

Responding to a play text

Handout DN4

Record your gut reaction

Record your immediate visions, connections, ideas, feelings and challenges after reading the play for the first time. Annotate the text with images or text if this is helpful.

Record an analysis of the text

1. Complete the following in terms of the narrative of the play.

(Title of play) is the story of (subject) who (action) and (consequence).

For example: **Romeo and Juliet** is the story of **two young people from rival families** who **fall in love** and **die tragically**.

2. Complete the following in terms of the theme of the play.

(Title of play) is a play about (concept/theme/idea) and how (effect).

For example: **Romeo and Juliet** is a play about **young love** and how **its obsessive nature is destructive**.

3. List:

- the character(s)
- the location(s)
- the transitions
- facts, deductions, questions regarding characters and the world of the play

For example: *Romeo and Juliet* takes place in Verona. (fact) The families are very wealthy. (deduction)
What caused the feud between the two families? (question)

- central ideas
- genre, style.

4. Complete the following sentence for **every** scene in the play using a subject and a verb. This will identify the key action of the scene and the key performer(s) and will help you to direct and focus the action of the scene.

The scene in which (subject) (verb).

For example: The scene in which **the two gangs fight**.

Record structure

Draw the shape of the play as a graph, paying attention to the organization of scenes, points of tension, motifs and recurring ideas.

Record your interpretation

Complete the following sentence.

For me, (title of play) is about (concept/theme/idea) and how (effect). I think it was written in order to (playwright's intention).

For example: For me, ***Romeo and Juliet*** is about **adult conflict** and how **it destroys young people by forcing them to live in a violent world**. I think it was written in order to **examine how young people can be victims of the adult world**.

Research

Carry out research on the following.

- a. The author's life
- b. The period and cultural conditions of the time when the play was written
- c. Any world or local events current at the time of writing the play that may have had an impact on its writing
- d. The play's reception and impact on audiences
- e. The themes and ideas of the play
- f. Particular characters or character traits
- g. The period, location and events of the play
- h. The genre or style
- i. Any particular aspects unique to the play, for example particular soundtrack, images, props

After carrying out your research, think about the author, the time of writing and the location. What was happening in the playwright's world? Why did he or she write the play? Who was it for? What was the playwright trying to say? How does it relate to other plays by the playwright? How does it relate to other plays being performed at the time?

Revisit

- a. Go back to the section above entitled "Record an analysis of the text" and add/edit/change as a result of your research and any further information.
- b. Revisit your interpretation and add/edit/change as well as give more detail.