Books, Films and Plays

For each of the sentences below, circle the words/phrases which could be used to fill in the gaps. Then suggest how you would use the words/phrases you have not circled.

1.	It i	It is definitely one of the most ghost st	ories I have ever read.
	0	o compelling	
	0	humourless	
	0	o chilling	
	0	o spine-tingling	
	0	entertaining	
2.	M	Most critics agree that this play is	
	0		
	0	well-received	
	0	slow-mowing	
	0	depressing	
	0	 hilarious 	
3.	W	When listening to this CD, one of the things that instantly a	rabs your attention is the
		music.	
	0	o moving	
	0	o rousing	
	0	o stirring	
	0	haunting	
	0	o unimaginative	
4.	If	If you get the chance, go; you are unlikely to see a more	film this year
	0		
	0	 overcomplicated 	
	0	o spectacular	
	0	o marvellous	
	0	action-packed	

character(s)	shallow, unconvincing, likeable, convincing, believable		
plot	overcomplicated, predictable, plausible, absorbing, gripping, riveting, suspense-filled		
special effects	cheap. laughable, stunning, staggering, astounding		
photography	poor, amateurish, breathtaking, incredible, impressive		
acting/performance	wooden, appalling, natural, powerful, spectacular		
writing/script	contrived, confusing, realistic, thought- provoking, compelling, boring, mundane		

Adverbs to add emphasis:

incredibly, extremely, exceptionally, absolutely, totally, completely, entirely, particularly, remarkably

25

The performance arts: reviews and critiques

Δ

Useful adjectives for describing works and performances

adjective	meaning	example
overrated	not as good as people say	It's an overrated film/play.
hackneyed	done so often it is boring	The plot was so hackneyed!
impenetrable	complex and impossible to understand	His films are impenetrable.
disjointed	unconnected and not in a clear order	The play was disjointed and difficult to follow.
far-fetched	impossible to believe	The film Green Aliens from Mars was a bit far-fetched.
risqué /rɪ¹skeɪ/	slightly immoral and likely to shock some people	The play was a bit risqué, and some religious leaders criticised it.
gripping	exciting and keeping your attention the whole time	It was a gripping film from start to finish.
harrowing	extremely upsetting	It was a harrowing documentary about war and refugee camps.
moving	making you feel strong emotion, especially pity or sadness	It's a moving story about a child whose mother dies.
memorable	you remember it long after	That was a memorable performance.
understated	done or expressed in a simple but attractive style	The whole ballet is really understated.

B Success and failure

His latest opera was panned [very negatively criticised] by the critics, which is strange, since all his previous works have been universally lauded [highly praised].

The play bombed in London's West End, but was more successful in New York. [was a failure] Her latest CD has won three awards. [prizes/honours, e.g. 'Best CD of the Year'] Anthony O'Donnell won the award for 'Best up-and-coming actor' of 2001. [likely to

become very famous or successfull

The critics generally agree that her new symphony is a masterpiece. [very great work of art] Novak was definitely miscast as the father in that film. [was the wrong person for the role] She has become typecast as a middle-aged mother. [always associated with that type of role] He was given several encores for his performance of the violin concerto. [//oŋkezz/ calls from the audience to repeat it]

She got a standing ovation for her performance of Juliet in Romeo and Juliet. [the audience stood up and applauded]

C

Nouns relating to performing

I liked her interpretation of the song 'Yesterday'. [way of understanding and performing it] I prefer the original version by the Beatles. [one of several performances that exist] He gave an excellent rendition of Hamlet's speech. [performance on a specific occasion] The actor's portrayal of the mother in the film was very tender. [the picture she created]

Exercises

- **25.1** From memory, give an adjective from A which is *opposite* in meaning to the following words.
 - 1 credible/believable
 - 2 original/novel
 - 3 underrated
 - 4 exaggerated
 - 5 coherent/smooth-flowing
- 25.2 Now use other adjectives from A instead of the underlined words in these sentences. Make any other changes that are necessary to produce a correct sentence.
 - 1 The musical shocked some people because they thought it was immoral and was attacked by several politicians and religious figures.
 - 2 Her performance was one of those you will never forget, simply marvellous.
 - 3 I can't remember the last time I saw such a film that keeps you in suspense and totally absorbed all the time.
 - 4 It was a play that aroused very deep emotions in me.
 - 5 It's a film that is difficult to watch without getting very upset.
 - 6 Some of his films are absolutely impossible to understand because they are so dense and obscure.

25.3 Answer these questions.

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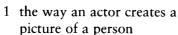
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- 1 Would you like to go to a play that was universally lauded by all the critics? Why / Why not?
- 2 Good performers deserve an encore. True? Would you give one?
- 3 Would you like to see a film that was panned by the cinema critics? Why / Why not?
- 4 What are the top Hollywood awards for films normally called? What is their more correct name?
- 5 Do most actors like to become typecast? Why / Why not?
- 6 A standing ovation shows that the audience disliked the performance. True? Why / Why not?

25.4 Read the text and underline the words or phrases that match the eight definitions. Use a dictionary if necessary.



- 2 he/she is the wrong actor for that part
- 3 a film/book/play that keeps you in suspense
- 4 keep you in suspense / constantly excited
- 5 up-and-coming
- 6 a film which huge numbers of people will go and see
- 7 a police or crime theme
- 8 a very great work of art

Cliffhanger not to be missed

In this latest blockbuster cops-and-robbers movie from the Holdart Studios, budding Hollywood star Florida Packline plays country-boy Ricky Smart, who gets involved with a gang of criminals intent upon stealing ten million dollars from a Chicago bank. However, their plans are spoilt by the discovery of a dead body in the tunnel they are digging through to the bank. Who is the mystery dead woman? Is she a stranger, or someone from Ricky's own past? Packline's portrayal of the confused boy from a small town caught up in big city crime is convincing, but Julia Fischer as his long-lost sister is somewhat miscast. Not a masterpiece, but it will certainly keep you on the edge of your seat.