

# BEGINNING THEATRE OBSERVATION & ACTIVITIES BOOK



This booklet contains many of the worksheets and assignments you will use this year during class in Theatre Arts. These small assignments will often build into parts of much larger assignments. All of these will count as part of your Participation grade. Each will be worth only 10 points and if you miss the day we do the assignment, and the assignment cannot be “made-up” individually or in a timely manner with the required partner or group, it will be counted as “excused” in the grade book with no penalty. There will be 10 assignments per quarter for a total of 100 points. This booklet includes reasons and the importance of observation for actors, several worksheets and also directions for some of the other observation-based assignments required in a successful theatre program.

## REAGAN HIGH SCHOOL 2014-2015

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## FIRST QUARTER OBSERVATIONS & ACTIVITIES



The activities this quarter are based on getting to know each other, yourself and the development of your observation skills. Each assignment allows for you to observe someone or something in your environment and sometimes to apply that observation to theatre in some way. There are short articles included in the workbook that will introduce you to various aspects of using your observation skills to various aspects of theatre. Take your time with these and apply each as described.



# Everything I Needed to Know About Teamwork, I Learned in High School Theatre

Submitted by dougk on Tue, 08/28/2012 - 13:40  
<http://www.dougsguides.com/theatre>

I was recently thinking about how people learn the fundamentals of teamwork, and how to deal with the challenges of working on a team. Most college courses won't expose you to working on a team - with the exception of maybe small teams in science lab courses or in programming classes. When you get to your first job, it's likely that you'll be working on larger teams and you'll have to develop team-working skills real fast. A young friend of mine told me about his first-day experience as a software engineer in a meeting: "People just looked around the room and had no idea of how to interact with each other."

I thought about what opportunities helped me to figure out the good and bad parts of teams, and I realized that high school theatre productions taught me all the elements of good teamwork:

- **People have different skills; recognize them and use them appropriately** - People are different and have different talents. Tryouts and auditions are a way to figure out how to match the talents of the actors to the 'job requirements' (ie, the role in the play). I was good in comedy roles (like The Man Who Came to Dinner), but you wouldn't want to cast me as a romantic lead. And of course, it's not just the actors who have individual talents. The production needs costumers, set designers and builders, techs to run the lighting board, publicity people, ticket sellers, and so on. Recognizing and matching skills to the jobs available is what makes good directors and producers - or project managers.
- **You may have skills you didn't think you had** - Many times plays (or projects) can't fill a role with someone who has experience with the part. Or two guys try out for the single role of the sidekick and one gets cast as the heavy instead. In a play, you may have to develop skills that you didn't think you had for the benefit of the production. I was asked to play the male dance lead in Brigadoon at summer camp - despite having no formal dance training at all - probably because of my high tolerance for humiliation. It was both terrifying and fun. Likewise, on a project you might be asked to accept some responsibility or perform a task which is outside of your expertise. Embrace opportunities to develop new skills.
- **The people off stage are as important as the people on stage** - It takes a big ego and a lot of self-confidence to get up on stage. Sometimes (if not frequently) those personality traits turn into narcissism and an exaggerated sense of self-importance. But some actors (George Clooney comes to mind) make an effort to acknowledge that the show won't go on without everyone's help. Whether you are working the lights, taking tickets, or painting the set, your success is important to the success of the show (or project). My actor friend Olivia put it this way "Without the crew, we'll be on stage naked and in the dark". It's the same with projects: the people in the limelight need to recognize the contributions of all the team members.
- **Deadlines matter** - If you've been on a software project that missed a deadline, raise your hand. Hmm, looks like everyone. There is nothing like a deadline in the theatre. You've got maybe hundreds of people who paid money sitting out front waiting for the curtain to go up. There aren't many good excuses for not meeting that deadline. It's the same with projects: identify the problems early, solve them, overcome obstacles and deliver what you promised on time.
- **Emotions are a part of life; deal with them** - Yes, actors and others in theatre have a reputation for being emotional. I was a science geek and usually found those emotions to be frightening and irrational. But you know what? When you are on a team you are working with people, and people have emotions. The sooner you learn to accept and channel emotional energy - not ignore it - the sooner you'll become a more successful team member.
- **Someone has to be in charge** - Can you imagine a play run as a democracy? "OK, let's vote. How many think it should be 'To BE or not to be' and how many like 'To be or NOT to be'? The director has the ultimate responsibility for the show's vision and execution. Sure, she may solicit other's opinions and will work closely with the set, lighting and costume designers and the actors to make the show work, but the director makes the ultimate decision. I have rarely seen a project succeed without a strong and accountable manager who is totally invested in the success of the project.

I realize now that what I thought was a lot of fun and a distraction from the challenges of my other high school courses was actually preparing me to work together with people of different talents toward a common goal with a strong leader. For me it was theatre, but it could be dance, music, sports, clubs - anything where you are working with a team. If you're in school now, make time to develop your team-working talents.

# # 1

## New Friend Scavenger Hunt

For each of the categories below, find a person in the group who fits the description. Make sure to introduce yourself before asking the question to a person you do not know. Write the person's name down next to the item that fits them. You can only use each person twice. The individual who gets the most matches wins!

