

# Teaching Playwriting in Schools

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TEACHER'S  
HANDBOOK

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**CENTERSTAGE**

# CONTENTS

## INTRODUCTION

A NOTE TO TEACHERS.....	2
STRUCTURE SUGGESTIONS.....	3
SUGGESTED USES FOR PLAYWRITING ACROSS THE CURRICULUM.....	3
PLAYWRITING VOCABULARY LIST.....	4

## REWRITING

A NOTE ABOUT REWRITING.....	5
GENERAL CHECKLIST FOR SUCCESSFUL REWRITING.....	5
COMMON PROBLEMS IN STUDENT PLAYS.....	6
<i>Dialogue</i> .....	6
<i>Characters</i> .....	8
<i>Conflict</i> .....	9
<i>Plots/Scenes</i> .....	11

## ADDITIONAL EXERCISES & WORKSHEETS

EXERCISES FOR DEVELOPING OBSERVATION SKILLS.....	13
ACTION VS. ACTIVITY.....	14
ROUND ROBIN/SECRETS.....	15
STORY OF A JOURNEY.....	16
THE NEUTRAL PLAY.....	17
BUILDING A CHARACTER.....	18
CONFLICT SCHEME.....	19
PLAYWRITING QUESTIONNAIRE.....	20
OPENING LINES.....	21
QUESTIONS FOR THE PLAYWRIGHT (REWRITING).....	23

OTHER PLAYWRITING FESTIVALS AND AWARDS .....	25
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# Introduction

## A Note to Teachers

This handbook has been designed to help you bring playwriting into your classroom. It is our hope that these exercises, worksheets, evaluations, and suggestions can help you in teaching playwriting as a part of your curriculum.

In addition to providing you with the information to teach playwriting, we also hope to give students the opportunity to see their work produced and staged here at CENTERSTAGE. Each spring we sponsor the *Young Playwright's Festival*, which encourages students in grades 1 through 12 to submit their original plays. Selected plays will be honored with staged readings that will be produced by CENTERSTAGE, while some others receive playwriting workshops with a professional playwright. This year marks the 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the *Young Playwrights Festival*, and in hopes of making this year bigger and better we want to encourage as many students as possible to submit their work.

Please use the information within these pages freely. Alter them to fit your individual needs. Much of the handbook is designed to help with the completion and revision of plays written by students. Students should be encouraged to be creative and experimental, to discover their own voice and express it in new and challenging ways. To emphasize that theater is to be experienced, not simply read, students can act out their own scenes from their developing scripts. The following words of wisdom will help nurture your students' creative process.

### **Good playwriting may come from very humble beginnings.**

- Student scenes, even in their first draft, are an achievement.
- The best thing you can do for student writers is give them the opportunity to write without censure; to write "anything" she or he would like a character to say or do. Eventually, some guidelines will be drawn, but in the beginning try to influence or edit as little as possible.
- Revision is important and necessary. It takes time, make sure to plan ahead.

### **Playwrights benefit greatly from hearing their work read aloud.**

- This is a very important step in understanding how the play and its several elements work.
- Theater is a "live" experience. We encourage you to set some time aside for bringing their plays to life, whether it is just a reading or if it is fully staged.

### **Remind the students that, in the end, it's their play.**

- Stress the importance of giving, receiving, and processing constructive criticism.
- Theater is a collaboration.
- If they do not want to make suggested changes, it is their choice.

## Structure Suggestions

Here is one way to structure a playwriting unit in five days, which can be consecutive or divided in whatever way best fits your scheduling needs.

In the first lesson, the teacher addresses playwriting vocabulary, particularly character, dialogue, and conflict. Break down the structure of scenes and plays to introduce the concept of goals and obstacles, the nature of conflict, the revelation of character, and the progression of an action. She or he uses a variety of methods—trigger photos, improvisation, and worksheets—to stimulate the student’s imagination to identify their individual creative ideas, stories, and characters. Students should start to write immediately.

After the introductory class, the next three classes begin with a brief review of the previous day’s work, a discussion about its presentation, and analysis of student writing. To introduce revision, the teacher uses student written scenes and monologues for analysis. Student scenes are read aloud and staged throughout the week. Both the class and teacher suggest revisions.

