

## Reviews and Criticism

- Do your homework before the show, find out as much background information as possible.
- Come prepared. Be sure to have a notebook and pen or pencil. Take notes sparingly. Just note a few key items to remember.
- Arrive early and stay late. It's not fair to write a review of a performance of you missed part of it. Be sure to read all the credits at the end of a film.
- Pay attention to the audience's reaction. Note how many people attended, and try to judge their reactions.
- Write your review as soon as possible after the performance. "Strike while the iron is hot."

- Make it perfectly clear in the lead what your main point is. Choose one main theme and stick to it.
- Be sure to identify the major characters and actors or performers so that the readers will recognize them from other performances, where appropriate.
- Include a brief plot summary, but do not devote your entire review to it.
- Give readers enough information to let them know whether they want to see it themselves.
- State your opinion clearly and usually without the use of first person. There is rarely any need to say, “I think,” because the reader assumes that the opinions are those of the reviewer.

- Include specific details to back up your opinions. Mention individual performances, characters, and scenes.
- Have fun, relax, and make the tone of the review appropriate to the tone of the performance.
- Accuracy is as important in a review as in any other piece of journalism. Spell the people's names right, and get the details right.

## **Editorials and Columns**

- Determine your goal. Why are you writing the opinion article: What is your main point? What do you hope to achieve?
- Determine your audience. What are you trying to convince? What are their attitudes on the subject? How can you best bring them to agree with your point of view?
- Outline your argument. Design a logical train of thought that leads to your conclusion.
- Begin with a catchy lead that will get people to read your article. Do not turn away readers with an unpopular opinion in the first sentence.

- Start out with areas of agreement. Begin with statements on which most people agree. Build from there with simple, logical steps.
- Follow universal rules of logic. Use “If...then” arguments and other generally accepted concepts.
- Build toward the particular actions you advocate so that the reader comes along with you.
- Never overstate your case. If you go too far, you will lose readers.
- Don't be wishy-washy. Once you have built up your case, state it firmly and clearly. Do not back away from it in the end.

- Follow all the rules of good writing, including use of strong action verbs, short sentences, and good grammar.
- Editorials are the voice of the leadership of a newspaper.
- Opinion columns express the personal opinion of the writer.