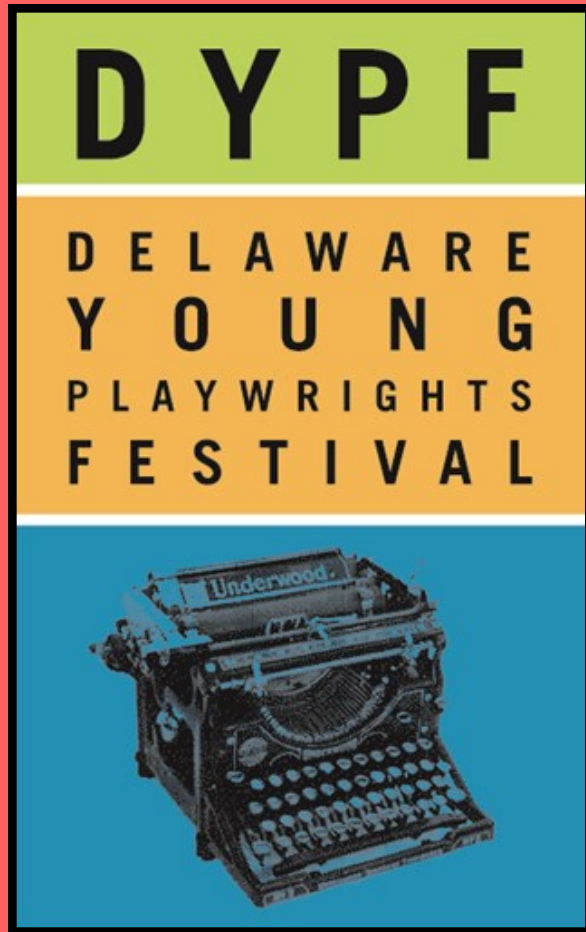




DELAWARE
THEATRE
COMPANY



**DYPF 2023-2024
PLAYWRITING GUIDE**



Welcome to Delaware Theatre Company's 2023-2024 Delaware Young Playwrights Festival!

Greetings from Delaware Theatre Company!

For many, the fall season feels like a time for new beginnings—perhaps the start of a new school year or a new theatre season, or possibly a sense of refreshment and a renewed strength of purpose after having experienced summer's delights. For others, though, fall might bring a sense of nostalgia, of moving closer to the end of a year, of reflecting about what was. This year's Delaware Young Playwrights Festival theme incorporates the two, a combining of looking behind at life circumstances and a focus on what may be possible for the future—and that pivotal moment when decisions are made to take action in aiming for something better.

We always love reading the variety of stories that come from our Delaware Young Playwrights when their first drafts come in. We love learning about their perspectives, about what is important to them, and about what's on the minds of young people in the current year of the Festival. This year's theme will undoubtedly give us these same insights, but we hope to find them thinking about the past, how people got to where they were, how their circumstances may have differed from current day's, and especially, how our human story has a fascinating continuity, connecting us over time with people in previous generations. Though the plays the playwrights create this year do not necessarily have to be about "long past," and even could be a look at a contemporary moment in time, the considering of what has been with what might be, and the choice to risk what is known for the unknown, is fruitful territory in the life of a character, real or imagined.

We thank all the teachers who encourage their students' participation in DYPF. Some of you are new to the process, and we hope you and your students find it a rewarding learning experience. And some of you have been with us for many years, and we celebrate the legacy you have created—and continue to create—through passing your passion for the arts of theatre and writing on to generations of students! As always, we are happy and grateful to be your partners in theatre education!

All the best,

Johanna Schloss
Director of Education
& Community Engagement

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TIMELINE AND REQUIREMENTS

Timeline for 2023-2024 DYPF:

Wed., September 20, 2023: Free Kickoff Workshop on Zoom, 4:00-6:00 p.m. (Register to receive Zoom link.)

Friday, October 20, 2023: First Round Plays Due by Email to DTC

Friday, November 10, 2023: DTC Returns First Round Feedback by Email to Playwrights

Friday, December 8, 2023: Second Round “Competition Round” Plays Due by Email to DTC

Fri., January 5, 2024: DYPF Finalists Announced

Saturdays, February 3, 10, and 17, 2024: } Finalists Take Part in Artistic Team Collaborative Workshops

Thursday, February 22, 2024: Final Revisions Due; Actor Rehearsals and Tech Work Begin

Thursday, March 21, 2024: DYPF Culminating Performance at 7:30 p.m.
(All Playwrights Honored; Special Awards Announced)

Requirements for Play Submissions:

Students must be in grades 8-12 and enrolled in a Delaware school or DE home school. Plays must follow the theme.

Plays must be two-character plays.

Plays must be 5-10 pages of dialogue. (Title and character/setting pages do not count.)

Use Times New Roman or similar font, 12-pt size.

Use script format as demonstrated in DYPF study guide.

All entries must be original. Screenplays or adaptations are not eligible.

First Round Submissions: Submit one **digital** copy (**Word** or **PDF**) of each play. There is no limit of submissions per school in Round One. There is a registration fee of \$25 per school. (If submitting as a homeschool student or an individual not affiliated with a school, the fee is \$10 per play.) Plays are due to DTC by 4:00 p.m. on October 20, 2023. Teachers may email them as a group. Email plays to **Education@delawaretheatre.org**.