The last day is focused on the performance of student scenes. The teacher can describe CENTERSTAGE’s *Young Playwrights Festival* to prepare scripts for possible submission.

### Uses for playwriting across the curriculum

- Pre-writing: conflict scheme, questions about your story or scene, building a character.
- Four goals of playwriting practice: setting, stage directions, scene with dialogue (to show a situation), character conflict
- Revision: discussion questions about scenes.
- Dramatize and act out a historical event. (George Washington at Valley Forge, Harriet Tubman and the Underground Railroad, Martin Luther King facing conflict between the Civil Rights struggle, etc.)
- Act out original student plays.
- Create and act out dramatic monologues through personification. (Monologues about forces of weather, the animal world, the plant world, etc.)
- Create conflicts and dramatic scenes out of personal and family material, family legends, contact with the elderly, and visitors to the classroom.
- Create conflicts and dramatic scenes from personal life issues and life style themes, and social issues. (Relationships, ethics, personal safety, drug and sex issues, community issues, etc.)
- Create conflicts and dramatic scenes from pictures cut out of newspapers and magazines using the imagination to expand on what’s in the picture to create characters, goals, and obstacles.

## Playwriting Vocabulary List

**CHARACTER:** who the actor pretends to be. (Characters want things. They have goals and objectives.)

**DIALOGUE:** a conversation between two or more characters.

**CONFLICT:** obstacles that get in the way of a character achieving what he or she wants. What the characters struggle against.

**SCENE:** a single situation or unit of dialogue in a play.

**STAGE DIRECTIONS:** messages from the playwright to the actors, technicians, and others in the theater telling them what to do and how to do it.

**SETTING:** time and place of a scene.

**BIOGRAPHY:** a character's life story that a playwright creates.

**MONOLOGUE:** a long speech one character gives on stage.

**DRAMATIC ACTION:** an explanation of what the characters are trying to do.

**BEAT:** a smaller section of a scene, divided where a shift in emotion or topic occurs.

**PLOT:** the structure of a play, including exposition, rising action, climax, falling action, and denouement.

**EXPOSITION:** the beginning part of a plot that provides important background information.

**RISING ACTION:** the middle part of a plot, consisting of complications and discoveries that create conflict.

**CLIMAX:** the turning point in a plot.

**FALLING ACTION:** the series of events following the climax of a plot.

**DENOUEMENT:** the final resolution of the conflict in a plot.

# Rewriting

Rewriting is one of the most difficult and essential parts of playwriting. It is so hard for a writer to revise, regardless of age or experience. However, once a student experiences the benefits of an interactive revision process, they understand that revision is about possibilities, not mistakes.

For many younger students, the act of rewriting is a new experience. The idea of the first draft as exactly that—a “draft” to cover with lines, arrows, cross-outs, and new ideas—can be liberating. But in asking the young writer to rewrite, you will often have to help him/her understand that scenes will be strengthened by multiple visits and extra work.

This section includes suggestions for approaching revision in the classroom. The typical problems of student playwrights are identified. Exercises designed to let the student work out the “problems” themselves through further brainstorming are included.

## General Checklist for Successful Rewriting

- Have I written all the scenes the audience needs to see and hear? Do I need any scenes before or after to develop character and conflict?
- Is the play focused on the main character and conflict? How can I focus it?
- Are conflict and character developed through the dialogue?
- Have I expressed as much as possible through the dialogue, avoiding narration?
- Have I provided settings? Do the settings contribute to the action?
- Is my work divided into scenes where appropriate?
- Does the audience get to know the characters well enough to care about them?
- Are my characters different from each other? Do they speak in characteristic ways? (Speech patterns, style, attitudes, tone, etc.)
- Are there any characters I should eliminate because they aren't really necessary?
- Are my characters well developed? Do I know them as well as I should? Have I revealed as much as I need to about them? How can I develop them further? Scenes? Monologues?
- Do I know what my characters want? Will the audience know? Are their goals clear?
- Have I thrown interesting and challenging obstacles into my characters' paths? Are they struggling? Do people become obstacles for each other?
- Is the central conflict or struggle of my play an interesting one?
- Do the characters change? How can I put the characters through a believable change?
- Have I avoided resolving the conflict too soon?
- Is the audience always curious to know what happens next?
- What does happen next? Could I write that scene, too?

