



D Y P F

**D E L A W A R E
Y O U N G
P L A Y W R I G H T S
F E S T I V A L**



DYPF 2026-2027 Welcome and Important Information



Welcome to the Delaware YOUNG PLAYWRIGHTS' FESTIVAL!

Welcome, Educators and Students!

We here at Delaware Theatre Company are so excited to kick off another exciting season of the Delaware Youth Playwrights Festival! We are so grateful to all those who have participated in the past, those returning, and those who are new to the program for making this such a bright spot within the theatre. The legacy that DYPF has on the community is because of you, the educators who pass on a love of the arts to their students!

Having worked as an adjudicator the last few years, I have a read and seen what wonderful ideas and stories that the students come up with. The students' creativity and growth has been apparent, and we look forward to their scripts and stories this year. Playwrighting is personal and raw, there is something hard about putting pen to paper even when it comes to creating a world and characters that is so uniquely you. We want to applaud all who participate in this process.

For some quick housekeeping, we have decided to split the information in last year's packet into three separate packets. This packet includes information on the theme, formatting, dates, curriculum, and the rubric. The second packet will include the elements, a theatrical terms index, and notes on drafting and stage directions. The third packet is the packet for activities and exercises to get the students thinking and asking questions that will help them with their writing. We hope that by making three shorter packets, the information is delivered in a clearer manner. To also help with the rewrite process, there will be another packet sent back when we return the first round of plays back to you. The job of a writer is to be a good rewriter, and there are tips that we can share to help make this process easier.

This year's theme comes from our production of Other World that will be gracing the stage this upcoming January. Their story takes place in a video game world which we hope to show how any idea, no matter the setting can be put on stage.

We are here if you have any questions at all! We look forward to a great year! Cannot wait to see what you all write and come up with!

Russell Chisroe

Creative Producer of DYPF

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www.delawarescene.com

Delaware Division of the **Arts**

DYPF Mission Statement

The Delaware Young Playwrights Festival at Delaware Theatre Company helps students develop their voices through playwriting. Through workshops, mentorship, and performance opportunities, the program gives young writers real-world experience and support. DYPF strengthens writing skills, builds confidence, and encourages students to express their ideas clearly and purposefully. We support teachers and students in exploring storytelling and highlight the value of youth perspectives through the process of creating and sharing original work.

DYPF THEME

Imagine the possibilities of possibilities. What leaps of faith do we have to take to envision a whole new world? How can trusting what is possible create a new reality? Possibility contains potential - by challenging what is, we can create what will be.

"You always said you believed in the possibility of possibilities. I do too."

— Sumita from *Other World*

This year's theme is inspired by:

DTC is proud to present

Other World, A New Music

BOOK BY HUNTER BELL

MUSIC AND LYRICS BY JEFF BOWEN AND ANN McNAMEE

One moment Sri and Lorraine are in a garage on Earth. The next, they're unexpectedly transported into Sri's favorite video game, Other World. Now trapped in the game and in a race against the clock, this unlikely pair must work together, discover their inner strengths, and connect with gifted gamers and astonishing avatars in order to survive and find a way home. With art direction provided by Academy Award®-winning Weta Workshop (The Lord of the Rings, Avatar), this heartfelt, humorous musical explores the connections we make on- and off-line, while celebrating the families and friendships we need to thrive in any world. Join us for this spectacular, original, otherworldly adventure. Your journey begins...now!

REQUIREMENTS

Who Can Submit:

- Students in grades 8–12
- Must be enrolled in a DE school or DE homeschool

Play Requirements:

- Must follow the 2026-2027 theme
- Character Count: Two
- Length: 3-15 pages for first draft; 5-10 for second

Format:

- Use Times New Roman
- Use **standard script format** (as shown later in this packet)

Original work only:

- No use of AI
- No screenplays
- No adaptations of existing works

Round Two - Students must sign and submit a form confirming their commitment if selected as finalists

IMPORTANT DATES

Tuesday September 29th at 4pm - Zoom kickoff workshop for teachers and students
(Register by 9/28 to receive the Zoom link.)

