

Guide for Writing in Theatre

About Writing in Theatre

Anaïs Nin said that “we write to taste life twice, in the moment and in retrospect.” With this quotation in mind, we might say that writing in theatre allows us to experience and re-experience performances, to see things we hadn’t seen before, to consider ideas we hadn’t considered, to build connections between and among theories and performances, and ultimately to better understand and communicate to others the work that theatre performs. This guide will offer you an overview of the types of writing you’ll most often undertake in your theatre courses, some guidelines for approaching performances and other sources, and some models of excellent writing about theatre.

Types of Writing in Theatre

Below, you’ll find brief explanations of five common types of writing in theatre. In later sections, you can read about performance reviews, research papers, and character and scene analyses in more detail.

Performance Review

(academic
journal)

The purpose of an academic performance review is to deepen the reader’s understanding of the production of the play and the stagecraft involved. It describes the direction, acting, design, and venue to make the underlying concept behind the production explicit. The role of the reviewer is to go beyond the immediate emotional response of an average audience member and to discover instead what a performance was trying to aim at and whether it failed or succeeded in doing so.

Performance Review

(online/
popular press)

The purpose of a popular or online performance review is to offer the reader a recommendation or opinion regarding the production. Aimed at the casual theatregoer, it employs more informal language and focuses on evaluating the production in terms of its audience reception.

By Dr. Sergio Costola

About this guide

This guide contains the following sections:

- About Writing in Theatre
- Types of Writing in Theatre
- Evidence in Theatre Writing
- Performance Reviews
- Character & Scene Analyses
- Research Papers
- Conventions of Writing in Theatre
- Further Resources

The Disciplinary Writing Guides are designed to provide an introduction to the conventions, or rules, of writing in different subjects. These guides have been designed by Southwestern professors to help you understand what will be expected of you in your classes.

Character & Scene Analysis

This type of analysis is designed to offer an actor the background they'll need to create a strong characterization. A character and scene analysis considers a scene's form (structure and genre, rhythm and tempo) and its characters (their given circumstances, their objectives, and their obstacles). You can read more about this type of writing later in this guide.

Research Paper

Aimed at presenting an argument, a research paper is concerned with **how theatre (a play, a production, a genre, an entire theatrical tradition, etc.) means what it means**. While a performance review is primarily concerned with how a production conveys ideas to its audience, a research paper focuses on those ideas themselves, looking at the ways that theatre relates to the culture that produced it.

Dramaturgical Guide

A dramaturgical guide is any type of material (webpages, lobby displays, study guides, program notes, etc.) for either the production team or the audience that contains information about the play, the playwright, themes, production history, and the concept for a production.

Evidence in Theatre Writing

As in other types of historical research, all theatre writing depends on sources. The materials for theatre history may be divided into primary, secondary, and tertiary sources. **Primary source** is a term used in a variety of disciplines to describe materials produced or written during the time period under study. A primary source can either be a document or a monument (physical object). A **secondary source** is an interpretation or analysis of primary sources produced after the time period under study. Secondary sources use primary sources as evidence in order to make an argument. A **tertiary source** is a distillation and collection of primary and secondary sources. It relies on the work of previous scholars and it summarizes previous arguments made by scholars about specific time periods or topics.

In theatre writing, **primary sources** for the study of a specific production might include: the script; the theatre building and stage upon which the play was performed; the set and set designs/plans; the costumes and costume designs/renderings; the lights and light

production; all kinds of mechanical recording (photographs, videos, etc.); engravings or other visual records of the production; reviews or descriptions of the performance; your own notes from a performance, etc.

Secondary sources include commentaries and criticism. This might include texts like books about theatres or particular plays, articles in academic journals, and sometimes reviews. **Tertiary sources** might include bibliographies, chronologies, dictionaries, encyclopedias, indexes, abstracts, manuals, or textbooks. For the study of theatre history, the most commonly used textbooks in the English language are:

Brockett, Oscar G. and Franklin J. Hildy, *History of the Theatre*. 10th ed. New York: Pearson, 2007.

Brown, John Russell, *The Oxford Illustrated History of Theatre*. Oxford: OUP, 2001

Zarrilli, P.B., B. McConachie, G.J. Williams, C. Sorgenfrei. *Theatre Histories*. 2nd ed. New York: Routledge, 2009.

Wickham, Glynne. *A History of the Theatre*. 2nd ed. London: Phaidon Press, 1994.

