

Art Review Portfolio: Grading Rubric and Task Sheet

This assignment is extraordinary and exciting in its two-fold purpose.

Objective: The goal of the art review is to do careful analysis of the art of your choice: make sure that the publication you choose to write for also fits the criteria, and write an argument that goes beyond mere summary/recommendation to employ thoughtful, prolonged analysis and review that engages and benefits your audience.

Task (100 points): Write an 800 – 1,000-word (double-spaced, Times New Roman, MLA-formatted) review of a work of art (BYU's International Film Cinema, concert, painting, etc.).

1. Tailor your review to suit the needs of a specific publication. Thus, seek out a publication that writes art reviews that fit OUR CRITERIA (*Rolling Stone*, *New York Times*, *IGN*, *Blacksheep Review*, the *New Yorker*, *Seattle Times*, *Washington Post*, *Chicago Times*, *San Francisco Chronicle*) and assess what the editors and readers of this publication expect from a review—let this assessment guide your writing decisions. However, despite what you might find in an individual review, you must still fulfill the parameters of this class. You are choosing a publication mainly for stylistic considerations. ***You must attach a sample review from your chosen publication to your final draft.***
2. Your review must be of a performance/production/exhibit on BYU campus this semester! Remember, the venue will influence the review. Watching a movie on DVD will NOT fulfill this assignment.
3. A review must include the three “C’s described hereafter and may include commentary such as the following:
 - A description of what the work depicts.
 - A description of why the author/artist created it.
 - How it fits into the artist’s previous works.
 - How it fits into the current tradition.
 - What techniques the artist used in its creation—especially if these are unusual.
 - What it means. This can be seen in terms of timeless or time-bound issues of human value, perception, creation, politics, etc.
 - What will or will not appeal to readers/spectators.
 - How excellent it is.
 - A concrete recommendation of who should see it or not see it, including age groups. (Hint: this is your argument!)

Art Review: Grading Rubric

1. Analysis

- a. The review accurately identifies and describes several dominant techniques and accurately relates how they are used to reinforce the theme, meaning, mood, or feeling of the artwork.
- b. The review takes into account audience appeal/appropriateness.
- c. The analysis is concise and explicit, providing substantial textual evidence.
- d. The review goes beyond “good” or “bad” evaluative statements, beyond summary, to discuss what makes the piece effective, interesting, and innovative (or not).
- e. The review places the work within its greater—genre, artist, social—context.

2. Audience Appropriateness

- a. The review is written in a clear, concise style. The mood, tone, and diction match those of the intended publication.
- b. The review demonstrates the writer’s awareness of his/her rhetorical situation.
- c. The review reflects the preferences and/or taste of the audience.

3. Organization

- a. The review starts with description to contextualize the analysis.
- b. The analysis is purposeful: an intentional exploration of the way artistic elements add to meaning rather than a catalogue.
- c. The analysis ends with an overview or summary and recommendation.

4. Voice, etc.

- a. The writer’s voice is effective, engaging; appropriate in terms of his/her purpose and audience.
- b. Word choice is appropriate to the rhetorical situation and enlivens the prose.
- c. Sentences vary in length and structure, creating a flow that eases readability.
- d. Sentences avoid vague, wordy or obscure constructions.
- e. Punctuation, grammar, spelling, and usage adhere to the highest standards of edited American English.

Art Review Portfolio: Activity Packet

Art Review Activity 1: Reviewing the Reviews

Objective: This assignment requires you to choose the publication for which you will be writing and helps you get a sense of what sort of writing that publication prefers. (1 – 1.5 hours)

Step 1: Reconnaissance

Before you decide which publication you want to write for, take a careful look at the field. Using online databases or the library's periodicals section, choose 4-5 potential publications. Read reviews from 2-3 issues—enough to give you a good sense of who their audience might be and what they value in writing. Type a list of those publications you reviewed.

Step 2: Evaluation

Choose one publication that you'll write for, then think about your decision. Justify your decision: why did you choose this publication? Write 2-3 sentences explaining your decision with concrete information.

Step 3: Delving

Now focus on your chosen publication. Find 3 reviews from the publication and analyze each. Look at the stylistic decisions the authors are making: what kind of words do they use? How complicated are their sentences? What sort of cultural knowledge do they assume their audience has? Try and deduce what kind of things the audience values. Write 2-3 sentences justifying your decision and explaining the rhetorical choices of the publication. Remember that you will need to include this list and justification along with a sample copy of one of the reviews with your portfolio.

Step 4: Proposal

Fill in the attached proposal sheet and turn it in next class. Turn in the rest of the assignment with your portfolio. Be sure to write down your proposal for yourself so you don't forget.

