count.
(Use your style manual.)