

Performance Critique Paper Writing Guide
Enloe Modern Dance

Assignment:

Attend (1) dance professional dance performance each semester and turn in a thoughtful, reflective, and substantiated critique of the concert. Deadline is one week after the concert you attend.

Requirements:

- Start with a heading on the top left side of the paper.
Include: Name, Title of Paper, Date you are submitting the paper
- 2 pages, typed and doubled spaced
- 12 point font in Times New Roman
- Proofread! Read the paper aloud to catch awkward working and careless typos.
- Staple your ticket to the program and write your name on the program. This must be turned in with your paper.

The paper should be in essay format and detail your observations and critical analysis of the dancing and choreography. You will describe the choreography and process, but also analyze, interpret, and evaluate the performance. Choose your most interesting ideas and observations to include in your paper. The paper should have a clear opening paragraph, a body of developed writing, and a thoughtful conclusion. Bring paper and pen with you to the performance; you might even want to bring this writing guide with you. This guide serves to assist your writing process and organize your thoughts. Take pride in your writing; speak with depth and honestly about what you saw.

Structure of Paper

Contextualization: What is the setting for the performance - the WHAT, WHEN, WHERE?

- State the title of the concert you attended, name the location, date, place and time.
- State who performed (the company or a few performers, you do not need to list out the names of every dancer in the company).
- Choose 1 of the pieces to focus on and discuss in your paper.
- When discussing the choreographer or a specific dancer use their full name. If you mention them a second time, use only their last name.

Description: What are you seeing?

Scan for aesthetic details and identify: shapes, postures, gestures, movement patterns, use of space, use of timing, use of dynamics, floor patterns, repetition, music, costumes, set design.

- What is the feeling of the work?
- Use descriptive, juicy language to illustrate the quality of the dancing. Don't just say "they danced across the floor," describe the HOW — did they leap, tumble, spiral, tilt, slice, etc?
- What is most noticeable or memorable about the work?
- Describe at least 2 vivid details and use active and specific language.

Analyze: How is the dance is organized?

Collect facts. What dance elements are used and identify whether the principles of design are effective or not. Use these questions to help you shape your writing:

- What elements of design do you see in the work?
- Are similar design elements repeated?
- What movement motifs repeat in the dancing?
- How many sections are there?
- How well do the dancers perform the work? Analyze the performance quality.
- How do the other theatrical elements (lighting, music, sets, costumes) impact your perception of the dance?

Interpret: What does it mean to you?

- Describe what you experienced from watching this dance.
- What is the mood of the work? What is the story? How did the choreographer use movement and other theatrical elements to create a mood or tell a story?
- What kind of relationships are presented in the work?
- How does this dance convey intent and meaning?
- How does the analysis you made earlier aide you in arriving at this conclusion?

Evaluate: Was the dance successful or not, and why? Assess the merits of the work.

- What do you think of the dance? Discuss why.
- How effective is the dance?
- Was it well crafted? What demonstrates this?
- Was the work meaningful or satisfying to you? Why or why not?
- How do you relate to this work?
- How does your emotional response help you value the dance?
- NOTE: Avoid statements that are superficial and informal such as "I liked it, it was cool." Instead talk about WHY you were intrigued, or WHAT made it not engaging. Unpack the performance to demonstrate that you are thinking critically about what you are seeing.

Conclude: Close the paper.

Construct a thoughtful conclusion that ties together key points you have made throughout your writing. This should be a developed paragraph, not a trivial sentence.

TIPS:

- Avoid passive voice, colloquialisms, and parenthetical phrases.
- Make sure all quotations and references are to be correctly annotated.
- Check your paper for spelling and grammatical errors. Read your paper aloud to yourself or a friend to catch careless errors.