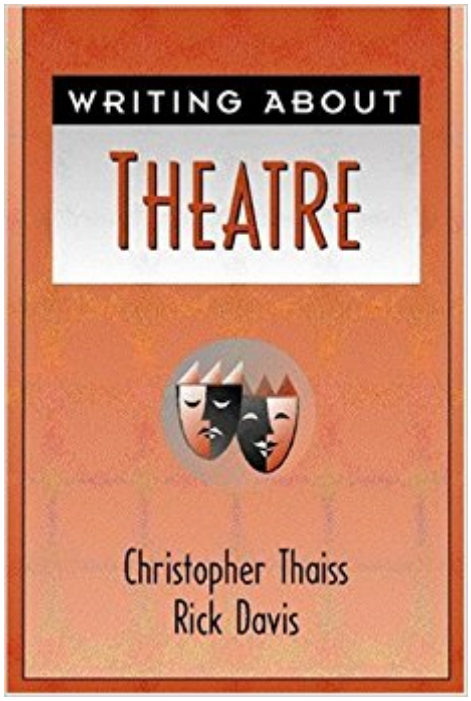
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Writing About Theatre



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Synopsis

In Hamlet, when the melancholy prince kills Polonius, the dramatic tension is enhanced by the audience’s knowledge that Polonius lurks behind the curtain, and that Hamlet will mistake him for his detested stepfather. Though this tension is understood and appreciated by readers of the play, its dynamics of raw intensity are perhaps best understood by the interplay between performers and audience members. By addressing both enthusiasts of theater and enthusiasts of dramatic literature, Thaiss and Davis demonstrate how one’s understanding of drama is enriched by critical attention to both performance and text. It specifically addresses the writing needs of a novice playwright, not in conjunction with "writing about literature," but about the play as subject in its own right. This book provides critical analysis of play texts, as well as performance reviews, theater history research, and other examples that enliven understanding and promote versatility. In its sequence of chapters, it addresses projects of increasing sophistication, from performance reviews and play analyses to theater history research and dramatic theory papers. As a general guide to good writing, this book also promotes learning and critical/creative thought. Introductory chapters cover the principles of good writing and offer strategies to help readers overcome writer’s block, organize effectively and avoid common usage and style pitfalls. Anyone interested in drama and/or literature.

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Customer Reviews

This book combines a guide to good writing with an accessible, practical introduction to most of the

writing tasks that the college or advanced high school student will encounter in a theater/drama curriculum (with the obvious exception of playwriting, which is amply covered in many other sources).Ã Â Ã Â It has proven to be "evergreen" at some colleges and universities since the various chapters can be used in different ways throughout an undergraduate career, from an easy-to-apply approach to play analysis through the more advanced tasks involved in formulating a theoretical or critical essay.Ã Â My erstwhile colleague Chris Thaiss is the primary author of the chapters on writing techniques, and he is one of the nation's leading thinkers and teachers on this crucial subject.Ã Â It was fun (and a little nerve-wracking) to collaborate with him, knowing that the first reader of my drafts was going to be a distinguished writing teacher.Ã Â In the end, however, he proved to be gentle and supportive as well as a very close and exacting reader -- just what we wish for as authors and students.Ã Â I found the experience of writing the "drama" chapters to be clarifying for me in my work as writer-about and teacher-of-drama, and I hope that some of that new light comes through for you as well, no matter what stage of engagement with this great subject you happen to be in.Ã Â Always eager for feedback and thanking you for reading,Rick Davis

In Hamlet, when the melancholy prince kills Polonius, the dramatic tension is enhanced by the audience's knowledge that Polonius lurks behind the curtain, and that Hamlet will mistake him for his detested stepfather. Though this tension is understood and appreciated by readers of the play, its dynamics of raw intensity are perhaps best understood by the interplay between performers and audience members. By addressing both enthusiasts of theater and enthusiasts of dramatic literature, Thaiss and Davis demonstrate how one's understanding of drama is enriched by critical attention to both performance and text. It specifically addresses the writing needs of a novice playwright, not in conjunction with "writing about literature," but about the play as subject in its own right. This book provides critical analysis of play texts, as well as performance reviews, theater history research, and other examples that enliven understanding and promote versatility. In its sequence of chapters, it addresses projects of increasing sophistication, from performance reviews and play analyses to theater history research and dramatic theory papers. As a general guide to good writing, this book also promotes learning and critical/creative thought. Introductory chapters cover the principles of good writing and offer strategies to help readers overcome writer's block, organize effectively and avoid common usage and style pitfalls. Anyone interested in drama and/or literature.

As if new!

This is an excellent text for students at all levels of college study, as well for anyone else interested in writing about theatre. The clear structure and writing style make the book very accessible for those who are new to the field, yet it is also full of valuable insights for those who already have training and experience. Chapter 1 offers a wonderful overview of the main types of writing explored later in the book. Chapters 2 and 3 provide guidelines and exercises that could be applied to writing in many fields. The emphasis on writing to learn and the sensible and thorough discussion of the writing process are particularly useful to students. Subsequent chapters focus on some main types of writing about theatre. They combine fundamental definitions of each area with very practical tips for creating clear and effective essays.My university's theatre department uses this book in several courses. It can support classroom instruction in introductory or specialized classes, and function as a reference book for students engaged in more advanced or independent work. I recommend it highly.

I had been looking for a book to use with my Senior Research course. The Thaiss and Davis book came out just in time. I have used it for several other courses as well. I have found it easy to use and have discovered that the students appriciate that it is centered on their particular topic. In addition, using it with introductory courses has made for better critical and research writing. It fills the void.

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