

## Write Up

I wanted to use this presentation as an opportunity to talk about *Ghost's* critical reception. I thought that by examining what the group's ideas were about the play and comparing them with a number of other opinions I could open up a unique window into the text and also give relevant contextual information about the module, whilst also trying to persuade them that the social messages in the play were still relevant today. To some extent I think that I succeeded in this, but there's no denying that my presentation could have been even better if I had been more concise.

I think that my first slide gave the presentation a clear focus. It outlined all of the different objectives that I was seeking to achieve and imposed a clear structure on my talk. Unfortunately I can now see that some of the goals I set myself were simply too ambitious: it was unrealistic to think that I could cover both the critical reception to Ibsen's play when it was first staged and the reaction of people today in a single, fifteen-minute presentation. As a result certain ideas, such as the reasons as to why different critics have reacted to the text differently over time, had to be skimmed over and a few points got clouded as a result.

Nevertheless it is clear that my peers responded positively to a number of my ideas. The regular opportunities for them to ask questions meant that they could really engage with what I was saying, and this brought out some really interesting and enthusiastic responses. I asked two members of the class to write some notes for me when I was speaking and they both said that they felt that my engagement with the group as a whole was very good. Whilst I do agree with them, to a large extent, I think that the class had got a little bit confused by the end. When I asked my final question very few people responded and I think this is because I had to rush the end of my talk to stop it going well over the time limit. As a result when I do a presentation next time round the reaction of my peers has shown me that I need to make sure that it is more concise and well organised. Whilst the opportunities to ask regular questions meant that everyone in the class was engaged these discussion points could have been trimmed down to centre on one or two meaningful points allowing deeper and more analytical points to be brought up and talked about.

This brings me onto the main thing that I learnt from this talk which is, namely, that one idea can be more than enough. I was really interested in the play and as a result I tried to cover lots of different points: on the one hand I was arguing that the text was still relevant today but on the other I was also trying to discuss the critical reception that it met at the time. In future I need to pick one of these topics, stay with it, and then back it up with clear and concise analysis. As a result I won't find myself going over time and, consequently, having to skip through lots of my ideas. The presentation has also shown me that I do not need to be worried about being a confident presenter, as I actually found that I enjoyed presenting all of my different ideas to the group, and this means that next time round I can use my time more effectively to work on supporting all of my different ideas with evidence as opposed to worrying about how people will receive them. I felt quite a lot of anxiety about doing the project and worried that people would laugh at me or find what I was saying to be completely ridiculous which meant that I kept changing my idea or trying out a new angle, and this meant that I was working right up until the last minute and consequently found it harder to review my ideas and think critically about them.

One of the main things that I was worried about was fulfilling the objectives of the module. I was concerned that my talk would not fit in with the wider scheme of work, but having thought about it in some detail I am now of the opinion that this aspect of the talk was actually quite strong. I managed to go into some detail about the critical reception of the play at the time and also offered a

series of developed points about why I think that critics reacted in the way in which they did. I was particularly pleased that no one knew who Eleanor Marx was as it meant that I was genuinely giving the group some new information about how Ibsen's plays have endured over time which they did not previously have before. In addition I was also told by one of my peers that they were really pleased about the secondary sources which I had included because it gave them a direction in which they could go to further pursue their ideas. The one thing that I think I could have done to make this aspect of the talk even better though is to go into the texts in greater detail. For example I could have had a look at the representation of women at the time by making a comparison between Mrs Alving and Mrs Warren and then using secondary criticism to support the assertions I was making about the text itself. To some extent I did do this once by looking at a quotation from Mrs Alving about the concept of duty but I think that had I done it more regularly I could have given the group a greater insight into my thoughts of the text and also covered a wide variety of secondary criticism too.

In conclusion I can confidently state that I found the presentation a valuable learning experience. I have learnt that I can talk about my ideas confidently, and so will not need to worry about this in the future, but also that I need to focus on more concise, well-argued ideas. I can use this revelation to not only improve the presentations that I give in the future but also to help me in my academic writing. It is definitely true to state that you can have too much of a good thing and to some extent that can be seen as the moral lesson that I have learnt from this exercise.