

Important Reminders for Grade 10 & 11 Critique Writers:

- *Art criticism is responding to, interpreting meaning, and making critical judgments about specific works of art.*
- *Art critics help viewers perceive, interpret, and judge artworks.*

Important things to remember:

- Write your critique as if the reader has NOT seen the performance or artwork you are critiquing
- Use high quality, formal writing, in the first person (you can use “I”, “me” etc...)
 - That means – **don't** do not use contractions, or slang.
 - Avoid using firstly, secondly, thirdly and so on, at the beginning of every paragraph.
There are all kinds of transition words – find some! (check here: <https://www.msu.edu/~jdowell/135/transw.html>)
 - Proofread for grammar, spelling, and especially, **clarity of thought**. Look at each sentence/paragraph:
Does it make sense? Does it say what you are trying to say?
 - Refer to different portions of performances by using descriptive language, **do not** refer to things by citing the times (ie. Do NOT say “From 2:10-2:17 in the film....”)
 - Use art-specific language whenever possible, and use it properly!
 - Try to keep things constructive, and phrase things politely, as if the artists were going to read it.
- Include an introduction **AND** conclusion.
 - The **introduction** should introduce the piece you are critiquing and draw the reader in.
For Visual Works: It **MUST** include basic information such as the artist(s) name(s), location/context, medium(s) used (acrylic, graphite, clay, multimedia etc...), size / scale of the works, you may also want to include the style (if known, ex. Cubism, Group of Seven, Impressionist), the motivation for the work, the location in which it was created, and another other technical information.
 - Use the introduction to state your overall opinion and give a very brief overview of what you will discuss in your critique/analysis.
- Use multiple paragraphs in the body of your critique (one for each new thought), 3 sentences each min.
- Back up **ALL** your opinions and statements with well described examples of what you can **SEE** in the art work.
Providing well explained examples is key to getting the highest marks.
- A critique is basically an opinion essay – you are entitled to your opinion but you **MUST** back it up.
- The **conclusion** should recap what you have said in the body of your critique.
It should start with a few specifics and move to more general statements to wrap up.

Not sure what you can talk about? Here are just a few things you could talk about:

- **Analysis** - Think about the elements and principals of art / design (Line, colour, shape/form, value, texture, perspective, repetition, balance, movement, etc...) How are they used? Are they effective? Visually interesting? Do they help tell the story or evoke a feeling?
- **Interpretation** - Meaning/ Message: Is there a story or meaning behind the piece? What is it? How is it told/shown? How does the composition, or artistic techniques used in the work help to convey the story or message? Discuss the effectiveness (or ineffectiveness) of these approaches.
- In all portions of the work, from the description through to the interpretation, be sure to use art-specific language often and properly



ART VOCABULARY

Colour:

Black and White
Sepia (brown tint)
Saturation
Tint
Shade
Hue
Value
Colour Scheme
Complementary
Analogous
Primary
Secondary
Tertiary

Composition :

Focal point
Angle / View point
Subject matter incl. Costume, Hair
& Makeup
Facial Expression & Body Language
Physical space / environment
Foreground
Mid-ground
Background

Elements of Art:

Line
Shape
Form
Colour
Texture
Space
Value

Principles of Design:

Pattern
Contrast
Emphasis
Balance
Proportion / Scale
Harmony
Rhythm / Movement

Other Art-Specific words:

Narrative
Symbolism
Representation
Abstract (abstraction / abstracted)
Simplified
Stylized
Geometric
Organic

Example of a quality introduction:

It is often said that dances which tell a story are those that make the most impact on the audience. On season two of So You Think You Can Dance (USA), choreographers Tabitha and Napoleon D'Umo choreographed a piece that certainly lived up to that statement. In this piece, danced to the song "No Air" by Jordan Sparks & Chris Brown, dancers Katee and Joshua communicated the story of a soldier who receives word he is being sent to war and the distress it causes his girlfriend. The combination of quality dancing, excellent choreography, and emotional performances all came together to create a highly moving, and emotional piece of art that I thoroughly enjoyed.

Example of a quality conclusion:

Despite the small issues in synchronization during the jump series near the end of the dance, Katee and Joshua's emotional portrayals of their characters, and their overall technical proficiency made this dance highly successful, and very memorable. I felt connected to both characters and really felt their pain and frustration throughout the dance. If they continue to create dances such as this I suspect that both the dancers and choreographers involved will have long and prosperous careers bringing stories to life for audiences everywhere.