1. Was born in February \_\_\_\_\_
2. Is an only child \_\_\_\_\_
3. Loves country music \_\_\_\_\_
4. Has been to Europe \_\_\_\_\_
5. Speaks another language \_\_\_\_\_
6. Likes to go camping \_\_\_\_\_
7. Likes to paint \_\_\_\_\_
8. Is from a different ethnic group than you \_\_\_\_\_
9. Has 6 or more brothers and sisters \_\_\_\_\_
10. Owns a car \_\_\_\_\_
11. Likes to sing \_\_\_\_\_
12. Has been to the Smithsonian Institute in Washington, D.C. \_\_\_\_\_
13. Has been on a cruise ship \_\_\_\_\_
14. Loves purple \_\_\_\_\_
15. Has been to more than 2 continents \_\_\_\_\_
16. Has gone white water rafting \_\_\_\_\_
17. Plays sports \_\_\_\_\_
18. Likes mexican food \_\_\_\_\_
19. Dislikes hamburgers \_\_\_\_\_
20. Has been to an art museum \_\_\_\_\_
21. Has had braces \_\_\_\_\_
22. Has met a movie star \_\_\_\_\_
23. Was born in the state where you are located \_\_\_\_\_
24. Was born outside the state where you are located \_\_\_\_\_
25. Has a twin \_\_\_\_\_
26. Has sleep problems \_\_\_\_\_
27. Flosses their teeth daily \_\_\_\_\_
28. Recycles \_\_\_\_\_
29. Is wearing the same (only one needed) color that you have on \_\_\_\_\_
30. Has eaten a whole pizza by themselves \_\_\_\_\_

# #2

## Classmate Interview

When you sat down, you found a puzzle piece cut out of construction paper on your desk. To find the person assigned to be your interview partner match your puzzle piece and color to another student in the classroom. Ask at least ten of the following questions and record your partner's answers on this sheet. Try to discover something unique and special about your partner. You can make up a few of your own questions as well.

Your Name \_\_\_\_\_ Partner's Name \_\_\_\_\_

- What are your "vital statistics:" name, height, age
- What sports do you like? Or hobbies? What do you do in your free time?
- What is the weirdest thing you've ever done? Why did you do it?
- How long have you lived here? Where else have you lived?
- What person do you most admire and why?
- What is your best school subject?
- What is more important, love or money? Why do you think so?
- What do you think you'll be doing when you're twenty years old?
- What is something you hope will happen to you?
- What is your favorite color?
- If you were an animal, which would you be, and why?
- What is your favorite team? Why are they your favorite?
- What is your favorite college? Do you want to go there after high school? Why?
- What is your favorite food? Favorite restaurant?

Look over all your notes and prepare to introduce your partner to the class. Be sure that you include the person's name. You'll have to select the things you feel are most important or that show your partner's uniqueness. You won't use every detail. Each partnership will come to the front of the class and introduce each other to the class. You should speak loudly and clearly so that all can hear and understand you. You should write down something interesting about each member of the class on the sheet you will be given with everyone's name on it.

# #3

## Find Someone Like You

First, answer each question below about yourself. Then travel around the room asking different students (at least 4) the following questions.

1. Where were you born?

Answer:

Names:

2. If you someone wanted to give you an unusual pet and promised to provide for its upkeep, what kind would you select?

Answer:

Names:

3. If your house was on fire and you had time to recover only one inanimate object, what would you save?

Answer:

Names:

4. What two qualities do you consider essential in a friend?

Answer:

Names:

5. If you could change one rule that you must follow at home, what would it be?

Answer:

Names:

6. What is the most difficult aspect about being a teenager?

Answer:

Names:

7. What are the two most important qualities you would want in a boyfriend or a girlfriend?

Answer:

Names:

8. Where do you think is the best place to go on a first date?

Answer:

Names:



# Self Observation

Last week I had a cold. During the illness I was paying attention to my body and all that it was going through and I was reminded just how important self-observation is for the actor.

As an actor the greatest sources of information and inspiration are your life, your body, and your emotional states. You are experiencing things all the time and you must pay attention to them so you can sense how they feel and manifest themselves. This is a challenging task because we tend not to notice what is going on inside of ourselves unless things become extreme or chronic.

So I want to encourage you to start paying attention to what is going on with you. And I want you to write it down because paying attention isn't enough. Writing concretizes information, making it more real and useful than just looking at something and hoping that you'll remember it.

These self-observations of your experiences and emotions, physical sensations and musings, should be included in your actor's journal where you write about all of the people and things you see that could become part of a characterization.

So pay attention. Become an observer of yourself. Watch, listen, and feel what is going on inside of you and around you. By doing that you can have access to everything you will ever need as an actor.

<http://www.actingis.com/2009/11/15/self-observation/>

# #4

## About Me

Date \_\_\_\_\_ Name \_\_\_\_\_ Period \_\_\_\_\_ Age \_\_\_\_\_

Birth date \_\_\_\_\_ Zodiac Sign \_\_\_\_\_ I was born in \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_.

Now I live at \_\_\_\_\_, in \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_. I am

\_\_\_\_\_ tall and weigh around \_\_\_\_\_ pounds. My eyes are \_\_\_\_\_ and my hair is

\_\_\_\_\_. I am in the \_\_\_\_\_ grade. I am \_\_\_\_\_ handed. I have \_\_\_\_\_ brother(s)

and \_\_\_\_\_ sister(s). People often say that I look \_\_\_\_\_.

I think I look \_\_\_\_\_.

My most common facial expression shows \_\_\_\_\_.

	My Favorite	My Least Favorite
Color	_____	_____
Saying	_____	_____
Book	_____	_____
Magazine	_____	_____
Movie	_____	_____
T.V. Show	_____	_____
Piece of Music	_____	_____
Piece of Art	_____	_____
Food	_____	_____
Drink	_____	_____

My lucky number is \_\_\_\_\_. The closest Person to me is \_\_\_\_\_.

The person I admire most is \_\_\_\_\_ because

I would like to be (a) \_\_\_\_\_ when I am older.

My biggest fear is \_\_\_\_\_. My strongest belief is \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_. My favorite habit is \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_. My worst habit is \_\_\_\_\_.

I am a \_\_\_\_\_ person because I \_\_\_\_\_.

If I were (a) \_\_\_\_\_ I would \_\_\_\_\_.

I used to \_\_\_\_\_, and now I \_\_\_\_\_.

