

13 WAYS TO RESPOND TO PLAYS

1. Do a play analysis
2. Create a costume, set, lighting or sound design
3. Choose an interesting prop and build it
4. Write a backstory or sequel for a character
5. Do a complete character analysis
6. Perform a memorized & blocked monologue, duet, or group scene
7. Direct a duet or group scene
8. Analyze the challenges this play would present to produce at your school
9. Research the time period of the play and discuss the historical context
10. Create a trailer or poster and a marketing plan to publicize the play
11. Research the playwright and create a biographical presentation
12. Go and see a live production of the play and write a theatre critique
13. Choose a category from the "30 ways to read a play" and write a response to your reading of the play that way. You must answer and expound on any questions included in that section of the article.

CHARACTER ANALYSIS

Whenever possible, all answers or comments are to be based strictly on information about your character supplied in the actual text. When this is not possible, you may create answers or comments provided they are logically related to information in the text. This is an opportunity for fresh original actor creativity, provided in an organic framework for directing and acting which permits and encourages artistic individuality as well as artistic collaboration.

1. Name of actor/actress:
2. Title of Play:
3. Playwright:
4. Genre of Play? When was the play written?
5. Theme of play? Why did the playwright write this play? What are they saying with this play? How does your character help to tell this story?
6. Name of character:
7. Age of character:
8. Precise birthdate of character:
Astrological sign? What significance, if any, to this sign?
9. Generally, how "physically active" is your character?
10. Do they lead with a specific part of their body? Why?
11. Do they have any specific movements that they make? Why?
12. Any particular habits?
13. Name an animal (not a bird) which in appearance, movement, or manner seems analogous to role. What is it about this animal that most specifically relates to your role?
14. Can you name a person close to you, family or friend, who seems to be a good deal like your character? If so, name him or her.
15. Can you name a famous person who seems to be a good deal like your character? If so, name him or her.
16. Vocally, is your character generally quiet and demure or loud and flamboyant? If neither, how would you describe your character's vocal nature?

17. Do they have any other vocal tells? Fast or slow speech? Dialects? Stutter? High or low pitch to their voice?

18. Basically, how would you describe the way your character likes to dress (casual, tailored, sloppy, neat, colorful, etc.)? Why do they dress that way?

19. How would you describe the way your character likes to wear or comb his/her hair?

20. Select the three or four major emotions your character seems to encounter the most (fear, love, hate, anger, etc.). Give an example from the text in which each of the examples you listed are revealed.

21. What is the motivational force (spine) of your character? State the motivation of your character by beginning with the name of your character and the word, "wants. . ." If possible, the "want" should relate to another character or characters in the play.

What do I really want? Who do I want it from? Why? When do I want it? Why?

22. What are the obstacles in the way of your character getting what they want?

23. What tactics does your character use to try to achieve their motivation/objective?

24. What is the major beat or action (or key moment of activity and/or decision/choice) in the play for your character (the most important moment in the play for your character)?

25. Describe in short phrases the major activities your character engaged in during the day of action of the play (from rising, up to the first entrance on stage).

26. Describe in short phrases the major activity your character engages in during all offstage time after every exit made during the action of the play.

27. Create a list of 5-8 major character "idiosyncrasies, likes and dislikes" for your character. (e.g. likes cheeseburgers and french fries, suffers from insomnia, reads mystery novels, likes Dustin Hoffman movies, hates John Wayne movies, etc.)

28. Does what your character say correspond to what they do? Or do their actions show them to speak falsely?

29. What do other characters say about this character?

30. What is the easiest part about portraying this character? What is the most difficult part?

31. Do you like this character? Why or why not?

Add any other pertinent notes or comments about your character.

THEATRICAL CRITIQUE

1. Paragraph 1: The Basics

Include the answers to the five W's:

Who (the playwright, directors, and actors)

What (the title of the play)

Where (the name of the school or theater)

When (when did you see it?)

Why (In a few sentences, state the basic theme of the show)

2. Paragraph 2: The Plot

Briefly summarize the plot of the show:

How well did the story work?