## Common Problems in Student Plays Dialogue

### *Problems:*

1. **Narration**—Often the student playwright will make use of a narrator that speaks to the audience as characters do. This should be avoided. The story is best told through the revelation of information by dialogue and action: what the characters say and do. Show, don't tell.
2. **Too little/Too much information**—The whole story is not shared with the audience or there are details not important to the story presented (this can be hard to judge).
3. **Recycled lines**—dialogue consists of recycled lines from movies, etc.
4. **Too little dialogue**—Try having students create a scene with no action; where we must learn about a character only through what he or the other characters say.

### *Questions for the Playwright to ask:*

- How might the characters' true feelings be communicated to the audience through dialogue?
- What dialogue could be cut without damaging the story?
- What narrative clues have been left out?
- What is your favorite piece of dialogue? Why?
- Can you think of a way to say this that is truer to the character?
- How does each character feel about the other characters?
- Do we know this by something he or she says?
- Can you imagine something he or she might say or do, feeling the way she or he does?

*Exercises for sharpening dialogue skills:*

### **“The Other End”**

Ask the students if they have ever heard someone talking on the telephone and tried to imagine what the other half of the conversation was like? Have them observe a phone conversation taking place and then try writing down both sides of the conversation—the side they over-hear and the side they imagine.

### **“TV Writer”**

Have the students turn on a television program, especially one unfamiliar to them, and watch for 5–10 minutes with the sound muted. While they are watching, they should write down what they *think* the characters are saying to each other. Encourage them to practice first without writing. While they are making up the dialogue, questions they should think about are:

- Who are these people?
- What do they want from each other (if anything)?
- What are their relationships to one another?
- Do they have a conflict?
- What interesting things will happen to them?
- How will it all end?

## Common Problems in Student Plays Characters

### *Problems:*

1. **Characters are not unique**—They do not have an individual way of speaking. This is one of the most common problems for new playwrights—every character sounds the same, uses the same slang, dialect, etc..., normally the characters' voices are identical to the playwright's manner of speaking.
2. **Believability**—The characters do or say unbelievable things, behaving contrary to their nature without causation. (i.e. A grumpy man suddenly buying presents for the neighborhood children is unbelievable; when he has been visited by three ghosts, shown the error of his ways, and then buys the presents, the activity becomes believable.)
3. **Too many characters**—There are characters present who are unnecessary to the story being told. A surplus of characters can confuse or muddle the story and burden the playwright as well.
4. **Characters not fully developed**—Characters are incomplete or not “whole,” which prevents people from connecting with them and caring what happens to them.

### *Questions for the Playwright to ask:*

- Who is this character?
- What else might this character do?
- What might this character say?
- Why does the character do/say what he does?
- Does your character have a secret?
- What kind of mood is he in now?
- Are all of these characters necessary?
- Where is the focus of the scene?
- How does the character's background affect what he says?
- What is his relation to the other characters?
- Do you care about this character? Why?
- Who is the story about?

## Common Problems in Student Plays

### Conflicts

#### *Problems:*

1. **No Conflict**—There are no obstacles to characters' wants. The obstacles she or he is presented with are easily overcome. The problems are minor and the resulting conflict lacks consequence.
2. **Conflict resolved too quickly**—The change the characters present is not believable because it occurs too soon or too easily. The conflict does not sufficiently challenge the characters.
3. **Unfocused conflict**—It is unclear what the conflict is about and/or why the characters are involved in it. Perhaps there are too many characters or not enough dialogue.
4. **Conflict does not progress**—The central conflict or dramatic action does not effect change in the scene. Change happens *independent* of the main conflict of the play.