Second Round Submissions: Submit one **digital Word** or **PDF** copy of each play. No additional fees are due. Playwrights who agree to the submission of their work for this round must read, sign, & submit digitally a form stating their commitment to the process if selected as a finalist.

And a few more hints:

Use the guiding questions and rubric to help you shape your writing.

Most one-act plays work best if there is only one setting.

One continuous scene often works better for one-act plays than breaking it up into lots of short scenes.

Save your work electronically as a Word or PDF document so that you may email it.

Be sure to title your play and include your name and your school/teacher's contact information.

Students submitting individually (as part of a home school or individual entry) should include parent's/guardian's name and email address.

THEME

Each year we challenge student playwrights with a theme drawn from one of our Delaware Theatre Company mainstage productions. This year's theme is inspired by this quotation from DTC's upcoming production of the play *Kings of Harlem* by Layon Gray.



"Historical moments are created by historical opportunities."

—“Pops” Coffey, *Kings of Harlem*

History lessons are full of stories of the great men and women who rose to the occasion when a need presented itself. The names from the history books are familiar—Rosa Parks, Benjamin Franklin, Neil Armstrong, and the like—people whose actions led to famed changes in our society. Often we forget, though, that these “great” men and women were real people, more often than not born into ordinary circumstances, who found themselves at a crossroads when human action was needed to make a positive change in their communities and beyond. These real people stepped forward to take action to make that change, whatever that may have been, at great personal risk, but for the greater good. Our minds may even think of our own ancestors or personal heroes who made sacrifices so that future generations could have a better life. Playwright Layon Gray was inspired by the story of the New York Rens, an African-American-owned, all-Black men’s basketball team that dominated the game in the 1920s and 1930s during the Jim Crow era. In Gray’s play *Kings of Harlem*, basketball coach Pops Coffey speaks the words, “Historical moments are created by historical opportunities” to motivate his team of Black athletes when they are given the unprecedented invitation to compete in the World Championship of Professional Basketball against the champions from the whites-only league. The team recognizes that their play on the court makes them both a target of criticism and racial discrimination as well as an inspiration to others, demonstrating to all races that Blacks are able to compete and win at the highest level.

Whether fighting injustice, seeking a solution to a problem, using imagination and innovation to create a pathway to a better life for others, or taking other risks to improve their own or others’ circumstances, men and women have made history—family history, community history, or world history—by taking action when the opportunity or need presented itself. Often the taking of action added a great burden to their lives or the lives of their loved ones, yet this burden was offset by these individuals’ vision for a better tomorrow.

The 2023-2024 DYPF theme is as follows: Write a play about a character or characters who encounter(s) a challenge or opportunity and must make a difficult choice to take action, even when a positive outcome is not guaranteed.* The play must be a two-character play that is 5-10 pages in length.

**Though not a requirement, playwrights are welcome to use real figures from history, or create fictional characters who take part in a real historical event, as part of their play. DTC encourages playwrights who do use historical events or figures in their play to use research as a support for their writing.*

THEME

Questions to help you grow your ideas for writing:

1. Set a timer for 2 minutes, and make a brainstorm list of “historical moments” from American history and/or world history. After the time expires, read your list. About which moments on your list do you feel you have a good grasp on the circumstances and the people involved? Who were some of these people? What made those moments stand out in their own time? Can you think of any personal or professional risks these people took in this moment? Feel free to do an internet search to gather more information.

2. Now look at something on your list about which you know comparatively little. Can you imagine the “before” and “after” of this moment for the average person? In other words, what change to someone’s world may have occurred because of this moment? Who might have needed this particular change enough to take action towards making it happen? Feel free to do an internet search to gather more information.

3. Who are your personal heroes? Are they family members, community leaders, historical figures, outstanding athletes, artists, or members of particular fields? Why do you consider them “heroes”? What actions have they taken that make them “rise above” others in your estimation? Now consider their choices to do what they do or have done. Do you know of, or can you imagine, what motivated them to take that action? What sacrifices may that person have made to work for something important in their lives or the lives of others?

4. What activity, art, or sport interests you? Or what potential career interests you? Reflect on the past of that activity, art, sport, or career. Do you know any influential people who were part of the historical fabric of that world? Who were they, and what did they do? Or imagine someone who was involved or who wanted to be involved in the creation, development, or work of that field. What might that real person or imagined character have found exciting about that field? What might have stood in that person’s way of fully taking part in that activity, art, sport, or career? How might that character have taken action to remove an obstacle, invent a solution, or otherwise make a positive contribution in that field? Feel free to do an internet search to gather more information.

Getting Started with Theme: Firsts, Famous Names, and Game-Changers

Jackie Robinson... Mother Teresa... George Washington... Billie Jean King... Wilbur and Orville Wright... Malala Yousafzai... Harriet Tubman.... These familiar names are associated with either “famous firsts” or with memorable actions that made them game-changers in history. But in looking at the early lives of many of these famous people, we find that their path to fame began in more simple roots; that often, they did not set out to be famous or great, but happened to arrive at a critical place and time and chose not to let things stay as they were. Research their path from “ordinary” to “extraordinary.” What motivates someone to take action and move away from “comfortable and safe” to the unknown life ahead? Use that motivation to trace a before-and-after moment for an imagined character in a similar world, or for an imagined character in our world today.