People say that I am \_\_\_\_\_ because I \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_. I am always happy whenever I see \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ upsets me a

great deal. I find it easy to talk about \_\_\_\_\_ but difficult

to discuss \_\_\_\_\_.

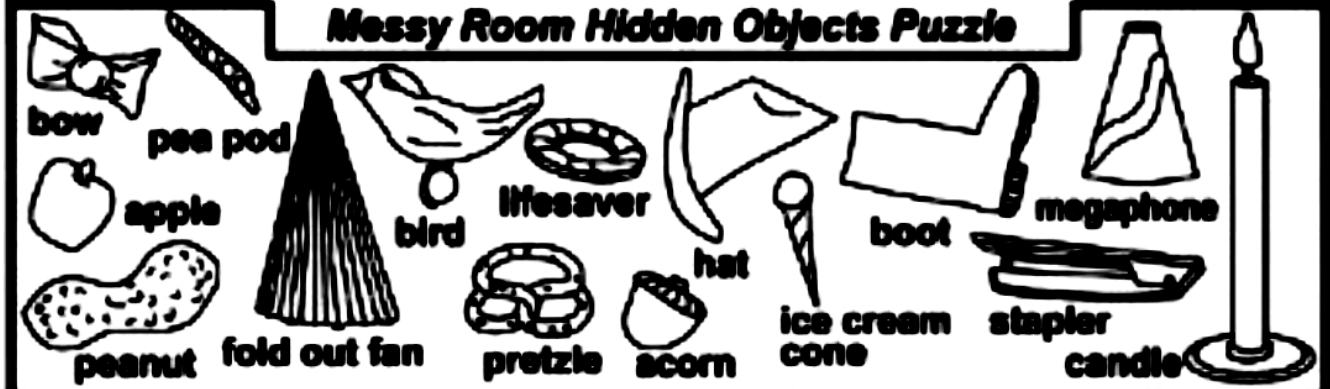
If I wrote a story about my life it would be a \_\_\_\_\_.

## #5: Find the Hidden Objects

Look carefully at the picture and then color in the objects indicated as hidden within the picture.



### Messy Room Hidden Objects Puzzle



## #6: Find the Hidden Objects

Look carefully at the picture and then color in the objects indicated as hidden within the picture.



# #7

## LIST THE OBJECTS

In class, take 1 minute (60 seconds) to look at the objects in the provided box. Try to remember as many of the objects as possible. Upon returning to your seat, list as many of the objects in the box as you can remember.

1. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_
5. \_\_\_\_\_
7. \_\_\_\_\_
9. \_\_\_\_\_
11. \_\_\_\_\_
13. \_\_\_\_\_
15. \_\_\_\_\_
17. \_\_\_\_\_
19. \_\_\_\_\_
21. \_\_\_\_\_
23. \_\_\_\_\_
25. \_\_\_\_\_
27. \_\_\_\_\_
29. \_\_\_\_\_

2. \_\_\_\_\_
4. \_\_\_\_\_
6. \_\_\_\_\_
8. \_\_\_\_\_
10. \_\_\_\_\_
12. \_\_\_\_\_
14. \_\_\_\_\_
16. \_\_\_\_\_
18. \_\_\_\_\_
20. \_\_\_\_\_
22. \_\_\_\_\_
24. \_\_\_\_\_
26. \_\_\_\_\_
28. \_\_\_\_\_
30. \_\_\_\_\_

After listing all the things you can remember, take a moment to think, then write down ideas of HOW and WHY those were the items you remembered. Did you have a method for your memory? If so, what was it?

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# #8

## WHAT'S IN THE BOX?

Take 30 seconds to observe the items in the box offered. Upon returning to your seat, answer the questions on the screen about the items in the box.

1. What color is the glue stick wrapper?
2. What piece of jewelry is in the box?
3. What is the title of the play on the program on the bottom of the box?
4. What state is represented by the symbol on the receipt included?
5. Is the pencil sharp or dull?
6. Of what material is cone made?
7. What color are the symbols on the small box?
8. What color is the thread on the spool?
9. What kind of battery is included in the box?
10. What brand of soap is included?
11. What is leaning on the box of soap?
12. What is sitting on top of the small, oblong box?
13. How could you use the small, yellow item?
14. For what is the grey item used?
15. What red item is attached to the cone?

## #9

[illegible]

This image shows a single sheet of white paper with horizontal blue or grey ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page. There are no margins, text, or other markings on the paper.

# #10

## BEING A WITNESS

Use: [http://mrdispenza.com/yahoo\\_site\\_admin/assets/docs/observation.308111416.pdf](http://mrdispenza.com/yahoo_site_admin/assets/docs/observation.308111416.pdf) or Observation .308111416

After observing the 1st picture, answer the following questions:

1. Are there cars parked on both sides of the street?
2. What color is the pickup truck in the street?
3. Are there any mini-vans in the area?
4. What does the blue sign advertise?
5. What is the posted speed limit?
6. Are there any pedestrians in the road?

Now, some of you will be assigned as Investigators and most of you will be assigned as Witnesses. The witnesses will look at the picture for 30 seconds. Then the investigators will ask you questions about what you saw. Each investigator will interview 3 witnesses with the same questions. After the interviews are over, the Investigators should meet and try to create a drawing of the scene described.

### INTERVIEWERS QUESTIONS:

1. How many cars were in the intersections?
2. Across the street, were there any vehicles parked on the side?
3. Can you describe at least one of the cars in the intersection?
4. Are there any other potential witnesses in the area?  
(If yes, follow up with the following questions.)
  - 4A. What was this witness doing?
  - 4B. Where was he?
5. What was the posted speed limit?
6. Was there a car parked in the 1st parking space of the parking lot shown?

On the next slide determine if the statements are OBSERVATION or INFERENCE.