Wilson, Edwin and Alvin Goldfarb. *Living Theatre. A History of Theatre*. 6th ed. New York: McGraw Hill, 2011.

The Performance Review

The First Steps

A good reviewer is an “informed” audience member, someone who gathers information before experiencing the piece. In order to write a successful performance review, you should follow these steps:

- Read the play before seeing it (if it’s not a new play) and gather information concerning the playwright.
- Read critical analyses and interpretations of the play in order to become familiar beforehand with its form, style, main themes, and meanings. Writings on the social or historical context of the play/theatre company can also be useful.
- Once at the theatre, read the program and take notes of the dramaturgical/lobby display (if available).
- Before the performance starts, take notes on the venue and organization of the theatre space.
- Immediately write down your first impressions. (Do this during the performance if possible, or right after the performance is over. Do not wait the following day.)
- Organize your notes and create an outline.

Structure

Performance reviews should be primarily focused on the production rather than the play’s content, form, or historical background. The review should explain how all of the production elements (directing, design, acting) were successful in presenting the director’s concept—the central creative idea or interpretation of the play that unifies all aspects of the production. Generally, a performance review contains the following elements. These elements can be organized in different fashions, but the structure below is one of the most common:

- **General Information:** This includes the title of the play / musical / performance piece; writer / composer; director; location of the performance / name of the theatre company; and the date.
- **Introduction:** This provides a brief synopsis of the play’s plot and main themes (or, if the play is really well-known, a brief introduction to this particular performance)
- **Directorial approach/Concept:** Here you offer a general description of how the director has decided to consider or emphasize the work’s main themes. Were his/her choices successful in creating the impact on the audience that the creative team intended?
- **Space/Venue:** Consider the venue. How was the stage space organized? Did it suit the production? Was there a particular and varied use of it? Was the production visually engaging? Were the stage pictures created somewhat related to the production concept?
- **Acting:** Consider the performances. Was the acting of a particular kind (realistic, stylized, relying more on physical movements, on words, etc.)? Was the chosen style consistent and appropriate for this production? Which performers stood out?
- **Design:** Describe the sets, costumes, lights and sound. How did the design elements contribute to the production’s concept?
- **Conclusions:** Offer final considerations on the production and its meanings. How did it contribute to a better understanding of life?

On the following pages, you’ll find two models of performance reviews with each of these sections identified.

general information

CLEANSED. By Sarah Kane. Directed by Benedict Andrews. Schaubühne am Lehniner Platz, Berlin. 23 May 2005.

introduction

With all five of Sarah Kane's theatrical works in the company's repertory as of May 2005, the Schaubühne am Lehniner Platz, one of Berlin's most prolific theatre companies, has clearly established its position in the world of theatre as the "House of Sarah Kane." Equally as controversial as her infamous play *Blasted*, *Cleansed* opened 28 March 2004 at the Schaubühne.

**directorial
approach

concept**

With *Cleansed*, Kane dramatizes a microcosm of a society under the power of an unrestrained dictator, a God-like figure named Tinker who maintains control of a former university campus turned into an "institution." Tinker judges and carries out sentences on the inhabitants of his world: Graham, who dies of a heroin overdose in the first scene and remains in the action of the play as a ghostly presence; Grace, Graham's sister, who comes to the institution to retrieve his body; Rod and Carl, a homosexual couple deeply in love; an unnamed female dancer; and Robin, a weak, ineffectual boy. The plot is loosely based on, among other sources, Shakespeare's *Twelfth Night*, as Grace seeks her (apparently) dead brother, becomes trapped in Tinker's dark world, and eventually decides to become her brother by changing her sex, allowing Tinker to sever her breasts and give her a phalloplasty of Carl's extracted genitalia. Each of the characters is tested by Tinker, who observes them, ascertains their innermost desires and, with strict Orwellian justice, "cleanses" them. According to interviews with the playwright, Kane wrote *Cleansed* to explore the survival of human love in the midst of violence and devastation.

space/venue

The real success of the production, however, resided in the tremendous flexibility and technical capabilities of the Schaubühne. Staged in the facility's smaller, black box space, *Cleansed* featured a polished stone façade with an expansive stone stage space on either side of the central sunken pool area, which remained empty for much of the production. Two scenic elements added variety and functionality: a short platform on stage right of the pool, and a simple handrail situated on the upper side of the pool that was used for a number of purposes including entrances into the pool, a barricade, and finally as a miniature gallows for hanging Robin in scene 8.