ELEMENTS OF A GOOD PLAY: SETTING

What makes a play something that people will want to see again and again? What makes a play something that gets audience members thinking and talking? Why are some plays so strong that they have meaning around the world or across the centuries? The following terms offer descriptions and guiding questions to help playwrights consider the elements that make a good play. Use these descriptions and guiding questions to help you shape and refine your work.

SETTING

The setting tells us where and when the play takes place. The setting should be vital to the plot and should add to the story on an emotional level. Settings should take into consideration the limitations of theatrical staging as well as the advantages of a live theatre space. Ask yourself these questions:



- Why is this place important to my characters?
- Why is this time period central to the action of the story?
- Could this story take place in any other locations? Could a more creative setting benefit my story, or is there a reason this is the best place for the events to occur?
- Could this story take place in any other time period? Will my audience know enough about the world of the play to understand why I chose to set it during this time period?
- What is interesting, important, and creative about my setting?
- Are there elements of the setting that can help forward the plot?
- Does my setting contain all of the elements needed to help tell the story?



The play *Kings of Harlem* takes place in two distinct time periods: contemporary times, as a character who serves as a storyteller tells a 21st-century audience about a legendary team of basketball players, and a basketball court in 1939 during the Jim Crow era. The storyteller frames the main action of the play, alluding to a 2015 protest that took place when the real Renaissance Ballroom and Casino—where the New York Rens played basketball in earlier days—was being torn down to make way for upscale condominiums in Harlem. The setting shifts to depict the story he shares, revealing the basketball court, where the players on the New York Rens meet, talk, practice, and play their games.

Though various basketball courts are suggested as the team practices and plays different opponents, suggesting the courts of various teams and multiple games, all are part of the world of 1939 America, when and where racial segregation and injustice prevailed in sports and permeated the lives of Black Americans.

ELEMENTS OF A GOOD PLAY: SETTING

Often in shorter works such as one-act plays, one setting works best. By unifying the time and place, the focus of the play can be streamlined, and the action can feel more immediate when there aren't breaks for scene changes. But whether their play unfolds in one time and place straight through, or it shifts among different times and/or places as does *Kings of Harlem*, playwrights should consider that the settings they choose must be able to be conveyed onstage regardless of a theatre's budget and technical resources. Sometimes descriptions of setting share a playwright's vision of important set pieces, such as "a family room of the 1970s with a worn-out easy chair and a cluttered side table," or "a bright and cheerful help desk at a library, present day." Sometimes the simplicity of lighting and sound can be enough to show a new "when" or a new "where." While you do not have to describe every object onstage, hints in your setting that communicate important information about your characters' world can work to your advantage. These hints don't even have to occur as stage directions; they become more important to the story when they are part of the characters' words and actions. And even the choice of the setting itself can have a big impact on the characters in the play. The more specific you are as a playwright in thinking about when and where your story takes place, and how that time and place can affect the characters' words and actions, the more the setting can enrich your storytelling onstage.

When does your play take place—not just an era or a year, but also a time of year or time of day? Where does your play take place—not just a location on a map, or just a general phrase such as "at home" or "at school," but in what space or place, specifically? What setting makes your characters confront their situation? How are the time and place specified in your work? What significant detail or image about this setting might be mentioned in a character's dialogue or action that allows the production team to imagine and creatively realize this imagined world for a live audience as they look at the stage?

Getting started with setting...

- Play "Trading Places" (see activities pages). Afterwards, discuss the effect that setting can have on the characters' behavior.
- Brainstorm a list of places for scenes and plays to take place. Choosing two or three places from the list, create a web of words or phrases that describe the emotional context of such a location. For example, "school" could make a character feel "excited about the future," "pressured to achieve," or even "trapped for years."

ELEMENTS OF A GOOD PLAY *(continued)*

CHARACTERS

Great characters lie at the heart of a great play. Unlike a novelist, a playwright cannot use description to evoke character or tell us what they are thinking. How do you create a walking, talking, feeling human being using only the words he speaks? The more a playwright knows and cares about a character, the stronger that character will be. Think about a character's past, her daily life, his likes and dislikes, her dreams for the future. One of the most important things you can give a character is a strong objective; that is, you should know what the character wants or needs, and eventually, so should your character! Reveal this information about the character through action and dialogue. A character's behavior should be believable within the world of the play. Characters should be unique individuals with clear objectives and a clear point of view. As you write, ask yourself these questions:

- Are my characters flat and stereotypical, or round with a sense of past, present, and future?
- Do any of my characters change over the course of the play?
- Which character is the protagonist? The antagonist? Is it clear? Should it be clear?
- Do my characters exhibit humanity?
- Do my characters have or develop a clear understanding of their objectives? How are my characters' objectives observable to the audience? (Remember, the audience cannot be expected to have read the script when they see your play.)
- Do the personality and other traits I've given my characters help or hurt the play?