1. There is a representation of a face on one side of the coin.
2. The Latin word "Dei" means "God."
3. The coin was made by deeply religious people.
4. The date 1722 is imprinted on one side of the coin.
5. The coin was made in 1722.
6. The face on the coin is a representation of the nation's president.

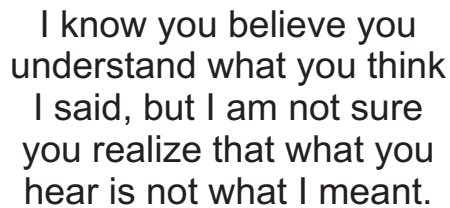


## SECOND QUARTER OBSERVATIONS & ACTIVITIES



The activities this quarter are designed to assist you in the vocal development and the combining of voice and physicality to create a unified whole for performance. Each assignment allows you to grow in your understanding of yourself in a performance. There are short articles and descriptions that will introduce you to several aspects of theatre and acting. Take your time with these and apply each as described.





I know you believe you understand what you think I said, but I am not sure you realize that what you hear is not what I meant.

Listening is the second part of any effective communication interchange and is the part that is frequently taken for granted. One assumes that listening is something that just happens.. Many people fail to recognize the difference between passive listening and active listening.

## 10 TIPS TO IMPROVE YOUR LISTENING SKILLS

Here's what good listeners know — and you should, too:

1. Face the speaker. Sit up straight or lean forward slightly to show your attentiveness through body language.
2. Maintain eye contact, to the degree that you all remain comfortable.
3. Minimize external distractions. Turn off the TV. Put down your book or magazine, and ask the speaker and other listeners to do the same.
4. Respond appropriately to show that you understand. Murmur (“uh-huh” and “um-hmm”) and nod. Raise your eyebrows. Say words such as “Really,” “Interesting,” as well as more direct prompts: “What did you do then?” and “What did she say?”
5. Focus solely on what the speaker is saying. Try not to think about what you are going to say next. The conversation will follow a logical flow after the speaker makes her point.
6. Minimize internal distractions. If your own thoughts keep horning in, simply let them go and continuously re-focus your attention on the speaker, much as you would during meditation.
7. Keep an open mind. Wait until the speaker is finished before deciding that you disagree. Try not to make assumptions about what the speaker is thinking.
8. Avoid letting the speaker know how you handled a similar situation. Unless they specifically ask for advice, assume they just need to talk it out.
9. Even if the speaker is launching a complaint against you, wait until they finish to defend yourself. The speaker will feel as though their point had been made. They won't feel the need to repeat it, and you'll know the whole argument before you respond. Research shows that, on average, we can hear four times faster than we can talk, so we have the ability to sort ideas as they come in...and be ready for more.
10. Engage yourself. Ask questions for clarification, but, once again, wait until the speaker has finished. That way, you won't interrupt their train of thought. After you ask questions, paraphrase their point to make sure you didn't misunderstand. Start with: “So you're saying...”

# #1

## PASS IT ALONG

Sit in a large circle and hold hands with the people on each side of you. I will start by gently squeezing the hand of the person on my right. Each person will “pass” the squeeze on the the next person until we go around the circle. We will repeat this activity with several variations.

After the activity is completed, take a few moments to reflect on the activity: what happened? why did it happen? was it easy? difficult? why?

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Divide into 3 relatively equal lines. Stand or sit in these lines. The first person in each line will select a card from those offered. After reading the card to him/herself, (s)he will turn to the person behind and WHISPER the phrase on the card. That person will turn to the next person in line and again WHISPER the phrase (s)he heard. Continue passing the phrase down the line until the last person will share the phrase (s)he heard with the class as a whole.

After the activity is completed and we share the final and the original phrases and the changes in them, take a few moments to write down what you learned from this activity.

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## A - Z Enunciation Exercises

By Wade Bradford

<http://plays.about.com/od/activities/a/enunciation.htm>

Young performers face several challenges. For one, they must memorize lines. For another, they must speak loud enough for Grandpa to hear them in the 22nd row. But perhaps the most daunting challenge is learning how to slow down and enunciate.

No vocal warm-up is complete without reciting a few enunciation exercises. With that in mind, I present 26 fundamentally fun tongue twisters. Each one provides an "elocution work out." Take a few for a test drive. Say each line three or four times. But remember, do not worry about speed. Focus on speaking clearly, even if you must over enunciate at first.

- A - Around the rugged rocks the ragged rascal ran.
- B - Big black bug bit a big black bear and the big black bear bled black blood.
- C - Can I cook a proper cup of coffee in a copper coffee pot?
- D - Don't doubt the doorbell, but differ with the doorknob.
- E - Eight gray geese in a green field grazing.
- F - Fine white vinegar with veal.  
The free thugs set three thugs free.
- G - Grab the groundhog from the glazed grass.  
Grey geese in a green field grazing.
- H - High roller, low roller, lower roller.  
How can a clam cram in a clean cream can?
- I - Inexplicably mimicking him hiccupping.  
I wish to wash my Irish wristwatch
- J - Jingle jungle jangle joker.
- K - Knit kilts for nasty cold nights.
- L - Little lucky luke likes lakes, lucky little luke likes licking lakes
- M - Monkeys make monopoly monotonous.
- N - The Next nest will not necessarily be next to nothing.
- O - Octopi occupy a porcupine's mind.  
Only royal oily royal oil boils
- P - Peter Prangle, the prickly pear picker, picked three perfectly prickly pears.  
A proper copper coffee pot.
- Q - Queen Catherine wakes the cat, and the cat quietly cries.
- R - Rubber Baby Buggy Bumpers!  
Roberta ran rings around the Roman ruins.
- S - Some shun sunshine. Do you shun sunshine?  
Six stick shifts stuck shut.
- T - Three thick thistle sticks.  
The thirty-three thieves thought that they thrilled the throne throughout Thursday.
- U - Unique New York, Unique New York, Unique New York.
- V - Venti, Grande, Tall - Very Grand Words for Large, Medium, Small.
- W - Will's wetsuit is round and wet and rough and wide and ready to go on a watery ride.  
Wayne went to Wales to watch walruses.
- X - Xylophones exist or so existentialists insist.
- Y - Yoda met a Yeti on the Plains of Serengeti.
- Z - Zoologists illogically love to read astrology.