Friday, Nov. 6th, By 5:00 PM - **First round plays due to DTC** – teachers may email multiple plays as a school group

Friday, Dec. 11th - DTC returns Round 1 critique to playwrights and Packet For Rewriting Tips sent to Educators

Friday, Jan. 8th - Competition round plays due to DTC

Friday, Feb. 5th—Finalist plays/playwrights announced

Saturday Workshops (finalist playwrights, directors, artists): March 6th, March 13th, March 20th

Monday April 5th, Final Draft due to DTC

Thursday, May 13th - DYPF Performance, 7:00 PM

Does Playwrighting connect with curriculum standards?

When students experience or participate in live theatre—whether attending a performance, writing a play, or performing on stage—they engage in deep, multi-layered learning. Theatre invites them to interpret stories, analyze character motivations, evaluate artistic choices, and express themselves through writing, speech, and performance. These activities connect directly to educational standards in Arts and English Language curricula.

Common Core State Standards – English Language Arts (Grades 9–12)

Reading Literature

- ***RL.1*** – Cite strong and thorough textual evidence.
- ***RL.3*** – Analyze character development and interactions.
- ***RL.5*** – Examine how structure and timing affect a story.
- ***RL.7*** – Analyze multiple interpretations of a text.

Writing

- ***W.1–W.6*** – Write narratives, arguments, and explanatory texts.
- ***W.9*** – Use textual evidence to support analysis and reflection.

Speaking & Listening

- ***SL.1–SL.5*** – Engage in collaborative discussions; present findings clearly; integrate diverse media formats.

Language

- ***L.1–L.3, L.5*** – Demonstrate command of grammar and usage; understand figurative language and word nuance.

National and Delaware Core Arts Standards – Theatre

Creating

- ***Anchor Standards 1–3*** – Generate and conceptualize ideas; develop scripts and performance plans.

Performing

- ***Anchor Standards 4–6*** – Interpret and refine work for presentation; convey meaning through performance.

Responding

- ***Anchor Standards 7–9*** – Perceive, interpret, and evaluate artistic work.

Connecting

- ***Anchor Standards 10–11*** – Relate theatre to personal meaning and broader social, cultural, or historical context.

Why It Matters

Through theatre, students learn to:

- *Think critically and creatively*
- *Express themselves through multiple forms*
- *Collaborate and communicate effectively*
- *Build empathy and cultural awareness*
- *Reflect on human experience through narrative and performance*

Theatre education meets, and enriches, academic standards while fostering lifelong skills.

Script Formatting Guidelines

MARGINS for your play should have standard one-inch margins

FONT should be **Times New Roman** – this is the standard for playscripts because each character/letter takes up the same amount of space, which helps you figure out the pacing of the play. With Times New Roman each page of dialogue should take only one minute.

PAGE NUMBERS are required: The Title, Characters, Place, Time pages should NEVER be numbered. Page numbers begin with dialogue and should be formatted like below, Act-Scene-Page Number and right aligned at the top of the page:

I – 1 - 1

SPACING Character lines are single spaced, with a double space between character lines.

THE COVER PAGE should contain essential information. This includes Title, Subtitle, By- line, Mailing address, Phone number, Email, Agent contact information (if you have one), and Copyright notice (if applicable). Copyright is created by using the Left Parenthesis (- immediately followed by lower case c - immediately followed by Right Parenthesis) = ©

By providing all of this on the first page of your script, you make it easier for our staff to process your submission and contact you. The title and by-line should be centered, approximately half-way down the page. Contact information should go in the bottom right corner.