The characters of *Kings of Harlem* each are distinct people. Coach “Pops” Coffey is a motivator, with a no-nonsense approach to his style of coaching. He wants to inspire his players to strive for better. Nat is congenial, a talker, enthusiastic and ready to be part of the team. Clem, on the other hand, is private and withdrawn, wanting to hide his underlying sadness and loneliness that at times erupts on the surface in an angry outburst. DeeDee likes to have fun, and he is playful and teases his teammates. And JoJo is the voice of experience, proudly announcing his accomplishments in the game, but also taking a fatherly tone with the younger players to guide them. Each character speaks in a different style to reveal a different personality, and each character has his own wants and his own back story that has shaped him into who he is. Playwrights reveal information about their characters through what they say and what they do, as Gray has done in *Kings of Harlem*.

Getting started with character...

- Create your own “I Want” list of ten or twenty things you want. What tactics in word or action might you employ to try to obtain something on your “I Want” list?
- Go to a public place like the food court at a mall or a sports event. Observe some of the people in this location. Choose one or two strangers, and write an “I Want” list imagining what this person would want.
- Write a character history to help you flesh out the people you create in your imagination. See the example in the activities pages. Then as you develop your story, make an “I Want” list for your characters to help you identify their objectives. Then think about what would or would not be an action believable for that character to take to go for her or his objective.

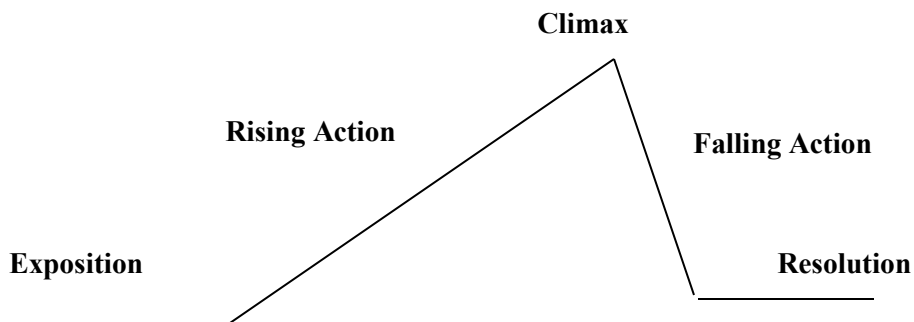
ELEMENTS OF A GOOD PLAY *(continued)*

ACTION OF THE PLAY

The “action of the play” can be thought of as the movement of events in the play from beginning to middle to end. In this sense, “action” refers not to a character’s physical behaviors, but to the development of the story structure; that is, the plot. The events that occur in the play must be realistic *within the world of the play*. (If your play is going to involve talking animals, you must either begin the play with setting up a world of talking animals, or you must clue us in when the animals begin to talk as to why this seeming departure from reality is possible in the world of this play.) The plot should follow logical cause-and-effect and should captivate the audience, making them want to see where the story goes and how it ends.

After a framing device that launches the play, the action of *Kings of Harlem* begins as new player Nat is introduced to his teammates and to the coaching style of “Pops” Coffey. During this expository section, the audience meets the various characters through the way they become known to Nat. Conflicts arise as the team must deal with racism on their road trips, as the individuals on the team sometimes butt heads with one another, and as they risk their reputations as champions when facing defeat at the hands of a formidable white team. The climactic moment occurs as tragedy strikes the group, and they must decide as a team whether or not to continue their quest to be the best in professional basketball in a high-profile tournament to which they were invited, knowing that they might face personal attacks as well as defeat on the court. The falling action and resolution wrap up the story elements and give insight to what happened to each member of the team after the events of the climax unfold.

The plot may be broken down into segments that flow in a dynamic path from start to finish.



You can see in the above diagram, which we call a “plot pyramid,” the action of the play has motion that includes rising and falling patterns. The exposition shares with the audience information about the characters’ starting points—the necessary information about the characters’ past and present ways of life. Although exposition is marked in the plot pyramid as occurring at the beginning of the story, a skillful playwright weaves some of that information through the opening moments of the play, revealing background gradually rather than dumping it in one fell swoop on page one.

Rising action concerns the way conflict—the central problem of the story—is introduced and built through the course of the play. Note that “rising action,” where the conflict occurs, makes up the bulk of the plot pyramid: conflict is the driving force of the action of the play. It occurs when a character or characters meet an obstacle to their objectives. The higher the stakes are for the characters, the more intense the conflict will be.

ELEMENTS OF A GOOD PLAY *(continued)*

The climax is the “breaking point” when the action comes to a head. The conflict is directly confronted during the climactic moment, and the climax ultimately brings about the resolution.

The falling action and resolution, sometimes known as the “denouement,” tie up the loose ends of the story and leave the audience with a snapshot of the “new normal” for our characters. The status quo in which we met the characters has changed because of the action of the play.

As you write your play, consider the following questions.

Action/Plot

- Does the action of the play stem directly from the desires of the characters?
- Does the action make sense within the world I have created?
- Is the action of the play as clear as possible? Is there a simpler or more direct way for my plot to play out?
- Is there any excess or unnecessary action in my play? In other words, does every action contribute to the plot?

Conflict/Rising Action

- What are the characters’ objectives and the obstacles that prevent them from achieving their objectives? Is the objective-obstacle set-up the main conflict of the piece?
- What will happen if the conflict is not resolved?
- Is the resolution of the conflict of great importance to the characters?