Art Review Activity 2: The Three C's

Instructions: Your art review is *not* a simple analysis. The review will argue whether a piece is worth seeing/experiencing. You will explore the excellence of a piece of art while answering questions about content, context, and concept (see the questions below). Spend some good time answering the

below questions to help you formulate your paper. The more thorough you are with this assignment, the better your paper will be. (1-2 hours)

Content:

1. What are the individual elements the artist used to create this work? (If it's a film, there's cinematography, film angles, musical score, lighting, pacing, the script, actors, settings, etc.) (If it's a painting, there's the medium(s), color, texture, etc.) (If it's a concert, there's the music performed, individual performers, conductors, atmosphere, etc.)
2. Which of these elements were outstanding? What made these elements work?
3. Which elements were less-than-stellar? Why?

Context:

1. What genre(s) does the art fit within (and be specific: not just "film" but "horror films")? (Sometimes a work will have characteristics of many genres, but how would you define it?)
2. What other works are well-known in that genre?
3. How does the work you're examining compare with the other works in that genre? Here, you may want to notice differences in content as well as differences in excellence.
4. Who created this work?
5. What else has this artist created?
6. How does the work you're examining compare with the other works the artist has created? (If you're examining a collaborative work like a film, use questions 4-6 to discuss the producers, directors, editors, actors, animators, etc.)

Concept:

1. Brainstorm what theme(s) this work explores. What evidence from the work suggests that this is the theme?
2. What deeper meaning does the work suggest? What evidence from the work suggests that this is the deeper meaning?

Other Matters: What magazine or newspaper are you writing your review for?

1. In what style does this publication typically write its reviews?
2. What kind of readers read this publication?
3. How will the information in questions 1-3 help you write your review?

Art Review Activity 3: Full Draft

Complete a full draft of your art review. You must bring one hard copy to class to get credit.

Activity 4: The Pithy Piece

In writing, reducing your main ideas to a few pithy, concrete, relevant statements while maintaining your argument with captivating examples can unnerve the most talented writers. Write a 180-220 word distilled abstract of your art review.

Activity 5: Peer Review—In Class Activity

First, make sure you know which publication your partner is writing for and that you understand what kinds of things that publisher values. Then, answer the following questions:

Content and Focus

1. In your opinion, does the review offer enough summary? Too much? Too little? More importantly, does the summary help further the writer's stance (argument), or is it merely taking up space? Please write your comments and suggestions?
2. Do you feel that the review provides adequate contextual /historical information? Too much? Too little? More importantly, does this information further the writer's stance, or is it merely taking up space? Please write your comments and suggestions.
3. In your opinion, does the writer offer enough of his or her opinion? Too much? Too little? Does the writer maintain a consistence stance, or do certain opinions contradict one another? Is the writer's stance focused or are they "peeing down both legs," as Zinsser says? Please write your suggestions.
4. Finally, examine the summary, context, and writer's opinions together. Does the writer connect all three elements or does some information feel tangential or unexplained? If some material feels disconnected to the article's focus, write the word "connect" next to that material. Are the writer's opinions well-supported by the summary and context? Are the given examples relevant to the writer's stance? Does the writer connect the summary and context to their argument?
5. Finally, do you feel that the writer has missed any important contextual information? Is their opinion too one-sided? Please brainstorm two different things (for 5 minutes total): 1) contextual ideas that the writer could touch on or should touch on, and 2) potential counter-arguments and support for those counter-arguments.

On Middling Issues:

Since this paper is short, this should be pretty straightforward.

1. Label each paragraph with a one or two key words of summary: what is this paragraph trying to get done?
2. Is each paragraph cohesive—does the paragraph revolve around one main question/issue/purpose? If yes, mark with a checkmark, if no, point out what your expectations were and how the paragraph strayed/betrayed that expectation.

3. Is each paragraph exhaustive—is everything that’s related to that paragraph’s project included in the paragraph? Is the question it’s setting out to answer answered? Or are there leftover bits of related information floating around in other paragraphs? If yes: smiley face. If no: underline the stray sentences and point them to a better home.
4. Are the paragraphs organized intentionally? Usefully? Is it clear why each precedes/follows the others? Write a sentence between each pair of paragraphs explaining the relationship between them and the logic behind their organization.

On Sentence-Level Issues:

1. Is the article’s language engaging? Underline a couple of sentences that exemplify really interesting/audience-appropriate language, explain what makes those sentences successful. Find 2 sentences that are less successful and explain what they could do better.
2. Does the review suck you in—draw you along? After the first couple of sentences do you want to keep reading? Why or why not?
3. Read carefully: circle all to be verbs. Pick 5 and offer suggestions on how they could change them.
4. At the end of the review, are you prepared to follow the reviewer’s advice? Write a couple sentences: why or why not?
5. What questions are you left with about the piece or the reviewer’s opinion?

Activity 6: Final Draft

Turn in Activities 1-5, along with your beautiful final draft in a portfolio folder.