

# The Thirteenth Annual Playwrights' Festival SUBMISSION PACKET

Coordinated by Emma Davis and Lonnie Miller

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**Submission Applications Due: Nov.  
11th at Midnight**

*Questions?* Contact the Coordinators ([playwrights20@gmail.com](mailto:playwrights20@gmail.com)) or the Faculty Advisor ([jamie\\_bal@newton.k12.ma.us](mailto:jamie_bal@newton.k12.ma.us)).

# AN OVERVIEW OF THE PROCESS

The Playwrights' Festival is a collection of ten-minute plays. The plays are written, directed, designed, and performed by students. Playwrights, working alone or in pairs, attend a writing workshop, write a ten-minute play, and submit it in November. The plays are then anonymously reviewed by a panel made up of the Festival Coordinators, select teachers, Theatre Ink adults, and Festival alumni. After the plays are selected, playwrights meet once a week to collectively peer edit the plays. Once editing is completed, the plays are published in an anthology to be put in the school library and sold to the general public. In a separate process, student directors, after attending several workshops, will apply and be assigned to each completed play. Playwrights who are not directing will be invited to attend auditions in April, but they will not be allowed to attend callbacks. The rehearsal process will last one month, ending with three performances on **June 4th, 5th, and 6th**. At the end of each performance, playwrights and other members of the crew will participate in talkbacks with the audience.

## The Writing Process

Your job as a writer in this Festival is to write a roughly ten-minute play. (Ten-minute plays are usually ten pages long). If you have never written a play that was in the Festival, you will be **required** to attend one of two writing workshops on **Saturday, October 5th (10AM-1PM)** and **Monday, October 21st (6-9PM)** in order to submit a play. If you have written a play that was in a previous Festival, attending a workshop is *highly* recommended but not mandatory. If you cannot attend these for any reason, email Emma and Lonnie or Ms. Bal.

## The Editing Process

All selected playwrights will meet on Saturday, December 15th from 10 AM to 1 PM for some initial feedback, as well as some playwright bonding! Once you receive feedback on your play, you will be expected to complete your first round of edits before the next meeting on January 4th. Starting that day, the playwrights will meet at North every Saturday from 10 AM to 1 PM for approximately 10 weeks. Each week, half of the playwrights present new drafts of their plays. This means that each play is read every other week. At each feedback meeting, playwrights “cast” different members of the playwriting team to read for the characters in their show. The plays are read aloud and the playwright or team then receives feedback from the entire group. Throughout the 10 weeks of editing, the focus of feedback will narrow from overall mechanics to character and plot structures to final details. In addition to receiving feedback for their play, playwrights will be asked to provide feedback on each play being read. The feedback process will be outlined in more detail at the beginning of the editing process. Throughout the weeks of editing, each playwright or team will meet a few times with the Coordinators for more individualized feedback. Final drafts of the plays will be due by March 27th at midnight.

## The Directing Process

Anyone interested in directing a play in the Festival (including the playwrights, if they so choose) will attend five **mandatory** directing workshops. Directors will then work with faculty advisors to develop a vision for the play(s) they would like to direct. Directing in the Playwrights’ Festival is a large time commitment, and conflicts with the Shakespeare show and Cabaret Troupe. A general interest meeting will be held in January. A Director Application packet will be available around the same time. For more information, contact Emma and Lonnie or Ms. Bal.

# WRITING RESOURCES

## Submission Feedback

We encourage all playwrights to seek feedback from friends, family, and teachers *before* they submit their play. If you would like feedback from someone more experienced with the Festival, feel free to reach out to Mr. Brown or Ms. Bal for feedback before you submit. In order to receive feedback, you must email Mr. Brown or Ms. Bal by November 3rd, or they will not have time. After the plays are chosen, we hope that you still choose to seek feedback for your play. For that, you can reach out to Mr. Brown, Ms. Bal, or Emma and Lonnie.

## Some things we're looking for:

**Potential:** We're looking for plays with a strong foundation, but more importantly, plenty of room to improve and grow throughout the Playwrights' process. If you present us with a story that makes sense, and that we think can evolve throughout the process, then you are doing something right. Clean formatting, and consistent and appropriate spelling (and grammar) will also help to make a good impression.

**Creativity:** The Playwrights' Festival is an evening of *original* plays. Show us something new, something unpredictable, something weird! That being said, you do not have to set your play on Mars to make it creative and original. Originality can be found even in everyday life.

**Characters:** In the Playwrights' Festival, your play has limited time on stage (10 minutes). You do not want to waste your stage time introducing unnecessary characters. If a character is only onstage for a minute, or does not help move the story forward, then cut them out. A safe number of characters for a ten-minute play is 2-4, especially if this is your first time writing a play.