NAME \_\_\_\_\_ PERIOD \_\_\_\_\_ DATE \_\_\_\_\_

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## #2

### CREATE YOUR OWN PERSONAL TONGUE TWISTER:



The name you use: \_\_\_\_\_



*Complete each section in order to create your own personal tongue twister.*

1<sup>st</sup> – make a list of descriptive adverbs that start with the same letter as your name:

\_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_

2<sup>nd</sup> – make a list of action verbs that start with the same letter:

\_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_

3<sup>rd</sup> - make a list of nouns (people, places, things) that start with the same letter

\_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_

4<sup>th</sup> – make another list of descriptive adjectives that start with the same letter:

\_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_

5<sup>th</sup> - make 3<sup>rd</sup> list of descriptive adjectives that start with the same letter:

\_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_

6<sup>th</sup> – make a 2<sup>nd</sup> list of nouns (people, places, things) that start with the same letter.

\_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_

Finally: Take one word from each list and fill in the blanks below to create a personal tongue twister:

\_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_  
Name Adverb Verb Noun

\_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_  
Adjective Noun Your Choice of Preposition Noun

***Example: Ms. Hall happily handed Hannah a huge hoop to hold.***

*Now: Read your personal tongue twister to yourself. If you do not like it, you can change your choice of words from above to have it be more fun or to make better sense. You may add additional connecting words if needed. When you are satisfied: create a PowerPoint slide of your tongue twister with an illustration that supports it. Turn this in via email ([gdhall@wsfcs.k12.nc.us](mailto:gdhall@wsfcs.k12.nc.us)) or on a disk – be sure you give your name and class period on the email or disk. We will put them together in alphabetical order and have a PowerPoint show of our class tongue twisters that we can practice for vocal warm-ups this quarter. The slide is a separate grade worth 100 points as a Project grade.*

# #3

## FACT OR INFERENCE

Listen to the short story I am going to read to you. Then answer TRUE, FALSE or NOT ENOUGH INFORMATION to the questions on the following page.

### The Story

A business man had just turned off the lights in the store when a man appeared and demanded money. The owner opened a cash register. The contents of the cash register were scooped up and the man sped away. A member of the police force was notified promptly.

# #3

## FACT OR INFERENCE

After listening to the story I read, answer TRUE, FALSE or NOT ENOUGH INFORMATION to the questions below.

1. A man appeared after the owner had turned off his store lights
2. The man demanded money.
3. The man who opened the cash register was the owner.
4. The store owner scooped up the contents of the cash register, and ran away.
5. Someone opened a cash register.
6. After the man who demanded the money scooped up the contents of the cash register, he ran away.
7. While the cash register contained money, the story does not say how much.
8. The story concerned a series of events in which only three persons are referred: the owner of the store; a man who demanded money, and a member of the police force.
9. The following events were included in the story: someone demanded money, a cash register was opened, its contents were scooped out, and a man dashed out of the store.
10. The robber was a man.
11. The robber demanded money of the owner.



## #4

# LISTEN AND RESPOND

A (boy)

My favourite thing has to be my new tablet. It's really light and quite small, so I take it with me everywhere. I'm always writing messages to friends and it's big enough to do college work on it too. It takes really good photos, and I play games and listen to music on it as well, of course. I often download films onto it and watch them in bed. My mum says I'm addicted, because I'm always on it. I even read things on it at breakfast time. I'm not allowed to at dinner time, though. I have to be polite and talk to people then. "Welcome back to real life," my mum says.

B (girl)

My favourite thing? Does my cat count as a thing? She's not really a thing, but anyway. She's a really beautiful little cat. I've had her since she was four months old. You know how some cats are really independent and hardly talk to you? I know cats don't really talk, but you know what I mean. Well, she's not like that at all. She's really affectionate and comes up to me as soon as I get home, purring away like mad. She makes a lot of noise for a tiny thing. She loves being stroked and comes and curls up next to me when I'm on the sofa. She's great company.

C (boy)

My new scooter! It's quite small, but fun, and just what I needed for getting around the city. I used to have quite a long walk to the metro, then a longish walk at the other end to get to college. But now I can just whiz there on my scooter. And there's no problem parking, there's always space for it. You have to be careful with the cars and lorries – they don't always see you – and when it rains the surface of the road is terrible, it gets really slippery. But in general it's perfect for me, and I can fit a friend on the back too – I've got an extra helmet for a friend. It's great. Riding along makes me feel so free.

D (girl)

This might sound a bit old-fashioned, but my sewing machine is my favourite thing. I'm studying fashion and love making things, as well as designing them. I also love clothes myself and often buy second-hand clothes – everyone loves the "vintage" look at the moment – and then I adapt them to my size. It's much easier using a machine to do that than doing it by hand. I do alterations for my mum and my sister too. If I don't make it as a designer, I suppose I can always set up my own alterations and customising business. Customising clothes, by taking things off and adding things on, is actually very creative, so I wouldn't mind that.

E (boy)

My set of Japanese knives. That sounds a bit sinister, doesn't it, but I'm not a murderer or anything. They're chef's knives and the best ones come from Japan. Cooking is my new hobby. I got into it when I started watching Masterchef on TV. Then I went to an evening class for beginners, and I haven't looked back since. I try and have a dinner for between four and eight friends every two or three weeks. That gives me something to work towards and I always do new dishes so they can try them out and give me feedback. It's quite an expensive hobby if you use good ingredients, but now my friends help towards the cost. They still get a good meal for a very low price.

