

Theatre Adjudicator Guidelines



Thank you for adjudicating; feedback means a GREAT deal to students and directors.

Running Notes

Use this sheet to take generalized notes on the production, as it unfolds, as you think about how the production meets criteria in the four evaluation areas in #3, below.

Evaluation Sheet

1. Support **learning** and **development** of *high school students*. The contest nature of the experience is of secondary importance. Please evaluate each production for its own value (do not compare to other productions).
2. Comments: give actors and director clear feedback, to assist them in developing their expertise.
3. Evaluation Areas:
 - a. **Performance**
 - i. Do actors use **voice** (projection, enunciation, consistent dialect, etc.) stylistically appropriate to communicate characters?
 - ii. Do actors use **movement** (facial expression, gestures, stage business etc.) to communicate physical requirements of characters?
 - iii. Do actors create believable, developed, and consistent **characterizations** that show **connectedness** to performance?
 - b. **Ensemble**
 - i. Do actors function as a **cohesive unit** to establish mood?
 - ii. Does the overall cast's performance indicate **listening, cooperation**, rehearsal and commitment to their work?
 - iii. Does the production **flow** smoothly and at an appropriate **pace** within and between scenes?
 - c. **Direction**
 - i. Does the production convey **understanding** and **purpose** of the script and its genre?
 - ii. Does the production tell a **dynamic** and **complete story** with three-dimensional characters and insight into humanity?
 - iii. Does the production use **space** effectively to provide for motivated, functional and artistic movement?
 - d. Technical (note: *host facilities determine lighting, sound, and stage configuration*). **Please be mindful budgets/resources vary**. How do elements – **if used** – enhance or detract/distract from the production?
 - i. Do **scenery, set pieces** and **props** work effectively within the needs and style of the production?
 - ii. Do **costumes** and **make-up** effectively communicate character, period, style and mood?
 - iii. [If opted-in by director for consideration in evaluation]: Do **lighting choices** enhance tone and mood? (Do not assess *mechanics*).
 - iv. [If opted-in by director for consideration in evaluation]: Do **sound choices** enhance effect and emotional moments? (Do not assess *mechanics*).

Adjudicators must NOT assess lighting/sound if their master ballot tells them not to.

4. Evaluation Area Ratings: **Please circle the number that indicates proficiency in each area** → **2**
These ratings indicate to directors and students how well you felt they mastered each of the criteria:
1=Needs Improvement: Characterization is barely developed. There is little cohesion among actors, and pacing suffers. Material has been directed in a way that fails to connect and/or communicate to the audience. Production elements, if present, detract more than help with storytelling.
2=Progressing: Work-in-progress: what you would expect to see at the middle of a rehearsal process, before it's ready for public viewing. Characterizations aren't fully believable, but actors convey the play's intent. Material has been directed in a way that does not fully draw the audience into the world of the play. Production elements complement and support the storytelling, but may not fully realized, or need polish.
3=Accomplished: Actors, direction, and design elements work in harmony to communicate a clear concept, and creative and purposeful choices bring the play to life. Performers are focused, energized, and authentic. Design elements support and help tell the story.

5. Adjudicator Recommendation (*Advance/Stop* or *All State/Critic's Choice*)
 - a. Subdistrict Workfest/Pre-District: No score is given; technical elements may not be finished; emphasis is on helping develop the production to be ready for district.
 - b. District Festival: If a play gets a majority of "N" scores, then ask: "Given feedback, could the production reasonably be expected make progress and necessary adjustments in approximately two weeks' time?" If "no" we suggest you recommend STOP. You should still provide feedback for learning and growth.
 - c. Sectional Festival: In two weeks' time, could this play achieve *Accomplished* level? Is it generally *accomplished* and polished, only requiring fine tuning? Does it rise to the standard we want to see presented at State? If "no" we suggest you recommend STOP.
 - d. State Festival: Recommend *All State* or *Critic's Choice*. Consider: Did the production achieve significant *Accomplished* levels? Does it show innovative vision, authentic storytelling, and artistic excellence? In what way does this production support learning and development of students?
 - e. State Festival (Merit Awards)
 - i. **Directing**: is the interpretation and staging of the production is executed in a cohesive, exemplary manner that brings an imaginative vision to the audience?
 - ii. **Performance**: do actors bring authentic, memorable, and poignant characters to life on stage?
 - iii. **Ensemble**: does the company collaborate well, driving effective pacing of the production?
 - iv. **Crew**: do technical elements communicate and enhance the audience's experience?

