

Drama Unit Checklist

This is merely a checklist of what items should be covered in your writing assignment. For full instructions consult the “Group Assessments for American Drama” handout.

Audience Group:

- Remember – this is a combination research paper and review. MLA formatting for both in-text and works cited **MUST BE USED**.
- Brief intro to and bio of the playwright and the play – include artistic influences and where the play falls in the playwright’s career, and a contextual history of how the play made sense for the time it was written.
- Production history: must include research of the original production of the play as well as a complete Broadway production history. You may list these details: a listing of original director, producer, performers and designers, and in this case a list of when the play was produced on Broadway with any noteworthy productions particularly highlighted. At least four sources – properly cited in MLA style – must be used.
- Highlight previous reviews of the play – what has been said about it by the critics?
- A review of your own: your review must contain a **JUDGMENT** of the play – is it good? Poor? Enjoyable? Boring? Complex? Facile? Obvious? Penetrating? Etc., etc. **PARTICULARS** and **SPECIFICS** of that judgment are also required; what makes the play good or bad? Enjoyable or not? Etc. A brief **SYNOPSIS** is necessary, as well as a discussion of the **THEME** of the work. What’s the main idea of the play, and does it successfully come across to you, the audience? **QUOTES** from the text are of course required as part of your supporting evidence for whatever claims you make. Some **COMPARISON** should be made concerning your expectations from the script and how those were or were not met by the film performance.

Actor Group:

- Choose a character you will pretend to play the role of and make decisions about how you will create the character.
- Back Story – create a life story of the character before the play begins (based on what you know from the play). This back story should provide reasons for the motivations and relationships that you explain next. You should also include in this bio a “what happens next” – after the play is over.
- Motivation – what makes the character do what they do? How do you know? What quoted text can you explain to justify your understanding of the character?
- Relationships- how does the character relate to and interact with other characters? How do you know? What quoted text can you explain to justify your understanding?
- Physical and vocal traits – How would you play the character? How does the character walk, talk, move...

Director Group:

- Casting – choose current actors to play the entire cast – Explain why your choices are appropriate. Photos of actors should be included (imdb).
- Sketch the set design with props - as if you are looking down on the stage from above, show how the stage will look (all three plays have a unit set – which means it does not change physically from scene to scene). You may use labeled shapes, a drawing program, or if you have artistic skills, feel free to sketch it out. What you need to demonstrate is an understanding of the 3 dimensional space the actors will move in.
- Choose a pivotal scene (5-7 pages) and explain its importance. Be sure to quote specific lines in the play to justify your understanding of why the scene is pivotal.
- Direct the scene you chose – photocopy the pages (or find them online) and either (1) write your direction on the pages, including lighting, sound effects and direction for the actors. Or (2) create a key (use numbers or numbers and colors) and type your directions on a separate document, using the key on the photocopied pages to correspond.
- Direction for actors should be both physical (move down stage, hold her hand, bow your head) and emotional (you are furious for this line – shout, be deep in thought, weep quietly with repressed sorrow)
- Lighting and sound can be simple, but you need a reason for them – light and sound should focus attention on a scene, not distract.