Listen to the speakers describing their favorite things and do the exercises to practice and improve your listening skills.

### 1. Check your understanding: gap fill

Do this exercise while you listen. Write the word to fill the gaps.

1. My favourite thing has to be my new tablet. It's really light and quite \_\_\_\_\_, so I take it with me everywhere. I'm always writing to friends and it's big enough to do college work on it too. It takes really good \_\_\_\_\_, and I play games and listen to \_\_\_\_\_ on it as well, of course. I often download \_\_\_\_\_ onto it, and watch them in \_\_\_\_\_. My mum says I'm \_\_\_\_\_, because I'm always on it. I even read things on it at breakfast time. I'm not allowed to at \_\_\_\_\_ time, though. I have to be \_\_\_\_\_ and talk to people then. "Welcome back to real life," my mum says.

2. My favorite thing? Does my \_\_\_\_\_ count as a thing? She's not really a thing, but anyway. She's a really \_\_\_\_\_ little cat. I've had her since she was \_\_\_\_\_ months old. You know how some cats are really \_\_\_\_\_ and hardly talk to you? I know cats don't really talk, but you know what I mean. Well, she's not like that at all. She's really \_\_\_\_\_ and comes up to me as soon as I get home, purring away like mad. She makes a lot of \_\_\_\_\_ for a tiny thing. She loves being stroked and comes and curls up next to me when I'm on the \_\_\_\_\_. She's great \_\_\_\_\_.

3. My new scooter! It's quite small, but \_\_\_\_\_, and just what I needed for getting around the \_\_\_\_\_. I used to have quite a long walk to the \_\_\_\_\_, then a long-ish walk at the other end to get to \_\_\_\_\_. But now I can just whiz there on my \_\_\_\_\_. And there's no problem parking, there's always \_\_\_\_\_ for it. You have to be \_\_\_\_\_ with the cars and \_\_\_\_\_ – they don't always see you – and when it rains the surface of the road is \_\_\_\_\_, it gets really slippery. But in general it's perfect for me, and I can fit a \_\_\_\_\_ on the back too – I've got an extra \_\_\_\_\_ for a friend. It's great. Riding along makes me feel so free.

4. \_\_\_\_\_ and love making things, as well as designing them. I also love \_\_\_\_\_ myself and often buy second-hand clothes – everyone loves the "vintage" \_\_\_\_\_ at the moment – and then I adapt them to my \_\_\_\_\_. It's much easier using a machine to do that than doing it by \_\_\_\_\_. I do alterations for my mum and my sister too. If I don't make it as a \_\_\_\_\_, I suppose I can always set up my own alterations and customizing \_\_\_\_\_. Customizing clothes, by taking things off and adding things on, is actually very \_\_\_\_\_, so I wouldn't mind that.

5. My set of Japanese knives. That sounds a bit sinister, doesn't it, but I'm not a \_\_\_\_\_ or anything. They're chef's knives and the best ones come from \_\_\_\_\_. Cooking is my new hobby. I got into it when I started watching Masterchef on TV. Then I went to an evening \_\_\_\_\_ for beginners, and I haven't looked back since. I try and have a \_\_\_\_\_ for between four and eight \_\_\_\_\_ every two or three \_\_\_\_\_. That gives me something to work towards and I always do new \_\_\_\_\_ so they can try them out and give me feedback. It's quite an \_\_\_\_\_ hobby if you use good \_\_\_\_\_, but now my friends help towards the \_\_\_\_\_. They still get a good \_\_\_\_\_ for a very low price.

### 2. Match the speakers with their favorite things. Write a – e next to the numbers 1 – 5.

- |                  |                     |
|------------------|---------------------|
| 1..... Speaker A | a. a tablet         |
| 2..... Speaker B | b. a sewing machine |
| 3..... Speaker C | c. a scooter        |
| 4..... Speaker D | d. a set of knives  |
| 5..... Speaker E | e. a cat            |

### 3. Your favorite thing.

What is your favorite thing? Explain how and why it is important to you? Be prepared to share aloud with the class.

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## #5

# LISTEN AND RESPOND

A (Girl 1):

My hero isn't very famous, but she ought to be. She's Mary Anning, who was only 12 years old and from a poor family when she made an amazing discovery. She found the first dinosaur skeleton, that of an ichthyosaur, on the cliffs of Lyme Regis in the south of England. That was in 1811, and until then people had thought that it was impossible for an animal to become extinct. Because she was a woman and didn't have enough money for a proper education, she wasn't able to take part properly in the scientific community of the time. But she read as much scientific literature as she could and continued to search for fossils, often risking her own life to get them by climbing dangerous cliffs. She once nearly died in a landslide which killed her dog. Although she didn't write famous books about fossils, her contribution to paleontology, the study of fossils, is said to be enormous. I admire her because she kept on trying to make new discoveries at a time when usually only men, and men with money, were allowed to be scientists. After her death the writer Charles Dickens said that 'the carpenter's daughter has won a name for herself, and has deserved to win it'.

B (Boy 1):

My hero is Kailash Satyarthi, who has been campaigning against child slavery for years. He is from India and first became aware of the problem of children working when he was 6 and noticed that a boy younger than himself had to spend all day polishing shoes and was unable to go to school. When he was 11, he began to collect money to help buy textbooks for other children, and when he was 26 he gave up his job as an electrical engineer to fight child slavery in India, by doing things like raiding factories where children were forced to work, making rugs or glass bottles. He introduced a programme first called RugMark, now known as Goodweave, which puts tags on child-labour-free rugs made in factories. He has saved many thousands of children, over 80,000, from a terrible life of enforced labour in South Asia and helped them to get an education. He has often been physically attacked for helping children, for example for trying to free Nepalese children forced to work in a circus. He regularly risks his life to fight injustice; two of his colleagues have been murdered. I believe that the best thing he has done is to change how people think about child slavery and to make it an international issue.

