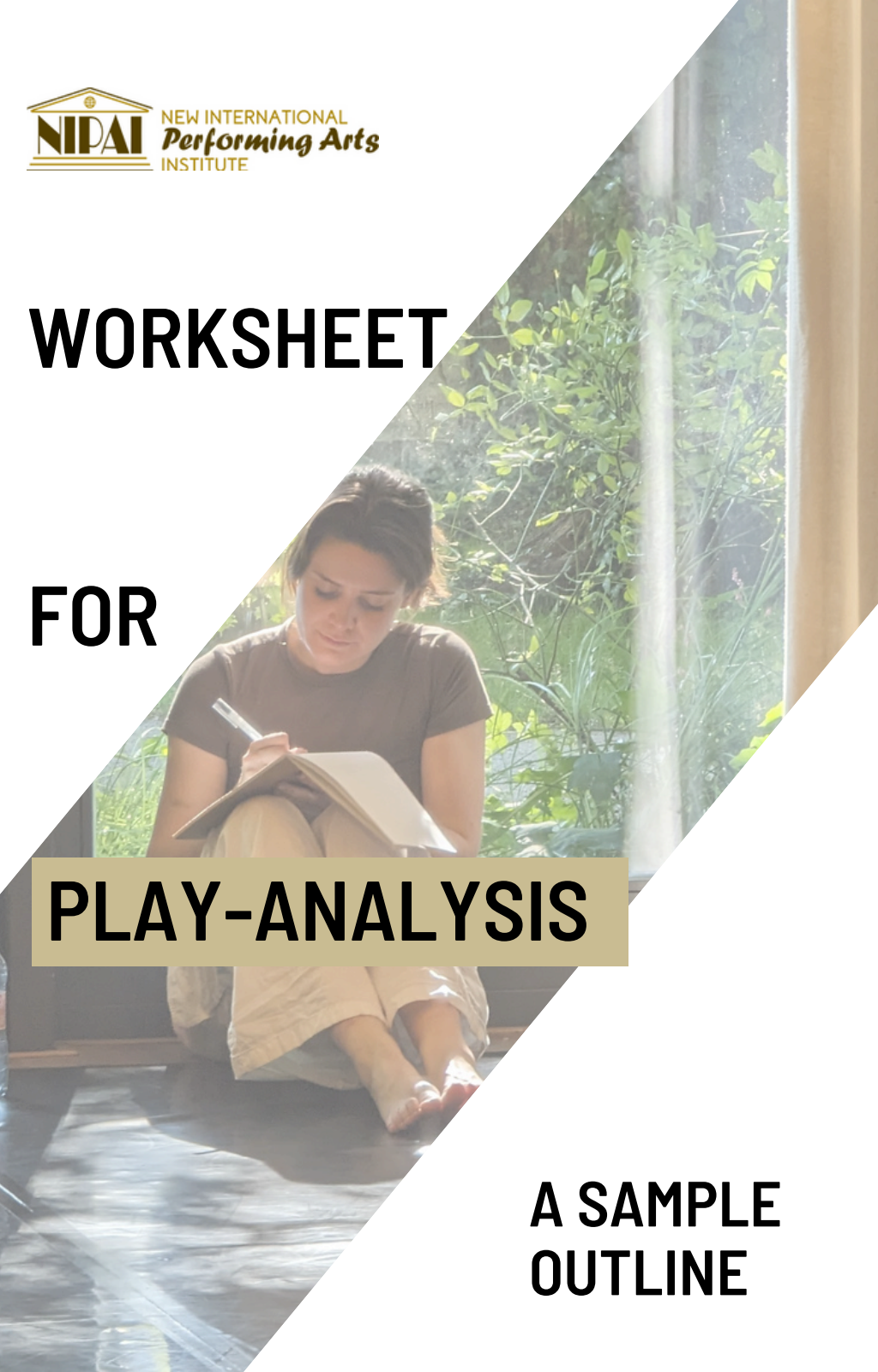


WORKSHEET

FOR

PLAY-ANALYSIS

A SAMPLE OUTLINE



The following is a suggested plan for play analysis, one that has proven effective for learning directors. Although this plan is presented here in outline form, an analysis of a scene from a longer play (10 minutes in length, with three to eight units) or a short one-act play will easily fill several pages. In other words, you must not complete the outline in an abbreviated manner as you would when answering a true-or-false question. Instead, you should develop your answers in detailed exposition. Avoid falling into the trap of merely extending the length of your writing to fill pages. Write what you believe is necessary to convey your point clearly, but refrain from diluting the focus with excessive verbiage.



I. GIVEN CIRCUMSTANCES

A. Environmental Facts: Discuss under the following numbered headings. Be sure to note at the end of each how it affects the dramatic action of the play.

1. Geographical Location, including climate.
2. Date: year, season, time of day.
3. Economic Environment.
4. Political Environment.
5. Social Environment.
6. Religious Environment.

B. Previous Action.

C. Polar Attitudes of the Principal Characters, both at the beginning and the ending of the play, reflected in how each character would answer these four questions, if they could:

1. How do I feel about my world?
2. How do I feel about my relationships?
3. How do I feel about myself?
4. How do I feel about my prospects?

II. DIALOGUE

- A. Choice of Words
- B. Choice of Phrases
- C. Choice of Images
- D. Choice of Peculiar Characteristics (for example, dialect)
- E. Sound of the Dialogue
- F. Structure of Lines and Speeches

III. DRAMATIC ACTION

- A. Titles of the Units: Number the units in the scene or play and give each unit a descriptive phrase as a title.
- B. Detailed Breakdown of the Action: Complete this before moving on to (C) because the verbs will help you summarize the units. Divide the action into numbered units. Describe the action in each line (speech) by using the initial of each character followed by a present-tense verb (for example, "N surprises").

C. Summary of the Action: Summarize the action of each unit by following the number of the unit with a compound sentence that expresses reciprocal action.



For example: A [present-tense verb] B, and B [present-tense verb] A. This sentence should capture the basic action of the unit.

IV. CHARACTERS

Treat each character using the following headings:

A. Desires

B. Will

C. Moral Stance

D. Decorum

E. Summary List of Adjectives

F. Initial Character Mood and Intensity at the Scene Opening, Expressed as:

1. Heartbeat: Rate
2. Perspiration: Heavy, light, location, etc.
3. Stomach Condition
4. Muscle Tension
5. Breathing: Rate, depth

V. IDEA

A. Meaning of the Title

B. Philosophical Statements in the Dialogue: Draw these from the entire play, not just from your scene. Cite actual quotations from characters. After you have extracted and written down 8 to 12 such quotes, write two or three sentences focusing on what you make of the quotes as a group. Is there any pattern evident? Do particular themes or obsessions begin to emerge? Are any realizations about life spoken or implied?

C. How Does the Idea Emerge from the Outcome of the Struggle Undergone by the Central Character(s)? Consider how it turns out for her (Blanche DuBois), him (John Proctor), or them (the Prozorov sisters) at the end of the play.

D. For the Scene You Are Working On: Why is it in the play? Could the play do without it? Why or why not?

VI. MOODS

After the number of each unit, express the mood of that unit in two categories:

- A. A list of mood adjectives, one for each of the senses.
- B. A mood image.

VII. TEMPOS

After numbering each unit, designate the rate of speed for that unit by using a descriptive term (for example, fast, medium-slow, largo). Also, create a horizontal graph to illustrate the tempo relationships by drawing connecting perpendicular lines to a horizontal line to show the tempo changes.

VIII. TONE

Summarize the analysis with words or a phrase that captures the essence of the scene as a whole.

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