**directorial
approach**

The production team handled *Cleansed's* violent actions and seemingly impossible stage descriptions in a symbolic manner. Kane's stage directions call for onstage amputations, throat cuttings, sex acts, dancing rats, and flowers that spring up through the earth. Well aware of the previous stagings by directors James MacDonald, Peter Zadek, and Thomas Ostermeier, Andrews employed a stylized approach in his handling of these difficult scenes.

Model Performance Review – Brett Ashley Crawford, “The Glass Menagerie-Review.” *Theatre Journal* 57.2 (May

<p>general information</p>	<p>GLASS MENAGERIE. By Tennessee Williams. Directed by Gregory Mosher. John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts, Eisenhower Theatre, Washington, DC. 18 July 2004.</p>
<p>introduction</p>	<p>When Michael Kaiser became president of the Kennedy Center, he brought with him a predilection for festival formats and a stated plan to increase the Center's theatrical presence. To that end, the Kennedy Center has produced two theatre festivals: the critically-acclaimed Sondheim Festival (summer 2002) and Tennessee Williams Explored (summer 2004). Kaiser's model for these festivals follows the museum retrospective in which a single artist is featured, allowing the audience to compare multiple works. In contrast to museum practice, Kaiser endeavors to present fresh interpretations of familiar productions.</p>
<p>directorial approach</p> <p>concept</p>	<p>Gregory Mosher's <i>The Glass Menagerie</i>, part of Tennessee Williams Explored, achieved that end. His production proved to be a startlingly innovative interpretation of a play that, for some, has become a predictable workhorse of educational and regional theatre. Each aspect of the production, executed with the precision and excellence expected of the Kennedy Center, revealed the complexity of the entangled lives of Amanda, Tom, and Laura in Williams's renowned memory play. Although Mosher's approach to the text was mostly traditional—the time and settings remained true to the original—the critical aspect of memory changed. The audience was not presented with only Tom's subjective view on the situation: rather, the social and economic realities of the family came to the forefront. This small shift produced a more nuanced interpretation that allowed the subtlety, humor, and complexity of each character and their relationship to surface.</p>
<p>acting</p>	<p>Sally Field, as Amanda, exceeded expectations. The actress's reputation for persuasive performances of psychosis (Sybil in the movie of the same name and Maggie in television's ER, two of her award-winning roles) would seem to have made her a natural choice for Amanda, a character usually interpreted as desperately eccentric, verging on psychotic. Instead, Field gave Amanda tremendous depth, imbuing her with both love and pragmatism. Field's interpretation revealed a hard working, frustrated woman and mother whose actions emerge from a maternal desire for happiness for both her children and security for her daughter. The Gentleman Caller's visit was particularly effective. Eschewing the usual hysteria of an aging Southern belle extraordinaire, Field made it clear that her costume choice was driven by economic necessity and that her behavior was a desperate attempt to keep Jim in the apartment until Laura regained her composure. Amanda's reminiscences became not only table-talk filler, but a touchingly simple wish for better times.</p>
<p>design</p>	<p>The production's design elements achieved the same subtle qualities that dominated the acting. The sound design, notable for the absence of actor amplification, evinced a complete environment. Aaron Copp's lighting design accomplished what Williams's script demanded—a dim memory—yet it also highlighted poetic elements of the production: a sliver of a moon for all to see and an expressive play of light and shadow on the stair well. At first, John Lea Beatty's set, with no internal levels and a narrow, horizontal playing space, seemed problematic. Yet, as the action commenced, the aesthetic choices became clearer. A narrow, horizontal flow intensified the feeling of being trapped, at times almost spewing the apartment's inhabitants onto the stairwell's open space. Of special note was the "picture of the venerable father" that turned into a changing projection of images from Tom's past during his soliloquies. However, while a pleasant artistic touch, the horizontal space foiled the effect. Once Tom moved away from the picture in the dimly lit set, the audience stopped watching the projection's changes as they followed Tom in his spotlight.</p>
<p>conclusions</p>	<p>Overall, Mosher's production served as a reminder that the theatre gains its strength through nuance, not spectacle, and that the complexity and beauty inherent in Williams's works can forebear the tried and trite. Furthermore, like the Sondheim Festival, Tennessee Williams Explored achieved success on a national stage playing to a summer tourist audience with material that heralded the intensity and honesty expected in the nonprofit theatre. Kaiser's success using this festival format should serve as an example to theatres across the nation struggling with budgets, programming decisions, and the administrative tangle of the twenty first century. Summer fare does not have to be light, fluffy entertainment. It can be successful and still serve as an artistically complex vision.</p>

Character and Scene Analysis: An Outline

The outline below will help you think through some questions that will inform a strong character and scene analysis.