Giving the Oral Response

The oral response is an opportunity to foster dialogue about the adjudication process, to give context to criticism and collective recommendation of the adjudicator panel. It also is one of the most crucial aspects of schools' experiences in the festival: a kind, constructive, and instructive oral response can be the difference between a school continuing or discontinuing its participation in the festival. Best practices to keep in mind:

- Introduce yourself, give brief background on your credentials, and express appreciation for the hard work the cast and crew has put into the production.
- Ask **students** how they felt the production went, what questions they have, and what feedback they feel would be most valuable. Empower them to take ownership in the growth process! Urge deeper questions beyond "did you like it?" or "what did we do wrong or right?" Use finesse in answering, and make *objective observations*: speak to what you saw and heard, using "I" language. Discuss what was strong or what was unfinished, encouraging more attention to detail to establish polish. Mention moments you were **brought into** the production, as well as **taken out** by distractions. Even if a show was almost flawless, highlight details that could be fine-tuned or extended. Be kind; encourage continued participation in theatre!

Evaluation: Guiding Questions

Adapted from Peter Geissler, Luxemburg-Casco HS; WHSFA Theatre Advisory Committee Member

Performance	Do actors use voice (projection, enunciation, consistent dialect, etc.) stylistically appropriate to communicate characters?	Could I hear them (projection)? Could I understand them (articulation)? Did they use pause effectively?
	Do actors use movement (facial expression, gestures, stage business, etc.) to communicate physicality of characters?	Was blocking clear and effective (different levels : lay, kneel, sit, stand, platform; different planes : 9 areas - right, left, up, down; open /teased to audience; effective crossing)? Use objects/hand props or pantomime effectively
	Do actors create believable, developed, and consistent characterizations that show connectedness to performance?	Did actors understand characters? Did I believe them? Were characterizations consistent?
Ensemble	Do actors function as a cohesive unit to establish mood?	Did they work well together? Were all actors parallel , without <u>upstaging</u> one another, or did one stand out?
	Does overall cast's performance indicate listening , cooperation , rehearsal and commitment to their work?	Did actors listen to one another? Did they react to one another? Did they build off one another (i.e., topping, volume, intensity)?
	Does the production flow smoothly and at an appropriate pace within and between scenes?	Was their timing on or off? Did scene changes go well, and seamlessly? Was overall pacing/tempo appropriate to the tone/mood of the production?
Direction	Does the production convey understanding and purpose of the script and its genre?	Was message clear , conveying understanding of nature and purpose of the play (comedy = laugh; drama = moved me; tragedy = persuade me to think/act; fantasy = transported me; melodrama = shock/excite)?
	Does the production tell a dynamic and complete story with three-dimensional characters and insight into humanity?	Did it build to a climax , and have a clear ending? If cut from a longer piece, did advance story and shed light on characters?
	Does the production use space effectively to provide for motivated, functional and artistic movement?	Did staging help tell the story in a compelling way?
Technical	Do scenery , set pieces and props work effectively within the needs and style of the production?	Was the message of the play complemented by scenery ? Were designed elements * appropriate (<u>realism</u> = detailed; <u>expressionism</u> = exaggerated, stylized; <u>romantic</u> = period/ historic, ornamented; <u>classical</u> = large, simple, stately; <u>cultural</u> = symbolic)?
	Do costumes and make-up effectively communicate character, period, style and mood?	Was the feel of the play complemented by actors' appearance ? *Also apply " designed elements " from the scenery criterion.
	[If <u>opted in</u>] Do lighting choices enhance tone and mood? (Do <u>not</u> assess <i>mechanics</i>).	– DO NOT ASSESS IF THE MASTER BALLOT TELLS YOU NOT TO – Did lighting choices (if beyond constant lighting) enhance mood of scenes? *Also apply " designed elements " from the scenery criterion.
	[If <u>opted in</u>] Do sound choices enhance effect and emotional moments? (Do <u>not</u> assess <i>mechanics</i>).	– DO NOT ASSESS IF THE MASTER BALLOT TELLS YOU NOT TO – Did sound and/or music (if used) enhance storytelling and impact? *Also apply " designed elements " from the scenery criterion.
Key reason(s) for recommendation:	<p>Has this play realized a generally <i>Accomplished</i> level, only requiring fine tuning? What were key factors above weighing in whether you recommend it to advance or to stop? <i>Remember to not compare the work to other shows, nor to how you would have directed it, but how it realizes its own artistic vision and effectiveness in storytelling.</i></p>	

