

### **Final Scriptwriting Assignment**

You are going to be writing a script for a one-act play that will be performed in the spring one-acts. I want you to produce your best work so we are starting early to make sure you have enough time to have a good quality production. Your show should be around 20-25 minutes. This typically translates into about 20-30 pages of dialogue (to give you a rough idea). Remember who your audience is. Be prepared for young audience members to be in attendance. This means G rated (some PG will be allowed but please see me first). This does not mean it has to be a “kids” play. You are still encouraged to cover content that is meaningful to you. There is just always a tasteful way to do so.

The first step is to PLAN. Even if you do your best writing on the fly, I want you to walk through the steps so you understand what is required of you to write a good quality play.

Process:

1. Draft the script
2. Write the script
3. Re-Write the script
4. Auditions
5. Rehearsal
6. Performance

#### Part 1: Planning

Please complete the following sections and hand them in (typed). You may email me your work as well. You will need to reference the class website for handouts and tips for the various sections ([msfbuchanan.weebly.com](http://msfbuchanan.weebly.com))

1. Create a world that's true to real life or fantastical or that mixes the mundane with the magical. But whatever set of rules you create for that world, make sure you follow them.
  - Describe your world. Where is it, when is it? Consider the 5 senses in your description. (2-3 paragraphs)
  - Provide 3-5 images of what someone might see in a typical day in your world (these may be hand drawn or taken from the internet). Try to provide some variety.
2. (This step may be done after you have characters) Write a conflict that builds as the play progresses. As you structure the conflict, think in terms of your play having a beginning, a middle and an end.
  - Remember to think of your world. What might be a problem that could happen in your world? For or between your characters?

3. Write characters that want something (which puts them in conflict with other characters) and try to get what they want at every moment.
- Provide a full character description of at least two characters in your story. Include emotional and psychological traits in addition to personality and physical traits
4. Make sure that each character has something at stake, a consequence if he doesn't get what he wants.
- Write down the stakes for each character in the play (not just the ones you did profiles for)
5. Create a "ticking clock" that puts the characters under pressure to get what they want right away.
- What is the urgency? Decide why the problem needs to be solved fast (should be part of stakes)

## Part 2: Draft

Now that you have your characters and plot mapped out, it is time to write your first draft. Things to remember:

1. Start with the story
  - In a brief paragraph, write the general synopsis of your play (think about the descriptions on the back of a book)
2. Make sure there is a good reason, an "event," for your play. It's not enough for two characters to sit around and talk for a while and then leave. There needs to be some important reason why we're watching them now, at this particular moment.
3. Write dialogue that illuminates your characters and advances the plot at the same time.
  - Refer to the play format example posted on the website (the same one you used for your previous script project)
4. Make each character speak in a distinctive voice. If you have trouble with that, try imagining a specific actor you know - even if it's someone who will never play the part - in the role.
  - Do they have an accent? A particular type of language they use? How are you going to make them SOUND different than the other characters on the stage. Vocabulary is a great way to distinguish one character from another.
5. Do *not* have a character tell us something she can show us instead. For example, it's much more effective to hide under the bed than to say "I'm afraid."
6. Give each character a "moment," something that justifies the character's existence in your play and that makes him attractive for an actor to play.

Part 3: Editing

You will make an appointment to meet with me and discuss your script. We will read through it together and I will provide feedback (we can break this up into 2 meetings if required). Be prepared to make changes.

Part 4: Re-writing/Final Copy

Once you are happy with your final copy you will hand it in (keep one for yourself).

**Auditions**

We will hold auditions for the one-acts. The sooner you pick a cast the better so we can get the ball rolling on rehearsals.

**Rehearsal**

You need to be able to commit to at least 2 rehearsals a week with your cast. This can be a combination of lunch rehearsals as well as after school rehearsals. There will be a rehearsal schedule created for all directing and scriptwriting students. Be prepared to commit to this.

**Performance**

Your play will be presented in the Spring One-Act Festival along with your classmates' plays. They will be great!