CAST OF CHARACTERS, PLACE, AND TIME should be on a single page as exemplified below. Headings are centered, upper case used as if a title. Double space between headings, characters. When listing characters, character names are ALL CAPS and underlined followed by a colon. The description is 3 inches from the left side of the page, 2 inches inside the margin. If the description goes over one line, the rest of the description should continue at the same place as the beginning and be SINGLE spaced

Cast of Characters

JOHN DOE: 18 years old, a soccer player

JANE DOE: 15 years old, JOHN's autistic sister, xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx, and she has tap shoes on.

Place

Anywhere (home, school, grocery store), in Anywhere Place

Time

Any time, season, year

PLAY BEGINS. Page numbers start.

ACTS AND SCENES. Each new act and/or scene should be started on a new page and be center justified. The act should be written in ALL CAPS and roman numerals, while the scenes should be in capital and small letters, a double space below and underscored, as follows:

ACT II

Scene 3

SETTING and AT RISE includes a description of the setting and any activity that is happening before the dialogue by using the terms "Setting" and "At Rise." The Headings are aligned to the left, with the description indented to 2 inches from the left of the page. Example below:

ACT I

Scene 1

Setting: This is where you describe what is present on the stage, such as furniture, doors, shape of the space, etc.

At Rise This is where you describe the action taking place when the lights are brought up on the stage, such as: John is discovered sitting in a chair. Jane is looking out the window.

JOHN (Laughing.)

XXXXXXXX **Xxx**. Emphasis may be indicated by italics or underlining.

OR

JOHN

(Tosses keys across room while laughing.)

XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX XXXXXXX XXXXX, XXXXXXX.

(JANE walks across room to pick up keys. She shakes some dust from them and unlocks the door.)

What were you thinking, Jane?

Simultaneous dialogue should be placed side-by-side, spaced to start and end at the same place on the page. Trailing off should be indicated with ellipsis (...) whereas being cut off should be indicated with a dash.

An example of a formatted cover page and a play in standard play formatting begins on the next page.

TITLE

A stage play
by Your Name

© Your Name
Mr. Tom Smith's Class
Delaware High School
1234 Elm Street
City, DE 19081
tsmith@dhs.k12.de.us

Cast of Characters

JOHN DOE: 18 years old, a soccer player

JANE DOE: 15 years old, JOHN's autistic sister, xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx, and she has tap shoes on.

Place

Anywhere (home, school, grocery store), in Anywhere Place

Time

Any time, season, year

ACT I
Scene 1

Setting: This is where you describe what is present on the stage, such as furniture, doors, shape of the space, etc.

At Rise: This is where you describe the action taking place when the lights are brought up on the stage, such as: John is discovered laying on the floor. Jane is looking out the window.

JOHN (Laughing.)

XXXXXXXX **Xxx**. Emphasis may be indicated by *italics* or underlining.

OR

JOHN
(Tosses keys across room while laughing.)

XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX XXXXXXXX XXXXX, XXXXXXXX.

(JANE walks across room to pick up keys. She shakes some dust from them and unlocks the door.)

What were you thinking, Jane?

End the play with two paragraph spaces (return 2x) and then the word "curtain" in ALL CAPS, center justified.

CURTAIN

Using a Rubric as a Guide for Your Play

The **rubric or scoring guide** included in this packet is the **same tool** that DTC's DYPPF evaluators will use to evaluate your play.

What is it for?

- The rubric is designed to show you what we value and are looking for. It will help highlight areas we think you excel at, are proficient in, as well as areas to improve.
- There will be notes and questions within the stageplay to give you more specific feedback on your play.

Important Things to Understand:

It's a Guide — Not a Grade!

It Clearly Reflects What We Are Looking For in a Play

The scoring criteria are based on the same **guiding questions** in this packet — things like:

- Does the dialogue reveal character?
- Does the plot follow a clear structure?
- Are the characters well-developed?
- Does the action of the play keep the audience engaged?

