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Template for Writing a Performance Review

Important points to remember:

- Back up or support 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.
- Write in a formal style (check grammar, punctuation, etc.)
- Avoid reading reviews of the play you are reviewing so as not to be influenced, but do read several reviews of other plays so you will get a feel for how reviews are often handled.

A critique is an evaluation of a performance of a show. It should contain five paragraphs and consist of about 750 words, be double spaced, and be written in Times New Roman, 12pt font.

1. Paragraph 1—The Basics

Begin with an eye-catcher opening and then include answers to the five W's:

- Who (the playwright, directors, and actors)
- What (the title of the play)
- Where (produced at the name of the school or theatre)
- When (when did you see it?)
- Why (In a few sentences, state the basic themes/messages of the show. What is the idea, meaning, or message? What is it a commentary on? What is the tone of the play? **(Do not provide plot summary in this introductory paragraph)**)

2. Paragraph 2—The Plot

- a. Briefly (three or four sentences) summarize the plot of the show.
- b. **The bulk of the paragraph should address the following: If you could change anything about the play, what would you change (To suggest changes to the play, select from one or more of the six elements of drama: plot, character, theme, diction, music and spectacle. Do not write about all six elements to which you would make changes.)**

3. Paragraph 3—The Acting

Reactions to the performers playing the characters in the play will include answers to the following:

- Use their real names and character names
- Were they believable? Were they good or poor actors?
- How was their volume and articulation?
- Did their gestures and body movement stay true to the character?

4. Paragraph 4—The Design (focus on no more than two tangible elements/production values below. Do NOT write about all four, only two of the following:)

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:

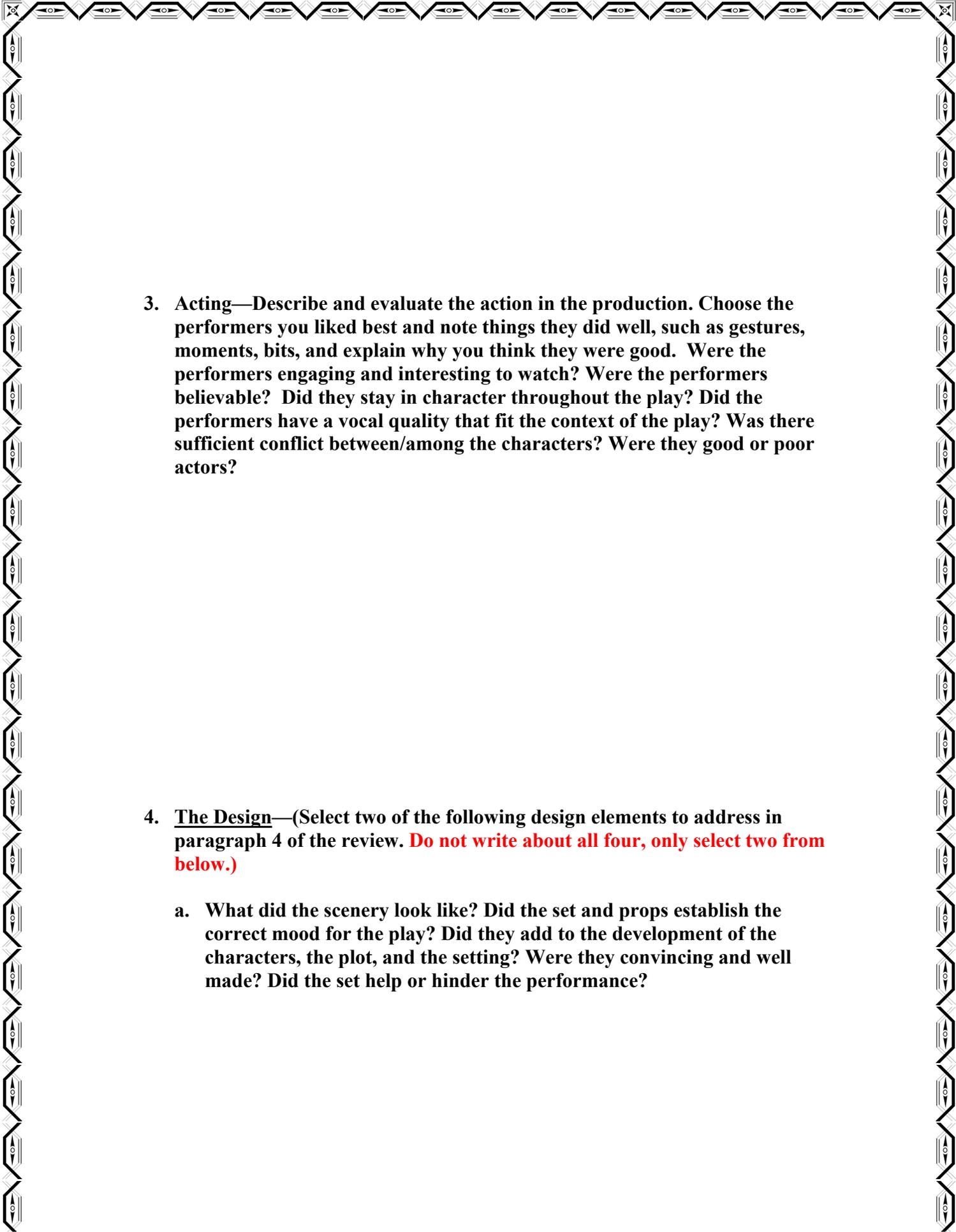
- Were they true to the period of the show and to the characters?