#### *Questions for the Playwright to ask:*

- Does the character have to sacrifice anything to achieve his or her goal? How big a sacrifice?
- Can you clarify the goal of each character and the obstacles to achieving his or her goals?
- How did the character change and what initiated the change?
- What needs to happen between these two characters to make their change believable?
- Who is this play about?
- What does this character want?
- What is stopping this character from getting what he or she wants? (Insisting on one-sentence answers assists in focusing.)
- What is the conflict in this scene?
- Why is there a conflict?

*Exercises for sharpening conflict skills:*

**“Problem-solving”**

Use the blackboard or a tape recorder to record ideas to develop into a play. Prepare questions that will provoke discussion and complicate the scenario. Creating “out loud” is often more involving for the imagination. (NOTE: Questions can make each scenario come alive. “And then what happened?” is the most-asked question in any story!) Some ideas:

- **Darnell**, who is ten years old, is constantly being harassed by **Reed**, an eleven-year-old bully. **Reed** has even been extorting money from **Darnell**. What can **Darnell** do to stop **Reed** from harassing him?
- **Elizabeth’s** parents are going away for a three-day weekend. Although **Elizabeth** has a license, her parents do not want her to drive while they are away. What does **Elizabeth** do when her boyfriend comes over and wants to go out with her?
- **Ellis** is the fourth-grade clown. He will do anything for a laugh. Some of his classmates love him for it, others hate him for it. Underneath, **Ellis** is very lonely and has no real friends. One day, a new boy, **James**, comes to town. Immediately, no one (including **Ellis**) likes him. One day **Ellis** and **James** meet by chance in the park. No one else is around. What happens?
- **Eddie**, an eighth-grader in middle school, is suddenly stricken with love for **Sonya**, a ninth-grader in high school who hardly notices him at all. **Eddie** desperately wants to go out with **Sonya**, but is nervous and afraid that he will be rejected. What does he do? Who, if anyone, does he elicit help from?
- **Bob** and **Barbara** who are good friends, go out shopping for a birthday present for another friend; but they both want to buy the same gift. What happens?
- **Jill** and **Joe**, who are friends, are both suspended from school for the same reason. What happens when they go home and tell their respective parents? Do they both tell the same story?
- **Tammy** likes **Tom**, a boy in her class. She wants to ask him to have dinner at her house, but she is afraid he will say “no”. What happens?
- **Steve** wants **Susan** to go to a rock concert with him, but **Susan’s** father doesn’t think she should go. Why? What happens?
- **Lee** builds a rocket in the family garage. What happens when it is stolen? Who stole it?
- **Chris** finds a magic lantern and is granted three wishes. What happens when the first wish brings misfortune?

## Common Problems in Student Plays Plots/Scenes

### *Problems:*

1. **More scenes needed**—More scenes are needed to understand how the conflict/plot developed to this point, what happens in the scene, or what happens next.
2. **Unnecessary information**—Information provided in the scene does not help us learn about the characters in a meaningful way. Excessive details muddle the story and detract from the plot line.
3. **Settings change too fast**—There are too many mini-scenes which might be more effective if combined into a few larger scenes in one or two locations.
4. **Setting is not specific enough**—More details are needed to let the audience know the location—character reference, set dressing, etc.
5. **Special effects**—The scenes are more feasible for film or television (i.e. they contain car chases, jumping from one elaborate location to another, large explosions).

### *Questions for the Playwright to ask:*

- What happened before this?
- What happens next?
- When does the scene take place?
- What can be done in this scene to further the story/plot?
- Why does this action have to happen here?
- What story does the scene tell?
- What information do we get from this scene?
- How do the characters feel in this scene? How might they show it through their actions?
- What is this character doing when...?
- What else could this character have been doing?
- What other things could happen in this scene?

*Exercises for sharpening plots/scenes skills:*

### **“Creating Characters from Photographs”**

Break the class into groups and have them appoint a secretary in each group to record the information generated. Pass out one photograph or magazine picture, containing two to four people in it, to each group. Instruct the students to examine the photographs, looking for “clues” as to what type of characters these people are and what type of situation they are in.