Creativity and Process Matter

- We are looking for exciting writers and inventive stories. Take risks! Be bold!
- Readers are looking for evidence of **creativity, vitality, world building, use of dramatic structure and theatricality, dynamic point of view and meaning**. There are many ways to reach toward those goals! The Playwright's Resource Packet can help you develop your personal artistic voice and make your play the strongest version of itself.

What Teachers Should Know:

- The rubric is a **teaching tool**, not a grading tool.
- Use it to support discussion and development of student work.
- Encourage students to take creative risks.

Summary:

The rubric is meant to **help you grow** as a playwright.

Use it as a **reflection tool and guide** — not a scorecard or a checklist.

In addition to getting a scored rubric back from us, you will also get your scripts returned with questions and comments from the evaluators.

The following page is the scoring rubric that evaluators will be using to evaluate plays and give you feedback.

2025-2026 Delaware Young Playwrights Festival

Play Evaluation Rubric

Title of Play:	School and Grade:
Name(s) of playwright(s):	Adjudicator:

Comments pertaining to your play are highlighted.

	Excellent	Good	Shows Potential	Needs work	Comments
Setting	The setting of the play provides an active, immediate atmosphere that impacts both characters and action of the play. Setting is vital to the story on an emotional or metaphorical level.	The setting of the play provides an atmosphere that impacts both the characters and action of the play. Setting is treated as an important aspect of the story that may have emotional or metaphorical relevance.	The setting of the play has some connection to the characters and action of the play, but lacks dimension and specificity. The setting does not feel essential to the play on an emotional or metaphorical level.	The setting of the play serves as a passive backdrop to the characters and action. There is no evidence that the setting makes an emotional or metaphorical impact on the characters/story.	
ACTION	The action drives the story forward and has a well-defined sense of stakes. The events of the play make an impact on both the characters and the audience. The action is creative and makes sense within the world of the play as written.	The action drives the story forward. Stakes are present but could be more specific/defined throughout. The events of the play make an impact on both the characters and the audience. The action is creative and mostly makes sense within the world of the play.	The action is present but at times stops driving the story forward. There are several moments where a sense of stakes is lacking. The events of the play sometimes make an impact on the characters and audience, and sometimes fall short of doing so. The action could have been more creatively conceived and/or doesn't make sense in the world of the play as written.	The story is not active and lacks a sense of stakes. The events of the play do not make an impact on the characters or audience. The action as written feels familiar and predictable and feels out of sync with the world of play as written.	