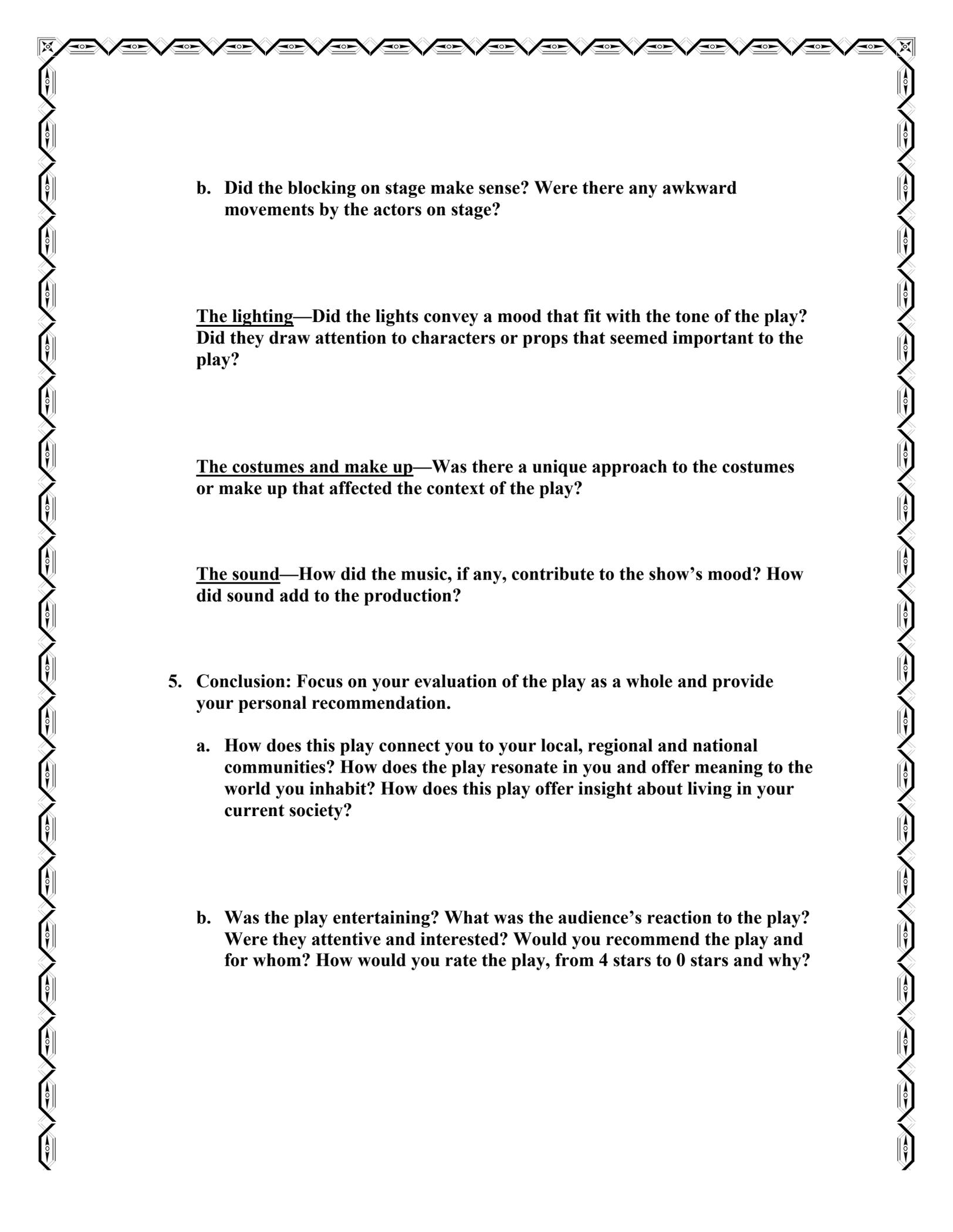
Sound:

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

5. Paragraph 5—The Reaction and Making Connections to Society

- a. Include a statement about how the play connects to your local, regional and national communities. What aspect of the play resonates in you and how does the play offer meaning in our world today? Place the play in context to your communities by addressing how this play help us better understand how to handle the issues dealt with in the play.**
- b. What is the play's effect on the audience?**
 - Was the play entertaining?
 - Was the audience attentive and interested?
 - What was your opinion of the show as a whole? Would you recommend the play and for whom? How would you rate the play, from 4 stars to 0 stars, and why?

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3. **Acting**—Describe and evaluate the action in the production. Choose the performers you liked best and note things they did well, such as gestures, moments, bits, and explain why you think they were good. Were the performers engaging and interesting to watch? Were the performers believable? Did they stay in character throughout the play? Did the performers have a vocal quality that fit the context of the play? Was there sufficient conflict between/among the characters? Were they good or poor actors?
4. **The Design**—(Select two of the following design elements to address in paragraph 4 of the review. **Do not write about all four, only select two from below.**)
- What did the scenery look like? Did the set and props establish the correct mood for the play? Did they add to the development of the characters, the plot, and the setting? Were they convincing and well made? Did the set help or hinder the performance?

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- b. **Did the blocking on stage make sense? Were there any awkward movements by the actors on stage?**

The lighting—Did the lights convey a mood that fit with the tone of the play? Did they draw attention to characters or props that seemed important to the play?

The costumes and make up—Was there a unique approach to the costumes or make up that affected the context of the play?

The sound—How did the music, if any, contribute to the show’s mood? How did sound add to the production?

5. **Conclusion: Focus on your evaluation of the play as a whole and provide your personal recommendation.**
- a. **How does this play connect you to your local, regional and national communities? How does the play resonate in you and offer meaning to the world you inhabit? How does this play offer insight about living in your current society?**
- b. **Was the play entertaining? What was the audience’s reaction to the play? Were they attentive and interested? Would you recommend the play and for whom? How would you rate the play, from 4 stars to 0 stars and why?**