

Grading Playwriting



**Levels 3, 6,
& 9**

If a student desires to get a good evaluation, we feel he should know just how to do so! Feel more than free to share the appropriate level of playwriting criteria as a self-proofing guide for your student.

A student should do a self-evaluation before submitting his work. Prior to handing in his draft, have him complete a proofing sheet (just a checklist of those skills to which you think he can be held accountable). He can use the criteria under “Evaluating the Play” as a guideline for his revisions. You may also want to give him a bulleted list that includes more detail for sentence and paragraph proofing.

Using the Spectrum

The spectrum is a useful tool for evaluating creative writing, which is necessarily more subjective than nonfiction. Teachers mark each criterium box in one place (typically using an X) and write specific comments that will help the student to improve future plays. Focusing on this kind of feedback may be particularly helpful for Level 3 and Level 6 students, who are just beginning to write plays.

Evaluating the Play

Below are our suggested criteria so that you may have a basis for providing more detailed comments.

- * **Characterization:** Ideally, the characters will be life-like and believable, and the viewer will feel as though he knows them as he watches the play. Characteristic clothing, mannerisms, and speech patterns can help make characters more real. In a play, characterization follows the “show, don’t tell” maxim and reveals the characters through words and actions. Characters should be basically self-consistent, always acting like the same kind of person.
- * **Plot:** The play should have a beginning, middle, and end, with a steady flow of action from one part to the next. There should be no gaps or events that are out of place, making it easy for the audience to follow the events. Students should only choose events that can be portrayed on stage or that can be interestingly narrated by one of the characters. A good plot will not have events that contradict each other or that make another aspect impossible. Older students should construct plots that are not easily predictable by introducing a “twist” or by complicating the problem that the characters face. The resolution of the plot should make sense and flow from what precedes it.
- * **Artistry/Craftsmanship:** Artistry refers to the form of the play, particularly the style of writing and the way in which the student embodies his idea in words.
 - The style should be a good example of the “show, don’t tell” method and demonstrate careful craftsmanship through concrete, specific word choice, interesting dialogue, and well-structured speeches.
 - Attention to detail is another important aspect of artistry. If the play shows attention to detail, it will maintain historical accuracy, self-consistent descriptions, and interesting dialogue.
- * **Performance:** The play lends itself to performance; the characters, plot, and language are all designed to be performed and maintain an audience’s interest. (We suggest that you do not grade your student based on the quality of the performance itself, unless you inform him ahead of time that the performance will be part of his grade. Rather, ask yourself whether he has made a play that can be performed and viewed with interest and pleasure.)
- * **Execution of Assignment/Overall Effect**
 - The student has used good mechanics and followed the proper format for a play.
 - The play is delightful and interesting. Overall, it accomplishes the purpose for which it was written.
 - The story should also demonstrate that the student completed his work thoughtfully and carefully, following his teacher’s directions.

Grading Plays

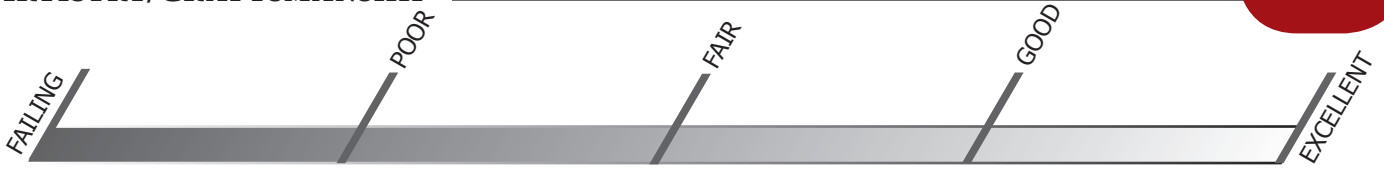
The spectrum is not designed to give a letter or number grade. However, if you wish to assign your student a traditional grade, you can do so by giving points for each criterium box. We suggest that you allot 20 possible points for each. You can then determine how many points to give for each box, based on where you mark the spectrum (see the scale in the sidebar). Assign a letter grade accordingly.

There are various point-to-grade schemes. Here’s the one that we recommend:

- A+ 100-98 pts.
- A 97-94 pts.
- A- 93-90 pts.
- B+ 89-88 pts.
- B 87-84 pts.
- B- 83-80 pts.
- C+ 79-78 pts.
- C 77-74 pts.
- C- 73-70 pts.
- D+ 69-68 pts.
- D 67-64 pts.
- D- 63-60 pts.
- F below 60 pts.

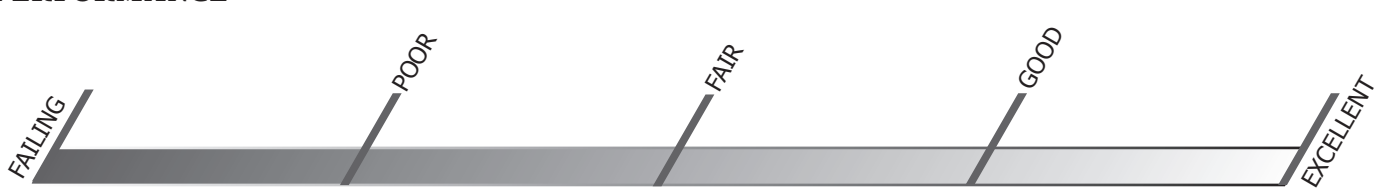


ARTISTRY/CRAFTSMANSHIP



COMMENTS: _____

PERFORMANCE



COMMENTS: _____

EXECUTION OF ASSIGNMENT/OVERALL EFFECT



COMMENTS: _____