C (Boy 2):

I'm really interested in ecology and my hero, or heroine, is Rachel Carson because she first got people thinking about the way we humans are causing permanent damage to the Earth's ecosystems. She began as a biologist, specialising in writing about the sea, but she gradually became aware of the danger of using pesticides like DDT and the way they can harm the whole of the food chain, from the worm to humans! She wrote her classic book *Silent Spring* in 1962 to explain this to the general public, to explain how humans and nature are interdependent. The title of *Silent Spring* refers to the fact that one day all the birds might be dead so they won't be able to sing in the springtime. The agricultural and chemical industries reacted very badly to the book and said she was unprofessional. But further research by other scientists proved that she was right about the dangers of chemicals used to kill insects. Nowadays there is a growing movement for organic food production, but unfortunately things in general are still getting worse, rather than better. We still need to read Rachel Carson's book and think about its message.

D (Girl 2):

My choice of hero isn't very original, I'm afraid, but he's the person I would most like to have met: John Lennon. He died a long time before I was born, and his most famous songs were written long before that, but when I listen to his music I really feel as if he's speaking to me personally. I love the whole range of the Beatles' music, from the early pop songs to the very experimental music at the end of their time as a group. John Lennon was the most innovative writer in the Beatles and he continued to create exciting music when he left and went solo. But although I love his music, what I admire about him is his dedication to universal peace. It's amazing that the song *Imagine*, written in 1971, is still incredibly popular after all this time. It's about a world where everyone can be equal, a world with no wars, no divisions between countries, no greed, no hunger, no material possessions ... I'd like to meet him because he was a lifelong rebel, and although he could be a difficult person, he was original, clever and funny. It was awful that he was killed in 1980 when he was only 40. I wonder what he would be doing if he was alive now.

Listen to the speakers discussing their heroes and do the exercises to practice and check yourself on the growth of your own listening skills.

### A. Check your understanding: multiple choice

Circle which speaker (A, B, C or D) talks about ...

- |                                                                                    |   |   |   |   |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---|---|---|---|
| 1. someone who was dedicated to world peace.                                       | A | B | C | D |
| 2. someone who has been the victim of violence as a result of their campaigning.   | A | B | C | D |
| 3. someone who left a more conventional job to help young people in their country. | A | B | C | D |
| 4. someone who was excluded from the professional community of the time            | A | B | C | D |
| 5. someone who she wishes she could meet.                                          | A | B | C | D |
| 6. someone who wrote a book about the effect humans could have on nature.          | A | B | C | D |
| 7. someone who made an important scientific discovery while still a child.         | A | B | C | D |
| 8. someone who faced strong criticism from big business.                           | A | B | C | D |

### B. Check your understanding: multiple choice

Underline the best answer to complete the sentences.

- Mary Anning's discovery was important because it showed that \_\_\_\_\_.  
 a. fossils could teach us about the past      b. an animal could become extinct  
 c. the shape of the coast was constantly changing
- Mary Anning's dog died because \_\_\_\_\_.  
 a. it fell off a cliff      b. a large amount of earth and rocks fell on it  
 c. it got stuck down a hole while looking for fossils
- Mary Anning didn't write a famous book because \_\_\_\_\_.  
 a. she was too busy exploring the cliffs      b. she did not have access to a formal education  
 c. she believed only men could be scientists
- Kailash Satyarthi first saw the problems of child slavery when he was \_\_\_\_\_.  
 a. 6 years old      b. 11 years old      c. 26 years old
- Kailash Satyarthi has saved over \_\_\_\_\_ children from enforced labour.  
 a. 18,000      b. 80,000      c. 800,000
- Because of their work, two of Kailash Satyarthi's \_\_\_\_\_.  
 a. friends were injured      b. children were attacked  
 c. co-workers were murdered
- Rachel Carson first specialised in \_\_\_\_\_.  
 a. human biology      b. the study of insects      c. marine biology
- Rachel Carson's book made people realise that \_\_\_\_\_.  
 a. using pesticides was damaging the ecosystem      b. birdsong is essential to humans  
 c. humans cannot control nature
- These days, more and more people are buying \_\_\_\_\_.  
 a. powerful pesticides      b. organic food      c. Rachel Carson's
- The speaker is apologetic because \_\_\_\_\_.  
 a. she doesn't know very much about John Lennon      b. she gets upset when she thinks about John Lennon  
 c. John Lennon is an obvious choice of hero
- The speaker likes \_\_\_\_\_.  
 a. all the Beatles' songs and Lennon's solo music      b. all of the Beatles' music, but not Lennon's solo music  
 c. only the Beatles songs that Lennon wrote
- It's amazing that Imagine \_\_\_\_\_.  
 a. is still so well loved today      b. really changed the way things were  
 c. contained so many important themes

C. Which of the heroes described in the listening were you most interested in? Why? \_\_\_\_\_

Tell us about a your own hero. Share this with a classmate aloud. \_\_\_\_\_

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# Readers Theatre

## WHAT?

What's the difference between a play and Reader's Theatre?

Reader's Theatre is a dramatic reading of a text in front of an audience. The text could be from a play, but is just as likely to be from a novel, poem, an original short story or other literary work. There are no sets, lighting effects, costumes, movement or memorizing of lines.

Reader's Theatre is always presented simply, using narrators to move the story forward. The emphasis is on reading the text aloud. But it's important to emphasize that it's not just a reading. It is a 'dramatic reading' with defined characters, ensemble work, and attention paid to the sound of the piece.