**Plot:** Ten minute plays give you very little time to set up a plot. Put creativity over complexity. If you are having trouble fitting your play into ten pages, simplify the story and cut down your exposition. That being said, we still want to see an interesting plot with a beginning, middle, and end. Make sure that your plot has an arc, with the action building to the height of the conflict, and then some sort of resolution. Try to avoid deus ex machina (an easy ending) in your resolution; not everything can be tied up with a neat little bow in real life!

### **...and some we're not:**

**Backstory:** An audience is there to watch a story unfold, to watch action, conflict, adventure. Instead of taking time out of your story to explain what happened in the past, hint at it. Let it come out in the story. Instead of having a character sitting on a couch telling us about their childhood, have them drop a few hints as the action unfolds.

**Character Exposition:** Almost everyone has heard the phrase “show, don’t tell.” If a character is upset about something, you do not need to explicitly tell us why. Let your audience infer. Here is one video that makes what you are avoiding clear:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CUvFeyGxaaU> (“Key & Peele - School Bully” - YouTube). PLEASE DO NOT DO THIS. THANK YOU.

**Perfection:** Your submission is not a final draft! We will not be grading you on your mastery of the English language, or the amount of experience you have. The Playwrights’ Festival is a learning experience! We do not expect you to submit the next great American play. Writing a play is a daunting task, and to write a producible play is a huge accomplishment. But that is not what we want of you now. Right now, all we want to see from you is you and your play’s creativity and *potential*.

# Formatting

There is a general format that we would like play submissions to follow. This format consists of a title, brief character descriptions, an initial setting of the scene, and a traditional dialogue format (obviously, writing style and literary choices may affect a writer's ability to follow a traditional format). Below is an example of a format that you should stick to (if possible):

## **Title (centered)**

### Cast of Characters:

**Character A:** A Young woman, about 25 years old

**Character B:** Neighbor of CHARACTER A, about 40 years old

### SETTING:

*The hallway of an apartment building.*

### AT RISE:

*CHARACTER A and CHARACTER B are standing across from each other in the hallway . They are engaging in slightly awkward conversation. (This is indented 3.5" to the right or 5 tabs, as are all character names).*

CHARACTER A

I been cheated by you since you know when.

CHARACTER B

So I made up my mind, it must come to an end.

CHARACTER A

*(In shock. This is indented 2" or 2 tabs to the right, and 2.5" to the left.)*

Look at me now, how will I ever learn?

*(CHARACTER B exits.)*

CHARACTER B (O.S.)

I don't know how but I suddenly lose control, there's a fire within my soul.

CHARACTER A

Just one look and I can hear a bell ring. One more look and I forget everything...

*(CHARACTER B enters with a letter)*

CHARACTER A (Cont'd)

MAMMA MIA! Here I go again.

*(Blackout)*

You can go to [http://ptfaculty.gordonstate.edu/lking/CPF\\_play\\_formatting2.pdf](http://ptfaculty.gordonstate.edu/lking/CPF_play_formatting2.pdf) for more information on formatting, but keep in mind that much of this document is meant for full-length plays, not ten-minute plays. However, much of the information will still apply to your formatting. Also, in order to keep to the "minute-per-page rule," it helps to use 12 pt. Times New Roman font with this format.

## **Instructions for Submitting Your Play**

Please fill out the following form. Please **do not submit the first 7 pages of this packet**. If you are printing this packet out at home, you only need to print pages 8-11. After you have filled it out, you will submit these pages to the folder on the callboard. Your name should **NOT** appear on any version of your play, only on the forms you submit. This is incredibly important to ensure a completely objective and anonymous review process. You **MUST** submit your play (without your name) by **MIDNIGHT on November 11th** by emailing a .DOCX file to Ms. Bal at [jamie\\_bal@newton.k12.ma.us](mailto:jamie_bal@newton.k12.ma.us).

# Thirteenth Annual Playwrights' Festival

## Play Submission Form

**Name(s) of Playwright(s):** \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**Grade(s):** \_\_\_\_\_

**Email(s):** \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**Phone Number(s):** \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**Parent/Guardian Email(s):** \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**Parent/Guardian Phone Number(s):** \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**Allergies:** \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_





**CONFLICTS! Please mark all dates that you have a known conflict, and add the times if possible. If you are unsure about the times or if there is in fact a conflict, please give as much information as you can.**

**Saturday, December 14th, 2019:** \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**Saturday, January 4th, 2020:** \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**Saturday, January 11th, 2020:** \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**Saturday, January 18th, 2020:** \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**Saturday, January 25th, 2020:** \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**Saturday, February 1st, 2020:** \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**Saturday, February 29th, 2020:** \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**Saturday, March 7th, 2020:** \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**Saturday, March 21st, 2020:** \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_