	Excellent	Good	Shows Potential	Needs work	Comments
Conflict	Conflict is powerfully introduced early in the play. Conflict is specific and distinct; it propels the play forward and dynamically builds in intensity, moving the play toward its climax. The characters' obstacles are significant and well-drawn, creating high stakes.	Conflict is introduced early in the play and propels the play forward, but could be more specific and dynamic. The tension and intention of the conflict is sometimes eased and lacks some connection to the climax. The characters' obstacles are present, but could be more fleshed out to raise the stakes.	Conflict is introduced a bit late in the play and/or lacks dynamic and specificity. Obstacles are present, but the characters easily move through/around them, resulting in low stakes and a mild climax.	Conflict is mild or not present. The conflict of the play does present any obstacles for the characters and therefore the stakes are low resulting in a mild or non-existing climax.	
Climax	The climax is an exciting turning point that is the most emotional/engaging moment of the play. Climax directly relates to the play's central conflict and determines the fate of the characters.	The climax provides a satisfying turning point, but could be more riveting, emotional or engaging by more directly and dynamically determining the fate of the characters.	Climax has a weak turning point that does not feel like the result of the action that precedes it. Characters are mildly or negligibly changed by the climax.	Climax does not provide a noticeable turning point or is missing entirely. Characters remain unchanged by the conflict in the play.	
Resolution	The resolution flows directly out of the climax and develops a new status quo in either the life of the character(s) or the world around them. The changes in status quo are meaningful and feel satisfying to the audience.	Resolution is connected to the conflict and climax of the play, but feels a bit too easy, tidy or predictable. A new status quo is developed in either the life of the character(s) or the world around them. The changes in status quo are present and adequate.	Resolution is present, but disproportionate to conflict and climax. Changes in status quo to characters' lives or the world around them are minimal or simplistic.	Resolution is too easy in the face of the play's conflict and climax, and/or the play just stops after the conflict. The characters' status quo from the beginning of the play is unchanged.	
Characters	Each character has a distinct voice and motivation that is revealed through dialogue, action and conflict. Their character is deepened by their choices/tactics over the course of the play. The characters have distinct and specific relationships to each other and to the world of the play.	Characters have their own voice and motivation that is often revealed through dialogue, action and conflict. Their character is periodically deepened by their choices/tactics over the course of the play. Relationships to other characters and the world are present, but could have more specificity and/or dimension.	Characters do not have a distinct voice. Characters have motivation, but they are not always revealed through dialogue, action and conflict and may rely too much on stage directions or character descriptions to make their character unique. The characters are infrequently deepened by their choices/tactics. Relationships to other characters and the world are present, but lack specificity or meaning.	Characters all sound or act the same. They lack motivation; their choices/tactics and relationships are flat and do not reveal who they are as characters.	
Dialogue	Dialogue is driven by action and tactics. Reveals history, given circumstances and personality through conversation and not exposition. Uses subtext to create depth and tension. Uses language, rhythm and	Dialogue is for the most part driven by action and tactics. It reveals some history, given circumstances and personality through conversation, but sometimes relies on exposition to do so. Could utilize more subtext to create	Dialogue is at times passive and does not always drive the action/tactics. Dialogue relies on exposition to reveal history, given circumstances and personality. Does not use	Dialogue is passive and expository. No use of subtext. Language, rhythm and punctuation is not creatively used.	

	Excellent	Good	Shows Potential	Needs work	Comments
	punctuation creatively to create character, meaning and impact.	depth and tension. Uses language, rhythm and punctuation thoughtfully.	subtext to create depth and tension. Minimally creative use of language, rhythm and punctuation.		
Theme	Uses theme of festival in unique and compelling way.	Clearly uses theme of festival.	Touches on theme of festival.	Theme of festival not evident.	
Mechanics	The dramatic structure of the play is dynamic and compelling. The world of the play is compelling, detailed and specific. The writer uses diction - word choice (including the use of the use of slang and colloquialism), phrasing, cadence/rhythm, metaphor, alliteration, imagery, punctuation, grammar (both correct and intentionally incorrect) and more - to create a unique style for the play.	The dramatic structure of the is dynamic and the world compelling. The use of diction - word choice (including the use of the use of slang and colloquialism), phrasing, cadence/rhythm, metaphor, alliteration, imagery, punctuation, grammar (both correct and intentionally incorrect) and more - could be more deliberate to create a unique style for the play.	The dramatic structure and world building needs more dynamic and specificity. More attention should be paid to diction - word choice (including the use of the use of slang and colloquialism), phrasing, cadence/rhythm, metaphor, alliteration, imagery, punctuation, grammar (both correct and intentionally incorrect) and more - to create a unique style for the play.	The play lacks dramatic structure and a distinct sense of world building. Diction feels haphazard and does not combine to create a style for the play.	
Theatricality	Play feels as though it was written for a live audience and embraces theatricality. The form, content and style of the play is exciting to imagine on stage.	Play feels as though it was written for a live audience and at times embraces theatricality. The form, content and style of the play is easy to imagine on stage.	Play feels as though it may be better suited to film or television rather than a live audience. It is difficult to imagine being effective on stage.	Play feels as though it should be written in another form of fiction. It is hard to imagine it being effective on stage.	

Check the following guidelines to make sure your play is ready for submission:

Two characters (two actors)? _____

5-10 pages of dialogue? _____

Script formatted according to guidelines? _____

Thank you for being a part of the 2026-2027 Delaware Young Playwrights Festival!