Section A: Reading the Play

1. Read the entire play in one sitting and make notes about your first response.
2. Re-read the play (several times).
3. Read and re-read the specific scene.
 - a. Find opportunities to read the scene with your partner.
 - b. Give the scene a title.
 - i. Discover the title through the action of the scene.
 - ii. Discover the title through the emotional relationships.
 - iii. Discover the title as part of the rehearsal process.

Section B: Research

1. Read the playwright's other works.
 - a. What themes recur in his/her work?
Does he/she have a primary concern?
2. Investigate the history of the period.
 - a. Morals
 - b. Behavior
 - c. Architecture
 - d. Music
 - e. Art
 - f. Any primary resource material from the period
 - g. Costuming
 - h. Other historical research on the period
3. Compare the play's world with today's.
 - a. In what ways was society significantly different from today?
 - b. What were the social customs in the relationships between men and women?
 - c. What was the social structure like?
 - d. Who ruled and how?

Section C: Given Circumstances

1. Speaking or writing in the first person, give a descriptive analysis of your character.
 - a. Physiology: Sex; Age; Height & Weight; Color of hair, eyes, skin; Appearance: good-looking, over- or underweight, clean, neat, pleasant, untidy, shape of head, face, limbs, etc; Heredity
 - b. Sociology: Class (lower, middle, upper); Occupation (type of work, hours of work, income); Education (amount, kind of school, grades, favorite subjects, aptitudes); Home life (parents living, earning power, orphan, parents separated or divorced, characters marital status); Religion; Race; Place in community (leader among friends, clubs, sports); Political affiliations; Amusements (hobbies, books, newspapers, magazines read)
 - c. Psychology: Sex life, Moral standards; Personal ambition; Frustrations; Chief disappointments; Temperament (easygoing, pessimistic, optimistic); Attitude toward life (resigned, militant, defeatist); Complexes (obsessions, inhibitions, superstitions, phobias); Extrovert or introvert; Abilities (Languages, talents); Qualities (imagination, judgment, taste, poise); I.Q.
2. What is my relationship to each of the other characters at the beginning of the play? What is our prior history together?
3. What is my relationship to each of the other characters at the end of the play?
4. What has happened to me before the play starts?
5. What does your character say about themselves?
6. What do other characters say about the character?
7. What actions does the character take which reveal something?

Section D: Answer the Following Questions:

1. What do I want? What is my goal in the scene? What am I fighting for?
2. Why do I want it?
3. Who do I want it from?
4. What is in my way? Obstacles/conflicts: With whom? With what?
5. What actions (including verbal agreements) do I take to overcome my obstacles/conflicts?
 - a. Actions=beat intentions
 - b. The doing of each action=my tactic

Section E: What is My Journey?

1. Where do I start physically/emotionally? With what relationships?
2. How do I change during the course of the play?
 - a. Where are the major turning points in the script?
 - b. How does each change alter my behavior? (Physically; Energy = changes of tempo in my physical rhythms); Psychologically; Emotionally; Needs
3. What is my central conflict in the play?
 - a. Where does my conflict begin?
 - b. How is my conflict resolved?
 - c. How do I personally (as an actor) relate to this conflict?
 - i. Does it have any relationship to my real life?
 - ii. What was my gut response to this conflict when I first read the script?

Section F: Personalizing the Role

1. What are the physical and emotional similarities between the role and myself?
2. What are the physical and emotional differences between the role and myself?
3. Create a comprehensive list of adjectives that accurately describe you.

The Research Paper

The theatre history research paper is like any other kind of history writing. Unlike art history or the study of literature, theatre history is a history of documents and not of monuments. In fact, as Peggy Phelan (1993) has pointed out, “performance’s only life is in the present. Performance cannot be saved [...] Performance’s being becomes itself through disappearance.” (146)

Theatre events are historical facts that happen in the past and leave fragmentary traces in documents that can be used by the historian to reconstruct them in the present. The fragmentary (and biased) nature of these traces forces the historian first to select and then interpret them through the construction of plausible thesis and meaningful arguments. As Richard J. Evans (2000) reminds us, “the historian formulates a thesis, goes looking for evidence, and discovers facts.” (68) In addition, the process of selection and interpretation makes history writing controversial. The first thing to do when you start writing a theatre history paper is to find a way to enter the conversation created by scholars on a given topic.