1. Give each character a:
  - a. Name
  - b. Age
  - c. Occupation
  - d. Short family biography
  - e. Distinguishing characteristics (physical or personality)
2. Briefly describe the relationship between the characters.
3. In one or two sentences describe what is happening in the photo/picture.
4. Note how each character perceives the situation and what they want out of it—at least one paragraph for each character. (Remind the students that each character will have his or her or her own point of view about what is happening and will think that she or he knows best. Make each conflict specific to the character.)

Break the groups up, making sure each member has a copy of the character information.

1. The students should write a story in narrative form, three paragraphs in length and including all the characters in some way.
2. Transform the story into three scenes with dialogue.

It is important for the students to stick to the three paragraphs and three-scene format. It encourages them to have a definite beginning, middle, and end.

#### Variations

- In the first scene have the characters reveal what they are thinking, but have one of them lie. Not only must the conflict be solved, but also the lie must be revealed in three scenes.
- In the first scene all the characters are present simultaneously, and we learn the problem. The second scene has one of the characters delivering a monologue in which she or he relays to the audience a plan to address the problem. The last scene will be the implementation of that plan, and its success or failure.

# *Additional Exercises & Worksheets*

## **Exercises for Developing Observation Skills**

Observation is a skill that all writers must cultivate to see and hear important details of people, places, and events. Ask the students:

- Do you notice how people speak?
- What is it about the way they speak or act that tells you when their mood changes?
- Do you know people who say the same things in different ways?

People can want the same thing, but they will go about attaining their goals in different ways. For example, two men both want to make a great deal of money. One achieves his goal by becoming the president of a bank. The other makes his money by robbing the bank.

### *Exercise One:*

Ask the students to write an observation of someone from their daily lives, someone who is not related to them and whom they do not know well—perhaps a neighbor or someone who comes into their home on business.

1. Describe this person physically (to the greatest detail possible).
2. Tell us what you know about him or her from your observation.
3. What would a scene involving this person be like?

### *Exercise Two:*

Overnight, assign the students to go into their bedrooms and sit anywhere with a paper and pencil. Tell them to look about the room very slowly, from one end to the other, floor to ceiling, and then pick one object and describe it in detail.

Example: a photo

Is the photograph on a table? Describe the table and the frame. Is the photo in color? Who is in the photo? What do they look like? What are they wearing? When was the photograph taken? Why do you have this person's picture? How do you feel about this person? When was the photo given to you? Can you think of a conversation with this person? If so, write it. Can you describe or write a scene when you received it or when it became valuable to you? Write a scene about how you might feel if it were somehow lost or taken from you.

The following day, share the observations. After a student reads an observation aloud, the class might want to make suggestions about where they see a possible story developing; or, if a story has already begun to evolve, where it might lead. The student might be encouraged to expand on this story, which will reinforce the realization that most writers find stories in what is happening around them—in what they see and hear.

## Action vs. Activity

To begin this exercise, ask the class the difference between ACTION and ACTIVITY, two playwriting terms that are often confused because they sound the same. ACTION refers to what a character wants and what is done to pursue this goal (i.e. character wants to go to a dance, but she doesn't know how to dance. ACTION: she asks her sister to teach her how to dance.) ACTIVITY is physical stage business (i.e. flying a kite, ironing a shirt, etc.). ACTION is inner motivation and objective of a character.

Divide the class in half. Ask each of half the kids to jot down an ACTIVITY. Ask each of the other half to create ACTIONS by deciding who the characters are and what each wants.

Toss the ACTIVITY suggestions into one hat and the ACTION suggestions into another. Pick one from each and have two students improvise a situation, an example of which might be:

*A younger sister wants her older sister to **“teach her how to dance.”** This improv begins while the sisters are involved in **the activity of “Climbing Mt. Everest.”***

After the improv, discuss how and why the ACTIVITY enhances the ACTION, the characters, the conflict, etc. Do a few more improvs and continue the discussion.

**ACTIVITY REVEALS ACTION: OUTER SIGN OF INNER REALITY.**

## Round Robin

Begin to tell a story and continue around the room with each person adding to the plot, characters, etc. Use every idea, go forward and build on what's been said. Write on the board the key points—environment, names, etc. Once everyone has been given a chance to contribute, have everyone get out a piece of paper. They should each continue the story, build to a climax, and resolve the conflict. Allow only 10-15 minutes for this writing exercise. Have everyone share his or her ideas.

