

The Eleventh Annual
Playwrights' Festival
SUBMISSION PACKET

Coordinated by Adam Chapnik



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Submission Applications Due: Nov. 13th

Questions? Contact the Coordinator

(playwrightsfestivalcoordinator@gmail.com) or the Adviser

(daniel_fabrizio@newton.k12.ma.us).

AN OVERVIEW OF THE PROCESS

The Playwrights' Festival is a collection of ten-minute plays. They are written by students, directed by students, designed by students, and acted by students. An aspiring playwright, or a team of two, attend a writing workshop, write a ten-minute play, and submit it in November. The plays are then anonymously reviewed by a panel of teachers, the Festival Coordinator, Theatre Ink adults, and Festival alumni. After the plays are selected, the Assistant Coordinator is chosen. Playwrights meet once a week to peer edit every play. Once editing is completed, the plays are published in an anthology to be put in the school library, as well as sold to the general public at intermission. During the editing, student directors will be assigned to each play in a separate process. Playwrights not directing will be invited to attend auditions in April - but not callbacks. After a month of rehearsals, tech and production weeks begin, ending with three performances June 7th, 8th, and 9th. At the end of each performance, playwrights 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, September 30th (10AM-12:30PM) and Wednesday, Oct. 11th

(6-8:30PM) in order to submit a play. If you have written a play that was in the Festival, attending a workshop is highly recommended but not mandatory. If you cannot attend these for any reason, email Adam Chapnik or Mr. Fabrizio.

The Editing Process

After the selection process ends, all playwrights will meet on Saturday, December 16th from 10 AM to 1 PM for some initial feedback, as well as some playwright bonding! They will also be provided a packet. The packet will instruct them on the basics of how to edit their plays. They will be expected to complete this packet before the next meeting on January 6th. Starting that day, the playwrights will meet at North every Saturday from 10 AM to 1 PM for 10 weeks. Every week, half of the playwrights present new drafts of their plays. This means that every play is read every other week. At each feedback meeting, playwrights cast different members of the playwriting team as the characters in their show. The plays are cold-read, and feedback is provided. As we move through the 10 weeks of editing, each feedback session will have a different focus. At first, the focus will be on large mechanics, which will close in on detail towards the last few weeks. As well as being able to accept feedback, playwrights will be expected to provide feedback within the scope of their confidence and comfort, and within the guidelines of the day. As the editing process begins, the feedback process will be outlined in more detail, as the mode of feedback will morph from week to week. Mixed in with these feedback meetings will be a couple of workshops with a professional playwright/director, as well as

meetings between the Coordinators and each playwright/team individually. Final drafts will be required by midnight of March 25th.

The Rehearsal Process

Anyone interested in directing a play in the Festival (including the playwrights, if they so choose) will attend five mandatory directing workshops where they learn about how to direct a play. After the workshops, directors will work with faculty advisors to develop a vision for the play they would like to direct. Directing in the Playwrights' Festival is a large time commitment, and conflicts with Julius Caesar and Cabaret Troupe.

A general interest meeting will be held in January. Director Applications will be available around the same time. For more information, contact Adam or Mr. Fabrizio.

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 Mr. Fabrizio for feedback before you submit. In order to receive feedback, you must email Mr. Brown or Mr. Fabrizio by November 5th, 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, Mr. Fabrizio, or Adam.

Some Things we are Looking for (and Some Things we are Not)

Do's

Potential: 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. If you present us with a story that we think can grow and 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 somewhat unpredictable, something weird even! 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: With the Playwrights' Festival, you have a limited time on stage. 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 ten-minute play.

Plot: In ten-minute plays, you have very little time to set up a complex plot. If you are having trouble fitting your story into ten-pages, simplify, and cut out as much exposition as possible. That being said, we still want to see a 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 in your resolution.

Don' ts

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 her childhood, have her drop a few hints.

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). DO NOT DO THIS.

Perfection: The Playwrights' Festival is a learning experience. We do not expect you to submit the next great American novel. 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 play submissions should 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 adhere to (if possible):

Title (centered)

Cast of Characters:

Character A: Female, about 12 years old

Character B: Single mother of CHARACTER A, about 40 years old

SETTING:

A kitchen table.

AT RISE:

CHARACTER A and CHARACTER B are sitting across from each other at the kitchen table, enjoying a hearty breakfast of oatmeal and berries. They are engaging in sleepy morning conversation. (This is indented 3.5" to the right or 5 tabs, as are all character names).

CHARACTER A

Twinkle twinkle little star.

CHARACTER B

How I wonder what you are.

CHARACTER A

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

Up above the world so high?

(CHARACTER B exits.)

CHARACTER B (O.S.)

Like a diamond in the sky!

CHARACTER A

Twinkle twinkle little star, how I wonder what you are!

*(CHARACTER B enters and clears the now empty bowls off
of the table.)*

CHARACTER A (*Cont'd*)

You can go to 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. If you received this packet from the callboard or from our General Interest Meeting, please detach the form from the packet. DO NOT SUBMIT THE FIRST 10 PAGES. If you are printing this packet out at home, YOU ONLY NEED TO PRINT PAGES 11-14.

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 process. **You MUST submit your play by MIDNIGHT on November 13th.** You will also email a **.DOCX** file of your play to Mr. Fabrizio at daniel_fabrizio@newton.k12.ma.us.

**Eleventh 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 : _____

Title of Play: _____

Number of Characters: _____

Brief Summary of Play: _____

Have you written a play that was in the Festival in past years?

Yes _____ No _____

If you answered "No" to the last question, which writing workshop did you attend? *(If you previously answered "No," attendance at one of these workshops is mandatory in order to submit a play).*

If you answered "Yes," skip this question.

Sat, September 30th _____

Wed, Oct. 11th _____

Why do you want to be part of the Eleventh Annual Playwrights' Festival? What would you bring to the process?:

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. Although all meetings are being planned to be from 10 AM to 1 PM, times may change based on availability.

Saturday, December 16th, 2017: _____

Saturday, January 6th, 2018: _____

Saturday, January 13th, 2018: _____

Saturday, January 20th, 2018: _____

Saturday, January 27th, 2018: _____

Saturday, February 3rd, 2018: _____

Saturday, February 10th, 2018: _____

Saturday, March 3rd, 2018: _____

Saturday, March 10th, 2018: _____

Saturday, March 17th, 2018: _____

Saturday, March 24th, 2018: _____