Climax

- Does the climax deal directly with the play’s main conflict?
- Does the climax address one or both of the characters’ primary objectives?
- Does the level of intensity in the climactic moment make sense when I look at what words, behaviors, and events led up to it?
- Will the audience find this moment as important to the characters as I find it to be?
- Are there other ways this conflict could come to a head?

Resolution

- Have I provided enough clues to the audience for them to fully understand the story and its ending?
- Did the climax lead to a natural resolution in which the new status quo is evident?
- How important to the characters are the changes that have been made in their lives?

Getting started with creating the action of the play...

- Write 10-line scenes (see activities pages) to help you show conflict through characters’ dialogue.
- Play “Beads on a String” (see activities pages) to practice logical flow of a story from beginning to end. If there are holes in the story, find a way to plug them or to rework the story so that it makes sense.
- Consider types of conflict: character vs. character, character vs. circumstances, character vs. self, etc. Give examples from familiar books, movies, or plays of different types of conflict and discuss the flow of the action as this conflict builds to a climax. As you develop your play, think about what the central conflict is or could be for your main character(s). If your story gets stuck, try offering your main character a different type of conflict and see if that sparks rising action.

ELEMENTS OF A GOOD PLAY *(continued)*

DIALOGUE

Dialogue accomplishes several things in a play: it allows the characters to push the story forward as they communicate with each other, and it reveals information about the characters themselves by what they say and the way they say it. In *Kings of Harlem*, we find a forwarding of action and important revelations about the characters in the dialogue. Here is an example:

POPS: Say here you good at rebounding balls.

NAT: I like playing under the basket, sir.

POPS: Kinda small to be playing the center.

NAT: Don't let the frame fool ya, sir. I can carry my own.

POPS: They put that three-second keyhole rule in the books a few years ago. You play with it in Louisiana?

NAT: No sir. We just did scrimmages.

POP: Well, this the real deal. Something you gone have to work on.

NAT: Yes sir.

LEROY: Pops, is it true about Murphy?

POPS: Yea. He had to take a job out state this summer. Ain't gone be back for the season. And I had to let Raymond go too.

DEE DEE: What?

POPS: We will not have that showboating clowning this year. We will not play that kind of ball.

In the dialogue sample above, we learn that Nat is new to the team and to the area, having played in Louisiana prior to moving to New York. Though Nat's game experience is limited, he is confident in his play, yet he also shows respect to the coach through the way he says, "Sir." We also learn that Pops is the man in charge, questioning his new player and discussing team strategy. And we also note the kind of team Pops believes in and demands: one that does not involve self-congratulatory showboating. Pops insists that discipline and teamwork are central to the way the team members will operate. Even DeeDee's simple "What?" implies that he is surprised Pops would let go of a talented player, further underscoring Pops' character traits and objective.

The characters speak in a way that befits them, and they also move the story along by talking about what is happening and what their objectives are in the moment. Nat wants to play for the team. Pops will not allow the players to settle for less than the best. Dialogue reveals all of this information.



(continued)

ELEMENTS OF A GOOD PLAY *(continued)*

DIALOGUE *(continued)*

Dialogue should be creative, realistic, meaningful to the action of the play, and appropriate to the characters. It should reveal history, circumstances, and personality in a subtle way. Conversations often hold the audience's interest better than long, chunky monologues. Ask yourself these questions as you write:

- Does the dialogue advance the story?
- Does the dialogue help the audience know more about my characters?
- Is the phrasing rich and captivating?
- Is it realistic to the world of the characters?



Getting started with dialogue...

- Clip out or find free online comic strips with empty speech bubbles. Practice writing dialogue between characters in the comic strip that illuminates something about who each character is or what each wants.
- In an open location where privacy is not assumed, listen to conversations that are held in public not for the subject matter, but for the purpose of hearing the speech patterns. How does the conversation go back and forth? Do the parties speak in complete sentences? Do they take turns? Afterwards, make notes for yourself on how natural speech between people unfolds. (Of course, be respectful of the other parties as you do this. If someone is attempting to have a private conversation not involving you, allow them their space. Do not record their words; only notice the rhythms of conversation.)
- Play “Six Ways to Say Something” (see activities page). Afterwards, examine how character affects speech.

MORE HELPFUL HINTS

SPELLING, GRAMMAR, USAGE, AND MECHANICS

Except in cases in which the misuse of correct English grammar is intentional—such as in the case of dialogue that demonstrates a character’s personality, background, or education level—use standard English conventions in spelling, grammar, punctuation, and usage. Why? Because writing is communicating, and good writers help people understand what they are saying by writing clear thoughts.

For instance, take a look at the phrases below. Each pair contains sentences with words that sound the same to the ear, yet they convey completely different thoughts based on the writer’s spelling and punctuation.

Look! Ahead in the road!

Look! A head in the road!

That’s what you’re going to wear.

That’s what you’re going to wear?

As a writer, be certain you know what you want to say. Then be certain that you communicate that in a way that your readers—potentially, actors, directors, and designers—will understand. Otherwise, instead of designing and building an orange construction cone in the middle of the road, your scenic designer might be wasting her time making a paper maché noggin.