Was it interesting, entertaining?

Did you like the actual script?

3. Paragraph 3: The Acting

Reactions to the performers playing the characters in the play:

Use their real names and character names.

Were they believable?

How was their volume and articulation?

Did their gestures and body movement stay true to the character?

4. Paragraph 4: The Design Elements

Set: Did it establish a definite mood and correct time period for the play?

Lights: Did they convey appropriate mood, emphasis, and brightness?

Costumes and Makeup: Were they true to the period of the show and to the characters?

Sound: How did the sound effects and music contribute to the show's mood?

If this performance was a musical, what is your opinion of the orchestra's performance?

5. Paragraph 5: The Reaction

What is the play's effect on the audience?

Was the audience attentive?

Was the audience interested?

What was your opinion of the show as a whole?

6. Remember to...

Back up all your opinions with valid reasons.

Be objective, fair, and sincere.

Evaluate the entire production.

Be constructive. Indicate good points along with those you felt needed improvement.

Enjoy the show—don't go to be overly critical.

PLAY ANALYSIS- 1

Characters

1. Who is the protagonist (main character)? What are his (or her) character traits? Weaknesses? Virtues?
2. What are the functions of the other characters? Do any serve to bring out certain aspects of the main character? How? Is there a character who seems to be the special vehicle for the author's message?
3. Who is the antagonist, if there is one? Is he/she complex (or "rounded") character (a mixture of good and bad)?
4. If the play is a classical tragedy, does the main character have a "tragic flaw" (weakness, moral defect, or an error in judgment)? What part does chance play in his or her downfall? Is the main character noble enough to win our admiration and sympathy in spite of his shortcomings?
5. What technique does the playwright use to help develop the characters? Stage directions? Self revelation by monologue or dialogue? Actions? Comments by other characters?
6. Does the playwright try to give minor characters well-rounded personalities? Are there any stereotypical characters?

Plot

1. What are the main plot elements? Into how many "chapters of action" is the play divided, regardless of the act or scene divisions? Can you summarize each chapter of action after you have read it? Is the progress of the action clear?
2. Is the plot of sufficient scope and importance to engage our interest?
3. What brings on the dramatic conflict? Where does the play really begin?
4. Are the incidents well-connected? How are gaps in time treated?
5. Is the resolution inevitable, or is the denouement brought about by coincidence?
6. Is there dramatic irony present? To what degree? What does it achieve?

Setting

1. Where and when does the play take place? Do the time or place change? If so, do the changes weaken the play? Are the changes necessary and natural?
2. How does the setting contribute to the theme and characterization? Is the particular setting important to the play?

Theme

1. What is the moral or human significance of the play? How do the theme, plot, and characters reflect this universal significance? Does it stimulate thought about any important problems of life? Does it supply answers by implication or by direct statement?
2. Does the play clearly reveal any over-all view of the universe on the part of the dramatist? Is his or her view sentimental, cynical, religious, humanist, romantic, etc.? Does the dramatist leave conclusions up to the reader or use devices to help form the reader's conclusions?

Language

Before discussing language, be sure to note if the play is a translation.

1. If written in verse, what kind? Does the dramatist seem hampered by the verse form?
2. Is the language elevated or close to that of real life?
3. Does it contribute significantly to the enjoyment of the play?
4. Is the language used by each character especially adapted to him or her? Is it used to help characterize?

General

1. What is the genre of the play (tragedy, melodrama, etc.)? How well does this play fit the definition of the genre? Is there anything about the play that doesn't fit the genre?
2. What historical period does this play fit into? How well does the play fit into that historical period?
3. Would you like to read the play a second or third time? Why or why not?
4. Would you like to perform in this play? Direct this play? Or attend a performance of this play? Why or why not (for each of these questions.)

PERFORMANCE POSSIBILITIES

Any interesting monologue possibilities? Character & page numbers (purple page flags)

Duo scenes? Characters & page numbers (blue page flags)

Ensemble scenes? Characters & page numbers (green page flags)

Who (in this class) do you think would most enjoy reading/performing in/directing/or watching this play? Recommend this play to them!