Descriptive Words/Phrases for Adjudicators

By Adam Jacobi



Content

layered meaning
evoke emotion
thought provoking
persuasive arguments
credible evidence
balanced perspective
timely source
coherent
cohesive
nuanced
dynamic
cutting
defined central narrative
compelling plot
range
clever
combination
compilation
unified
convincing
proficient
mastered
insightful
wealth

Effective Presentation

effective tactic(s)
executed thoughtfully
drew me in
expressive
articulate
believable
characterized
credible performance
committed character
energetic
lively
animated
honest
genuine
realistic
authentic
natural
understated
whimsical
rhetorical
passion
vivacious
vigor
intimate

Developing/Improving

artificial
awkward
broad / vague
faulty
flawed
hindered
incoherent
misguided
monotonous
repetitive
scarce
absent
incomplete
lacks
reassess structure
requires
potential
pulled me out
distracted
gimmicky
gratuitous
incongruous
reevaluate motives
identify purpose

Avoid: *good • great • weak • needs work • practice more*

One-Act Evaluation	Title: _____	Date: _____
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Circle a score for each criterion to indicate proficiency: **3**-Accomplished, **2**-Progressing, **1**-Needs improvement. Write **kind, constructive**, and **instructive** comments from your **outside** perspective to **explain** ratings, and **suggestions for improvement must be made for any scores less than 3.**

Performance	Do actors use voice (projection, enunciation, consistent dialect, etc.) stylistically appropriate to communicate characters?	3 2 1	
	Do actors use movement (facial expression, gestures, stage business, etc.) to communicate physicality of characters?	3 2 1	
	Do actors create believable, developed, and consistent characterizations that show connectedness to performance?	3 2 1	
Ensemble	Do actors function as a cohesive unit to establish mood?	3 2 1	
	Does overall cast's performance indicate listening, cooperation, rehearsal and commitment to their work?	3 2 1	
	Does the production flow smoothly and at an appropriate pace within and between scenes?	3 2 1	
Direction	Does the production convey understanding and purpose of the script and its genre?	3 2 1	
	Does the production tell a dynamic and complete story with three-dimensional characters and insight into humanity?	3 2 1	
	Does the production use space effectively to provide for motivated, functional and artistic movement?	3 2 1	
Technical	Do scenery, set pieces and props work effectively within the needs and style of the production?	3 2 1	
	Do costumes and make-up effectively communicate character, period, style and mood?	3 2 1	
	[If <u>opted in</u>] Do lighting choices enhance tone and mood? (Do <u>not</u> assess <i>mechanics</i>).	3 2 1	
	[If <u>opted in</u>] Do sound choices enhance effect and emotional moments? (Do <u>not</u> assess <i>mechanics</i>).	3 2 1	
Adjudicator: _____		Recommendation: <input type="checkbox"/> Advance <input type="checkbox"/> Stop	
Key reason(s) for recommendation: _____			

Adjudicator Running Notes

[SAMPLE-Generated from SpeechWire]

Friday, 8:00 AM *Proof* by David Auburn

Play Category: **Selection from full-length play**

Director's Synopsis: In this selection from David Auburn's *PROOF*, Catherine must deal with the death of her father and her relationship with him, their love of mathematics, and their mental health issues. Catherine is confronted with the reunion of her sister, pressuring her to move on from the past, a graduate student of her father who discovers new information about her dad's work, and her own struggles about how brilliant she may or may not be.

Reason for Selecting Show: We are fascinated by mathematical genius, because that zone of intelligence seems all too rare, even as our society moves toward more STEM careers. How does that world intersect with relationships and human psychology? Can it be distilled in an equation? We often shun what we don't understand.

Take notes on the production below, and use another sheet of paper if necessary. You will summarize comments in the following four areas on the evaluation sheet: **Direction, Performance, Ensemble, and Technical Elements.**