USING A RUBRIC OR SCORING GUIDE

The rubric/scoring guide in this packet is the one that DTC’s DYPF readers will use when examining your work. The descriptors for each criterion reflect many of the guiding questions contained in this study guide. These are not exhaustive descriptions, and the criteria used herein are likewise not the only things that are considered when evaluating a play. However, they provide some consistency for readers when they look at your plays, and they also help you evaluate your own play as you write and rewrite throughout the DYPF process. Do not confuse the achievement benchmarks for letter grades. A play that meets all of the “good” descriptors under each criterion is most likely a high-quality play. A rating of “excellent” may be very hard to achieve—even experienced, professional playwrights’ works may not match up with everything under the “excellent” heading. We encourage teachers to think broadly about the level of creativity and critical thinking that goes into writing for the theatre. The process is at times just as important as the product. **Our DTC readers’ responses are not suggestions for classroom grades/points earned, but are instead a teaching tool to guide students in writing in the unique form of dramatic literature.**

SCRIPT FORMAT

THE MILKY WAY

by

Jane Doe

© 2011 Jane Doe
Mr. Tom Smith's Class
Maple Heights High School
1234 Elm Street
Springfield, DE 19876
tsmith@mhhs.k12.de.us

Title Page

- Include title and by-line (your name).
- Include teacher's name, school, school address, and teacher's email address.
- Your copyright expresses that this is your original work.
- Use Times New Roman or similar font at 12 pt size.

Characters and Setting Page

- Give a brief description of characters in the play.
- Include a brief description of the time and place of the action of the play.
- Do not begin page numbering here.
- In general, use one-inch margins.

CAST OF CHARACTERS

LUCRETIA	80-year-old former debutante
SAM	Lucretia's neighbor, 30-35 years old

TIME: An autumn night, 2010

SETTING: Front yard and porch steps of a duplex on the outskirts of a city. A tidy neighborhood, where although the residents are not wealthy, they take pride in the homes on the block. A few mums brighten the small gardens. A "Beware of Dog" sign is visible on the chain link fence that leads to the SL back yard.

SCRIPT FORMAT *(continued)*

ACT ONE

Scene 1

(AT RISE we hear the sounds of early evening in the neighborhood: crickets, a hum of a passing car, a dog barking in the distance. SAM is sitting on the SR side of the duplex, relaxing on his porch steps, eating out of a large bag of chips. The bag rattles each time he reaches in. We hear him crunching as he eats. After a moment, LUCRETIA's porch light SL snaps on. SAM notices it.)

SAM

Oh, here we go again.

LUCRETIA

(Opening her front door and speaking through the screen door)

Keep it down! Keep that noise down! You want to awaken the good people of this neighborhood with that ruckus?

SAM (to himself)

Good people. She better not be counting herself in there.

(Loudly, to LUCRETIA)

It wasn't me, Lucretia. I don't know what you heard, but all I'm doing is eating some potato chips. That all right with you?

(LUCRETIA steps out on her porch. She is carrying a fireplace poker.)

LUCRETIA

Don't you sass me. This is a nice neighborhood. And I will defend it from any and all who threaten our peace and quiet!

First Page of Dialogue

- Note the location and style of stage directions.
- Characters' names are written in all caps (unless the name is part of a spoken line of dialogue) and deeply indented (3.5") or centered.
- Double space between characters' lines.
- Single space within characters' lines and any stage directions that flow within a line. Double space for stand-alone stage directions.
- Do not mark pagination here.

Additional Dialogue Pages

- Use title key word and page numbering in upper RH corner, ½ inch from top margin.
- Other margins continue at 1 inch.

Milky Way—2

SAM (chuckling)

So your way of keeping it peaceful and quiet is to come out here and threaten to hit a guy who is just eating a bedtime snack? I thought you said this was a nice neighborhood.

LUCRETIA

Well, I can't sleep with all that noise.

SAM

Look, I'm almost done. You want some? If we both eat, the bag'll be empty sooner. . . .

APPENDIX: ACTIVITIES AND RESOURCES

Motivational Speaker

As a group, brainstorm a list of strong emotions such as excitement or guilt. Then choose an everyday task that is typically not a favorite chore, such as getting the oil changed on your car, or washing the dishes. Choose one person to stand up and offer an improvised motivational speech to the class that plays upon one of the listed emotions as an influence towards the listeners' deciding to do or not do the action. If and when the speaker says something that would motivate you to do that task, stand up or raise your hand to indicate you would take action. After a few series of motivational speeches playing on emotions, create a list of intellectual, creative, moral, or other reasons and rationales that might influence people to take action. Improvise more scenarios and speeches, or simply discuss situations in which people are prompted to take action they might not otherwise take and consider what motivates them to move out of their habits or comfort zones.



Trading Places

Make a list of simple demands to be "first lines" for improvised scenes. Here are some examples: "Give me your sock." "Call your mother." "I want to leave." Have two students improvise a short scene using the demand as the first line of the scene. Then ask for a creative or unexpected setting and have the students start a new scene, still using that same first line. For example, if "Give me your sock" was originally played as a parent talking to a child while loading a laundry basket at home, what would happen if you ask the actors to start a scene with "Give me your sock," and instead have it take place between two people sitting at the top of a Ferris wheel? How does a new setting affect the direction the scene takes? Do the characters change? Does the action change? Do the same lines of dialogue make sense, or did everything change? Discuss the role that setting has on adding to or detracting from a scene.

