

Critical Response

Always a critic !

Write your own opera review

What is an opera critic?

An opera critic attends an opera and writes her opinions about the performance. Those opinions, also known as **reviews**, are often printed in newspapers or magazines. Critics write reviews about all sorts of things—books, movies, dance, music, plays, and more.

Because a critic's job is to share her honest opinion, a review can be positive or negative. Whether a critic enjoys a performance or dislikes it, she says what she feels. People sometimes read reviews to help them decide if they should see a performance or not.

What does it take to be an opera critic?

- **Language-** An opera critic must have fine speaking and writing skills. Some critics even write reviews in other languages.
- **Interest-** It is important that an opera critic be interested in opera. Knowing a lot about a subject helps a critic write an interesting review. Since a critic can spend a lot of time writing about one subject, it helps if it is something she enjoys!
- **Confidence-** A critic should be confident in her opinion. Some critics say that to be a good critic, you must think your opinion is always right.
- **Exposure-** Go to as many performances as you can, and listen to lots of opera. The more a critic hears, the more she knows!

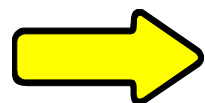


Now...you be the critic!

You can follow the steps below to create a review about a song, book, CD, TV show, or performance.

Once your class has seen *The Barber of Seville*, use the next page to create a review about the performance. Your teacher can mail it to us. We want to hear your critical opinion!

Turn the page for tips on how to write your own review!



FOUR TIPS FOR WRITING A REVIEW

1) Create a catchy first sentence.

You want to get the readers' attention, so the opening, or "lead" sentence, is very important. This can be a difficult part of writing a review.

Ask yourself:

How can I sum up my opinion in one sentence?

What would catch my attention if I were reading this review?

2) Clearly state what performance you saw.

Tell who gave the performance, the name of the opera, where the performance took place, and the date of the performances.

Ask yourself:

What if people want to come see this performance?

What details do the readers need?

3) Tell why the performance was wonderful, all right, or bad.

Be sure to say WHY you feel the performance was good. It is easy to say what you think. It is more difficult to say why you think it. For most beginning reviewers, the "why step" is the most difficult.

Ask yourself:

What did I like/not like about the performance?

How was the singing?

Were the costumes nice?

Was it too loud? Too soft?

How did the instrumentalist(s) sound?

Readers like to know the reasons for your opinions. Don't forget to tell them how you developed your opinions about the performance.

4) Talk about individual performances.

Toward the end of the review, you may write about the details of singers' performances.

Ask yourself:

Did Lisa sing well?

Did Frank play his character convincingly?

Whose performances stood out?

Turn the page to write your own review!