This exercise helps students to think in terms of creating a **beginning, middle, and end** as well as developing skills for listening and building upon previous events. Individual imaginations will create surprising results from the initial shared data.

## Secrets

A good start for this exercise is to take the students through a brief relaxation exercise. When they are quiet and focused, ask them to close their eyes and think about something about themselves that no one knows and that they wouldn't want anyone else to know. (Make it clear at the beginning that this is for them. They will not be asked to reveal this secret to anyone.) Have them write down their secret. Then ask them to imagine if someone found out this secret. What would the scene look like? What would happen? How would you feel? Walk around with a trashcan and give them the chance to save or destroy their slips of paper.

At least one student will ask what this exercise means. Explain that many plays have characters with secrets, and that some of the greatest plays are centered on a character with a secret.

To illustrate the dramatic impact, try one or more of the following suggested improvisations: **a.)** Character X has a secret that affects Character Y, but doesn't tell Y this; **b.)** Character X discovers a secret that Character Y has been keeping, but doesn't confront Y; **c.)** Character X confronts Character Y about the secret in either a or b.

These exercises encourage students to create characters whose secrets make them complex and multi-dimensional. Part of the enjoyment of watching plays is discovering the particular truth explored in the world of each play.

## Story of a Journey

This is an exercise that combines improvisations with linear dramatic structure. Divide the class into five groups. Each of these groups will now work to create its own part of the story.

**Group 1** will come up with 4-5 characters. They have to be related to each other in some manner (family members, co-workers, friends, etc.), but they can be any age, size, shape, ethnicity, etc. Encourage Group 1 to be as clear and detailed about their characters in any setting they choose.

**Groups 2, 3, and 4**, in the meantime, create **other** settings. All groups need to work independently, so no one knows (except Group 1) who the characters are or where the other groups are going to place them. There can be additional characters in each group's setting (hunters in a jungle, server in a diner, etc.).

Finally, **Group 5** must develop a reason why any group of characters might want to arrive at a destination of their choosing. If their setting is Grandma's house, the reason for going there is to celebrate her birthday at a surprise party.

You now have the foundation of the story of a journey that can be scripted into play form. The characters created by Group 1 have a destination and a reason for getting there, created by Group 5. In order to accomplish the goal of arriving there, they must travel through the settings created by Groups 2, 3, and 4—settings that may well have other characters with whom they must interact. The entire class can then outline the play and begin to plan the dialogue. Then, each scene will be improvised with the students playing the various parts.

The play that results can be very strange and wildly funny. The students will also gain a better understanding of character development, story progress, and the relationship between characters' objectives, obstacles, and conflicts.

## The Neutral Play

Write on the board four lines of dialogue that could be open to a variety of interpretations. For example:

**A**

Did you bring it?

**B**

Why?

**A**

Don't you ever listen to me?

**B**

Of course I do.

Tell your students to continue writing the dialogue between these two characters after each privately decides who the characters are, what "it" is, and where they are talking.

## Building a Character

1. Give your character a name, age, and physical description.
2. Where does your character live?
3. What does your character like to do?
4. Name one thing that would make your character angry.
5. Describe a typical day for your character.
6. Describe a dream your character has had.
7. Pretend your character has a secret. Why is it a secret?
8. What is your character's goal?

## Conflict Scheme

List the characters' names, their goals, and the obstacles in their way. Be specific and concise.

CHARACTER

GOAL

OBSTACLES

1.

2.

3.

4.

## Playwriting Questionnaire

Once the students have decided on ideas for their plays, use this questionnaire to help them develop the **story**, **plot**, and **conflict**.