Any interesting and creative thoughts regarding set, costumes, or performance possibilities?

Play Analysis-2

Play Title _____

Playwright _____

1. What is the setting and time period?
2. What is the significance of the title of the play?
3. Who is the protagonist?
4. Who is the antagonist?
5. What is the central conflict?
6. What role can you see yourself playing? Why?

Write a brief summary of the play. Note the exposition, rising action, climax, and outcome.

7. Exposition:

8. Rising Action:

9. Climax:

10. Outcome:

11. Describe the main theme of this play.

12. Describe one scene or monologue that you could see yourself performing. Note the Act and Scene it takes place in the play (use the back if necessary):

Play Analysis- 3

Name of Play: _____

Playwright: _____

Characters (describe):

Protagonist

Antagonist

Other major characters

Secondary or minor characters (list name and what they do in the play , who they are)

Exposition (all the information needed to get the audience "set up" for the story)

Time

Place

Preliminary situation

Plot (which follows the preliminary action)

Inciting Moment - How does the plight of the main characters begin?

Main conflict

Rising Action (summary)

Climax (turning point)

Falling Action (summary)

Denouement (Resolution – final outcome for each major character)

How do the characters' lives change throughout the story? What is their plight at the end of the play?

Theme of Play

A. What was the main idea/theme of the play and what does it say about the time in which it was set?

B. Meaning of the Title – what is the core meaning, or what is the play saying? Often an idea is expressed through a feeling – what lies subliminally beneath the feeling?

C. Philosophical statements in the play – cite actual quotations found in the script. Pinpoint the line(s) that make direct reference to your interpretation of its meaning

D. Implications of the action – What personal and societal changes do the characters deal with and how does this affect the main idea of the play?

E. Consider each scene – determine the purpose of each scene in the play. What idea is it trying to convey? How does it help the overall idea?

Personal Reaction

A. Did you like the play? Why or why not? Would you recommend it to others?

B. What actors in Hollywood might be suitable to play the characters from this play on the big screen?

THEATRE HISTORY PLAY ANALYSIS

Name of your play:

Playwright:

Is there anything about the Playwright's life that is reflected in this play?

Time period Play was written:

Country of Origin:

Important Historical Events/Social Constructs/Religious Affiliations at this time?

How does this play follow the "rules and conventions" of the time period?

Location of the play:

Mood of the play:

Who are the characters: (Name them and give a short explanation of who they are.)

In your own words, give a short synopsis of the story line:

What are the human issues that are brought up in this play?

What patterns do you notice in language, ideas, or themes?

Why do you think the playwright wrote this play?

What message is the playwright trying to convey to the audience?

Is there a "moral" or takeaway lesson to this play?

How does this playwright use the rules or conventions of his/her time in this play?

Does the playwright break any of the rules or conventions of his/her time period?

Why do they break or keep these rules or conventions?

Do you like this play? Why or why not?

What part would you most like to take on if you were cast in this play? Why?

Which scene is your favorite scene? Why?

If you were to design a set for this play, what comes to mind immediately?

Would you set this play during the time period it was written? Why or why not?

What colors would you use?

What kinds of shapes?

What kind of lines?

What textures do you imagine?

If you were to design costumes for this play, what comes to mind immediately?

Would you stick with costumes from the time period or use costumes from another time period?

What colors would you use? Why?

What textures or weights of fabrics? Why?

Anything else you especially liked or didn't like about this play?

Would you go and see this play onstage? Why or why not?

Play Analysis Worksheet 4

Play Title _____

Playwright _____

Setting/Time Period _____

1. What is the significance of the title of the play?
2. What is the central conflict? Who are the protagonist and antagonist?
Give reasons to support your choices.
3. Write a brief summary of the play including beginning, middle and end.
Note where the inciting incident and climax occur.
4. What do you think the theme of this play is?
Give reasons from the play to support your choice.
6. List any unusual words or references that you encountered along with the definition of each.
7. What is your personal reaction to the play.
Give details to support your statements.