Ten-Line Play

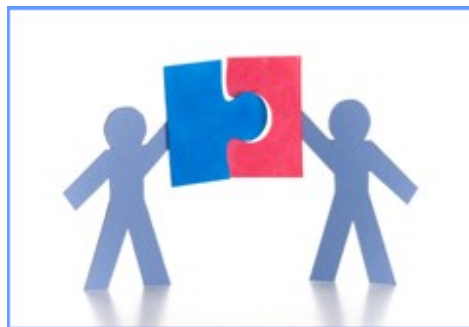
This could actually be called Eight- to-Twelve-Line Play in order to provide a little latitude to playwrights. Students are asked to write a quick dialogue between Character A and Character B in which there is a negotiation over an object. In a Ten-Line Play, A and B alternate five times each, for a total of ten lines. If A is going to have the last word, the play may be nine or eleven lines. Simple objects around the room can be starters: a pencil sharpener; a cell phone, a chair, a set of keys. In the Ten (or so)-Line Play, be certain one character has a clear objective and is met with an obstacle. Ask the students to write quickly, with no worry about cleverness, back story, or other artistic concerns. The point is to show conflict quickly, and negotiations that must occur in the space of 8, 9, or 10 lines total will propel the conflict to the forefront immediately. Share the plays with each other.

(continued)

ACTIVITIES AND RESOURCES *(continued)*

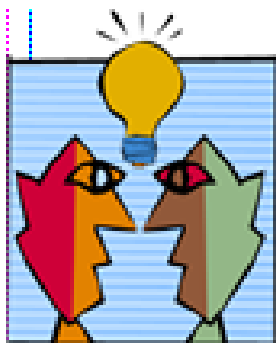
Beads on a String

This is an exercise in creating a logical story. Have one student step to the front of the room and offer the first sentence of a story. Have another student step to the other side of the room and announce the last sentence of the same story. Other students then get up and get in line, offering another sentence that occurs somewhere in the middle of the story. The object of the exercise is to think in terms of linear flow of a plot, to eliminate unnecessary tangents that interfere with the telling of the story, and to plug holes in the story so that it moves logically from one event to the next. Remind students that audience members only know what is spoken and demonstrated on-stage; back story that is in the playwright's mind or written as stage directions or character description may never make it into the audience's consciousness unless someone says or does something in the play to communicate the information. If you have to overexplain to get to where you're going, perhaps you need to simplify and streamline your story!



Six Ways to Say Something

This activity allows you to get creative in dialogue. Begin with a simple statement such as “It’s hot outside.” Then have various actors take on a character saying a line with that same intent, but using the speech of that particular character. Here are some examples for “It’s hot outside.”



- “Woo-wee! You could fry an egg on the sidewalk out there!”
- “Ahhh... feels like good beach weather!”
- “My neck is sweating. My toes are sweating. My sweat is sweating.”
- “Dress in light-colored, loose-fitting clothing, and drink plenty of water.”
- “It’s 110 in the shade.”

Consider how various characters might have not only an accent, but unique vocabulary or phrasing that reflects that character’s background, outlook, or education. Try writing a simple scene as a class, then have various groups rewrite the dialogue with a specificity for various characters saying those words. Share all of the scenes and compare and contrast the language used.

Great Moments in History

This is an exercise befitting this year’s theme. Make a brainstorm list of “Great Moments in History” While it could be something like “the signing of the Declaration of Independence” or “the invention of the printing press,” it could also be something inventive and/or contemporary like “campaigning for a no-date prom” or “opening a new donut shop in town.” With a partner or small group, choose something from the list, and create a short skit showing the moment a key character in this story must choose to risk or sacrifice something in order to pursue the desired outcome. Avoid making the risk/sacrifice something that is easily resolved, such as finding a winning lottery ticket to pay for the building of the new donut shop. Make your characters want something, and perhaps realize that part of their life is at odds with or at risk in the decision to take action. Share your scenes with your class.

ACTIVITIES AND RESOURCES *(continued)*

CHARACTER HISTORY

Developing characters is easier when you know more about them. Try answering these questions for each character in your play.

Character's Name _____

Gender _____ Age _____

Where was this character raised? _____

What are this character's physical traits? _____

Describe this character's intellectual capabilities. _____

What is this character's social and/or economic status? _____

What is this character's educational background? _____

What does he/she do on an everyday basis? _____

What is his/her family like? How do the family relationships affect the character?

What does this character want/wish for in the play? _____

What stands in the way of this character getting what he/she wants? _____

What does this character fear or worry about? _____

Delaware Theatre Company
2023-2024 Delaware Young Playwrights Festival
Play Evaluation Rubric

Title of Play: Name(s) of playwright(s):	School and Grade: Adjudicator:
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⊕ Comments pertaining to your play are highlighted.