1. Why is this day different from all the others?
2. What is the event that will bring your characters together? Write biographies for each of your characters that include what they want.
3. How will they change during the play? (Crucial Note: Plays are about how a course of events changes the characters involved. Characters grow and change thoughts, attitudes, relationships, and perceptions through what they experience in the play.)
4. What will the major conflict be and how will it lead to the **climax** when the problem is resolved? (Crucial Note: “Resolved” does not mean happily ever after. A **resolution** means something has changed, and the play will end with that change—for better or worse, the problem of the play has reached a **conclusion**.)
5. Jot down the basic plot and sum up the plot briefly. Think about how the problem might be solved (again, the resolution may change as you write the play.)
6. Answer the five “W”s: **WHO’S** in my play? **WHY** are they doing what they’re doing? **WHAT’S** happening in the play? **WHERE** and **WHEN** is it taking place?
7. Try outlining what happens in your scenes.
8. Start writing the scene that excited you the most, even if it is not the official first scene from your outline. Whatever great ideas come to as you write this or any other scene, be sure to **WRITE THEM DOWN!**
9. If you get stuck, keep asking **WHY**. (Why does she go wherever? Why does he stay with so and so? Etc.)

## Opening Lines

They're at it again. Listen to them.

My ride was late. I was minding my own business.

Yeah, the storm really hit us by surprise this time.

Come here a minute. I want to show you something.

You shouldn't have done that.

He's from out of town, passing through.

Crumbling before my very eyes.

Get a grip. It's not the end of the world.

He didn't mean it.

When will I see you again?

It's not fair.

Did you hear that?

I don't understand what you mean.

Are you dense? It's now or never.

Won't you say anything at all?

I hate this.

Go ahead. Be like that.

Did you bring it?

I'll leave the room. You do what you want.

Can we talk about this?

I don't believe it.

Mind your own damn business.

I hate that dog.

They don't really give you a chance.

Third night in a row.

Are you ever going to change?

Red ones, blue ones, and shiny green ones.

I found these in your pocket.

Stop bothering me.

Do you mind if I join you?

**First lines from plays already written:**

Yes, I have tricks in my pocket. (*Glass Menagerie*, Williams)

Troy, you ought to stop that lying. (*Fences*, Wilson)

What do you want? (*Ghosts*, Ibsen)

Dark phases of womanhood of never havin been a girl. (*For Colored Girls*, Shange)

Elli, Elli, dear do come out. It's so lovely. (*Private Lives*, Coward)

**First lines from novels:**

It was the best of times; it was the worst of times. (*A Tale of Two Cities*, Dickens)

Call me, Ishmael. (*Moby Dick*, Melville)

Mother died today. Or maybe yesterday, I don't know. (*The Stranger*, Camus)

## Questions for the Playwright (Rewriting)

1. What did you like about your piece?
2. What's the major conflict? How strong is it?
3. What's the dramatic action of the play?
4. Did anything confuse you about your play?
5. What's the most important image or moment to you in the piece?
6. Did your characters all sound the same or like different people with distinct voices?
7. What did each character want?
8. Are they going after something that is critically important to them?



## Other Festivals and Awards

### ***Young Playwrights Festival at CENTERSTAGE***

(Open to Maryland students in Elementary, Middle, or High School)

700 North Calvert Street

Baltimore, MD 21202

[www.centerstage.org](http://www.centerstage.org)

Contact: Sarah Curnoles, [scurnoles@centerstage.org](mailto:scurnoles@centerstage.org)

### **Young Playwrights Festival National Playwriting Competition**

(Open to any playwright 18 years old or younger)

Young Playwrights, Inc. Dept. WEB

306 West 38<sup>th</sup> Street #300

New York, NY 10018

[Writeaplay@aol.com](mailto:Writeaplay@aol.com)

[www.youngplaywrights.org](http://www.youngplaywrights.org)

### **Annual Blank Theatre Company Young Playwrights Festival**

(Open to U.S. playwrights 19 years of age or younger)

The Blank Theatre Company

Young Playwrights Festival

1301 Lucile Avenue

Los Angeles, CA 90026

[info@theblank.com](mailto:info@theblank.com)

[www.youngplaywrights.com](http://www.youngplaywrights.com)

### **Scholastic Writing Award**

(Open to US students in grades seven through twelve)

(212) 343-6892

[a&wgeneralinfo@scholastic.com](mailto:a&wgeneralinfo@scholastic.com)

[www.scholastic.com/artandwriting](http://www.scholastic.com/artandwriting)