The First Steps

Choose a Topic. If your professor does not give you a specific topic to work on, selecting one can seem a daunting task. Keep in mind that the more time you spend finding good research material, the easier the actual writing of your paper will be. Here are two ways you might select a topic:

- **Personal experience:** Select a play, playwright, performance, historical period, theatre company, etc. that really interests you. For example, a play you have seen, read, or that you have been involved with as an actor, designer, or director.
- **Research in the Library:** Read the table of contents and abstracts of as many recent theatre journals as you can. When a topic grabs your attention, read the entire article and look for other articles on a similar topic.

Gather general information. Once you have an idea of what your topic will be, start reading with tertiary sources (encyclopedias, theatre history textbooks, biographical dictionaries, etc.)

Gather more specific information. Read secondary sources about your topic and start collecting primary sources (You can sometimes find them in your secondary sources. You may find them through new research in archives, or special collections or on the field). If you do not collect, select, and order your primary sources, you won't be able to formulate an argument and you will be limited to repeating what others have already said.

Narrow your topic and formulate a hypothesis. As you read secondary sources and collect primary sources, it will become possible to narrow your topic. Once you have narrowed your topic and formulated a hypothesis/argument, you can start conducting further and more specific research. As you read material, take notes of the authors' main arguments and the evidence and logic they use to support their claims (be sure to note specific page numbers for citation purposes).

Map the controversy. At this point, you can map the controversy on a specific topic by summarizing, in an objective way, what other scholars have written. This mapping will help you form your introduction and highlight a gap in the pre-existing knowledge.

Create an outline. Take a position on the given controversy, refine your argument by summarizing it into a clear thesis statement, and create an outline of your paper, detailing how you will use your primary and secondary sources to support your thesis.

Structuring your Essay

The First Few Pages

1. In your first paragraph, convince your reader that your topic is important. Briefly introduce it and make it relevant by showing the interest it has attracted in your field (or convince your reader of the importance of your topic exactly because it's been thus far overlooked).
2. In the following couple of paragraphs,
 - a. briefly review the previous research done on the chosen topic; and
 - b. point out a gap, raise new questions about it (through a new theoretical framework), or simply support one of the existing positions by showing new evidence.
3. State the exact nature of your proposed research and say what your outcomes will be and why they are significant. What exactly are you arguing for? What's your main claim/thesis?

The Rest of Your Paper

In the body of your paper, you will set about to convince your reader that your thesis is credible. You'll do this by forming several supporting arguments.

Each supporting argument should share two characteristics.

1. It should directly support your thesis.
2. It should be backed with evidence from your research.

Obviously, the length of these supporting arguments, and the number of arguments themselves, will be based on the length of your research paper. In a longer paper, each argument may consist of several paragraphs or even pages. Be sure that you include enough evidence to back each of these arguments—your reader should assent to each of these subclaims in order to agree with your overarching point.

As you transition between arguments, be sure that don't simply move your reader along with "empty" transitions like "also," "next," "another important consideration..." Instead, relate each new idea back to the thesis to explain how it will further support your idea.

A Model of the Opening of a Research Article - David Savran, "Ambivalence, Utopia and a Queer sense of Materialism: How "Angels in America" Reconstructs the Nation." *Theatre Journal* 47.2 (May 1995): 207-227

Critics, pundits, and producers have placed Tony Kushner's *Angels in America: A Gay Fantasia on National Themes* in the unenviable position of having to rescue the American theatre. The latter, by all accounts, is in a sorry state. It has attempted to maintain its elite cultural status despite the fact that the differences between "high" and "low" have become precarious. On Broadway, increasingly expensive productions survive more and more by mimicking mass culture, either in the form of mind-numbing spectacles featuring singing cats, falling chandeliers, and dancing dinner-ware or plays, like *The Heidi Chronicles* or *Prelude to a Kiss*, whose style and themes aspire to "quality" television. In regional theatres, meanwhile, subscriptions continue to decline, and with them the adventurousness of artistic directors. **Given this dismal situation, *Angels in America* has almost singlehandedly resuscitated a category of play that has become almost extinct: the serious Broadway drama that is neither a British import nor a revival.**