	Excellent	Good	Shows Potential	Needs work	
Setting	The setting is vital to the plot and adds to the story on an emotional level. Settings take into consideration the limitations of theatrical staging and/or the advantages of a live theatre space.	Setting interesting and somewhat necessary to plot. Could be created in a stage space.	Setting tangentially important, but could be made interesting or could be more focused to fewer locations/scene changes. May need adjustment for it to be staged.	Setting cannot be staged and/or not integral to the plot. Too many changes of locations (no unity of place).	Comments
Action of the Play	The events of the play are realistic <i>within the world of the play</i> . The action is creative and able to be staged. Action follows logical cause- and- effect. The action of the play will captivate the audience.	Events are plausible; cause-and-effect mostly credible; able to be staged. Action is fairly interesting.	Events somewhat unrealistic, lack specificity, or are difficult to stage in live theatre. Cause and effect hinted at but not as clear as it could be. At times action lags, becomes bogged down, starts & stops abruptly, or seems to repeat with little forward motion of the plot.	Events unrealistic; unable to be staged. Cause and effect absent. Too little action, or action is scattered or unclear. Too many short scenes; does not build momentum.	
Conflict	Conflict clearly introduced early in the play. Conflict propels the play forward, building in intensity and moving the play toward a climax. The stakes for characters are high as they navigate the conflict.	Conflict central to play. Challenges to characters are believable but could affect characters in a deeper, more profound way. Stakes could be higher.	Conflict is evident but could be made more central to the play or more specific in nature. Challenges to characters appear superficial at times or are not explored in depth. Obstacles are too few or too easily overcome.	Conflict weak or uninteresting. Stakes are low. Characters' plight does not evoke empathy.	
Climax	Climax provides for direct and dramatic confrontation of conflicting characters and objectives. The climactic moment is riveting, perhaps explosive, but strong of its own accord rather than resorting to tricks such as gratuitous violence.	Conflict confronted in believable manner, but climax is not fully realized; protagonist and antagonist could more fully explore the extent of the issue. Interesting to audience.	Climax is not entirely earned by the action that precedes it, or confrontation is barely skirted. Climax could be made to be more believable or interesting.	Climax uninteresting; is not earned by the preceding action, or is avoided entirely.	
Resolution	The resolution flows directly out of the climax and develops a new status quo in the life of the character(s). The changes in status quo are meaningful to the characters.	Resolution results from action and climax, is believable but perhaps too easy or predictable. Characters' lives are clearly changed, but perhaps not in a fundamental way.	Resolution needs to flow more from the action, seems forced, or does not fill major gaps in storyline. Characters only mildly react or change after experiencing the events of the play.	Resolution too easy and/or the play just stops. Status quo from the beginning of the play remains unchanged.	



Characters	The characters are clearly revealed through action and dialogue. Behaviors are believable within the world of the play and contribute directly to the action. Characters are unique individuals with clear objectives and a clear point of view.	Behavior believable in context of play. Individual characters are distinct from one another, but could be strengthened with more clear objectives or observable traits.	Characters are identifiable but need further development. Behaviors could be more believable or perhaps lack consistency to character. Objectives sometimes unclear or characters do not follow through on them.	Characters are stereotypical; unbelievable; flat. Characters lack clear objectives, desires and points of view.	
Dialogue	Dialogue is creative, realistic, meaningful to the action of the play, and appropriate to the characters. Reveals history, given circumstances and personality in a subtle way. Conversations capture and hold the audience's attention.	Dialogue is usually realistic, meaningful and suitable to characters. Somewhat interesting conversation, but language could be tightened to illuminate background or inner motivations. Vital information is disseminated through dialogue.	Dialogue could better reveal characters' inner lives. Some key information seems to be missing from what is spoken. Dialogue may be monologue-heavy, or characters do not have voices distinct from one another.	Dialogue is uninteresting, flat, awkward, not suited to the characters. Does not sound like conversation.	
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	Spelling, grammar, punctuation enhance the telling of the story.	Spelling, grammar, punctuation are generally accurate; errors do not interfere with telling of the story.	Spelling, grammar, punctuation errors require the reader to reread and reinterpret to get the meaning.	Spelling, grammar, punctuation errors prevent understanding of story.	

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 2023-2024 Delaware Young Playwrights Festival!

Why Study the Theatre?

State and National Education Standards Addressed Through Engaging Your Students in the Theatre

When your students experience live theatre, they are taking part in a learning experience that engages their minds on many levels. From simple recall and comprehension of the plot of a play or musical to analysis and evaluation of the production elements of a show, students create, receive, and interpret messages communicated through words, movement, music, and other artistic devices. Students learn to communicate the content and respond to the performance of an artistic piece, reflecting their own and others' emotional, aesthetic, and intellectual points-of-view. And the immediacy of live theatre--the shared moments between playwrights and artists in workshop, as well as those between actors and audience members in the here-and-now --raises students' awareness of the power and scope of human connection.

The following educational standards are addressed through students' participation in the Delaware Young Playwrights Festival at Delaware Theatre Company.

Common Core English Language Arts Standards:

Writing: 9-10 and 11-12, strands 3, 4, 5, and 6

Language: 9-10 and 11-12, strands 2 and 3

National Core Arts Standards—Theatre:

Creating: Anchor Standards 1, 2, and 3

Responding: Anchor Standards 7, 8, and 9

Connecting: Anchor Standards 10 and 11

DYPF Mission:

Delaware Theatre Company's Delaware Young Playwrights Festival provides students with an authentic audience for their creative writing and teachers with an innovative literacy program. Guided by passion and professionalism, DYPF uses educational resources, interactive workshops, personal feedback to every playwright, and public performances to engage students in the art of theatre through the act of writing a play. Both competitive and cooperative, DYPF fosters, respects, and celebrates the voices of young writers.