Not within memory has a new American play been canonized by the press as rapidly as *Angels in America*. Indeed, **critics have been stumbling over each other in an adulatory stupor.** John Lahr hails Perestroika as a "masterpiece" and notes that "[n]ot since Williams has a playwright announced his poetic vision with such authority on the Broadway stage." Jack Kroll judges both parts "the broadest, deepest, most searching American play of our time," while Robert Brustein deems *Millennium Approaches* "the authoritative achievement of a radical dramatic artist with a fresh, clear voice." In the gay press, meanwhile, the play is viewed as testifying to the fact that "Broadway now leads the way in the industry with its unapologetic portrayals of gay characters." For both Frank Rich and John Clum, *Angels* is far more than just a successful play; it is the marker of a decisive historical shift in American theatre. According to Rich, the play's success is in part the result of its ability to conduct "a searching and radical rethinking of the whole esthetic of American political drama." For Clum, the play's appearance on Broadway "marks a turning point in the history of gay drama, the history of American drama, and of American literary culture." In its reception, *Angels*—so deeply preoccupied with teleological process—is itself positioned as both the culmination of history and as that which rewrites the past.

Here Savran helps readers understand the stakes of his essay, explaining why the argument that follows is important.

In this paragraph, the author walks us through what's already been said about the play, quickly and effectively giving readers an overview of what other theorists and critics think about this topic.

Despite the enormity of the claims cited above, I am less interested in disputing them than in trying to understand why they are being made—and why now. Why is a play featuring five gay male characters being universalized as a “turning point” in the American theatre, and minoritized as the preeminent gay male artifact of the 1990s? Why is it both popular and “radical?” What is the linkage between the two primary sources for the play's theory of history and utopia—Walter Benjamin and Mormonism? And what does this linkage suggest about the constitution of the nation? Finally, why has queer drama become the theatrical sensation of the 1990s?

This is the gap in previous research, something critics have over-looked or gotten wrong about the topic.

I hope it's not too perverse of me to attempt to answer these questions by focusing less on the construction of queer subjectivities per se than on the field of cultural production in which *Angels in America* is situated. After all, how else would one practice a queer materialism?

Here is the thesis, which addresses that gap.

Conventions of Theatre Writing

- **Past/Present tense:** Use the present tense to describe the action and characters of a play, or the author's intent: “In *A Doll's House* Ibsen returns to the subject so vital to him: the Social Lie and Duty;” “Nora is the beloved, adored wife of Torvald Helmer. He is an admirable man, rigidly honest, of high moral ideals, and passionately devoted to his wife and children.” It's best to use the present tense because it highlights the vividness of these actions and characters as they re-occur in our minds every time we read them. Conversely, past-tense verbs should be used in theatre history papers, since you are describing something that took place sometimes in the past.
- **Style & Citation :** Theatre historians generally use either Chicago or MLA. You can make use of footnotes or endnotes to provide supplemental information. For detailed instructions concerning how to provide reference (since it differs depending on the style used), see the *MLA* or *Chicago Manual of Style*. You can find more information on these citation styles, including guides and models, in the “[Student Resources](#)” section of the Debby Ellis Writing Center website.
- **Pronouns:** You should avoid using the pronouns “I” and “you” in research papers and in performance reviews for academic journals. First and second person can instead be used for performance reviews written for popular press, which require a less formal and academic style.
- **Citing from a play:** Because plays are often printed in many editions and anthologies, it is customary to cite the act, scene, and line number rather than the page number in your in-text citations. If you quote from one character, you can incorporate it into the body of the text. If you quote a passage with more than one character, set the quotation off from the body of your paper with one-inch indentations. If a character's speech continues onto the next line of your paper, indent subsequent lines an additional ¼ inch; double-space each line. Write the characters' names in capital letters followed by a period. Do not use quotation marks.
- **Avoid generalizations:** Always be specific and rely on your sources. Avoid truisms such as “theatre has always made people feel and think” or “this scene helps the plot and develops character.”
- **Quote/Paraphrase:** Introduce quotations by using transitional phrases such as “according to x,” “Y argues/states that,” or “in the words of z.” In a short research paper, avoid too many quotations to ensure that your voice (or argument) is heard.
- **Avoid plagiarism:** Plagiarism consists of taking credit for the work of others. You can avoid this by limiting the use of quotations, summaries, and paraphrases. Take careful notes as you research, keeping track of page numbers. And be sure to always reference and cite your sources.