Reader's Theatre is a useful classroom tool for all ages of students, but we're focusing on tools and techniques for the middle school and high school level. Hopefully, there is enough information here to guide you choose and prep your own pieces.

## WHY?

What purpose does Reader's Theatre serve in theatre?

Theatrically, Reader's Theatre allows you to focus on the aural nature of a piece of literature. What do the characters sound like? How do you vocally interpret the characters? What kind of expression will you use? What images are created through the words? Does the aural influence the plot (e.g. fast short sentences, during a climatic moment)?

Reader's Theatre can easily be put together in a much shorter time period than a traditional play.

Fluency and Comprehension are big watchwords when it comes to reading skills. Reader's Theatre is an effective method for building fluency and comprehension. The more you read aloud, the easier reading becomes, the easier understanding occurs.

Reading aloud also helps to build confidence – many students hate reading out loud because they think they are poor readers. Repeated oral reading helps prepare students for acting auditions which involve “cold readings”. An awesome combination of Theatre and Preparation for Future Auditions!

## HOW?

What steps do you take to create a Reader's Theatre piece?

Choose the Material:

When working with literature here are a couple of things to be on the lookout for.

- Strong characters.
- Multiple characters.
- Dramatic situations.
- Active narration.

## Prep the Material:

Prepping the material involves editing (if you're working on a larger novel) and dividing the text among your readers.

Even if you're not using a play as your text, it's important to treat the piece of literature as if it were a play. You'll find it helpful to re-type the text into play format. This way, you are less likely to be confused when it is your turn to speak. Also, each reader should highlight whatever you're going to say aloud.

If you have never had experience with Reader's Theatre take your time to prep our material.

## Understand the Text:

Nothing shows a lack of understanding of a text than reading it aloud. You need to comprehend a text on a couple of levels: What is happening in the story? What is the emotional tone of the moment? It has to be more than reading words on the page - readers should be able to concisely describe what's happening in the text, what's important in the text, and what's being expressed.

## Read with Expression:

- **Expression:** the power of expressing in words. A look or intonation expressing personal reaction, feeling.

Many of you may struggle with reading with expression. All you need to do is say them out loud, right? But this is a dramatic reading. When you add expression to your reading, when you truly comprehend what you're reading, the literature comes to life.

Sample expression elements:

- **Tone:** How does the text sound? Is there an emotion being expressed?
- **Pacing:** What is the inherent pacing in the text? Emotion is reflected in the sentence structure - length, punctuation, contractions - all hold clues to the pace.
- **Pauses:** Readers need to breathe. So do audiences! Pauses can be used to great effect in Reader's Theatre. They can offer a rest after a particularly dramatic or active moment. They can reflect a character making a difficult choice.

## Focused Staging:

While there is little blocking or movement in Reader's Theatre, there are some physical elements to note. Will the readers stand in a line? Stay seated? Will they keep their backs to the audience when not speaking? How will students give focus to the speakers? Will readers hold the scripts or have them on music stands? Music stands leave the hands free for gestures. Any actions need to be simple and easy to not interfere with the sound of the reading. Think in terms of a ritualistic style of movement than a naturalistic form of blocking. It's important not to ignore the physical aspect or readers may fidget and draw focus when they're not talking.

## Focused listening:

Reader's Theatre is a team-building exercise in that everyone has to work together. Everyone must actively listen to one another so the text flows easily from one reader to the next.



# ADAPT?

## Step One: The Dialogue

First, focus on any dialogue in the text. Since the piece will be read aloud, there's no need for conventional 'he said, she said,' notations. Cut all the he said, she said, said so and so to make the conversations in the novel more like theatrical dialogue.

The exception to this would be if there was something after the line of dialogue that would add to the narration. Action adds to the urgency of the moment as does emotion

**Next, note how dialogue is to be said.** There are usually clues in the text that reveal the intended tone.

Lastly, make note of any sounds that characters make in the dialogue. Coughs, sighs, sobs, laughter should come from the reader, not a narrator.

## Step Two: Cuts

How do you cut? Follow these guidelines to cut a text while striving to keep its integrity.

- **What is essential to the story?** Remember your audience. They have to be able to follow the story. If the story is cut too severely it won't make sense.
- **What is essential to the drama?** It's Reader's Theatre. There has to be action and movement.
- **What is essential for the characters?** This one is a personal judgement call. Novels often have descriptive passages that tell us so much about a character, but pause the story and drag the drama. But sometimes it's important to explore a character further to give the audience a clearer picture. Decide whether information is important for the audience or if it can be cut and used by the reader to enhance their portrayal.

## Step Three: Narration

When making Reader's Theatre come alive, dealing with the dialogue is always going to be easier than narration. Dialogue is inherently theatrical. The division of narration can be a bit more difficult. It needs to be active. While you don't want to have all the lines bouncing back and forth between narrators, you also don't want to have one reader speak multiple paragraphs at a time. The drama and the theatre of the reading must always be at the forefront. How do you make narration dramatic?

- **Read with expression** - Narration can be read with expression and tonal variety just as much as dialogue can.
- **Use more than one narrator** - If you want to really up the pace of a certain moment think about dividing up a sentence with multiple narrators.
- **Use multiple narrators within a sentence** - It's not always necessary to have the narrators speak one at a time. Accelerate the drama of the moment by having multiple speakers at the same time. The aim is to say the lines in one voice.

**Use a Soundscape** - Think about any sounds that might be used to accompany narration. This isn't about adding music cues - the sounds have to come from the group itself. In groups, create a soundscape to accompany the text.

# HOW TO PREPARE?

- Examine each character
- Make note of all sound elements.
- Decide on the staging.

## #6

# READERS THEATRE PREPARATION ACTIVITIES

### Read Aloud Practice:

Without giving himself time to reconsider his decision, and, indeed, that he might not allow his thoughts to be distracted from his desperate resolution, he bent over the appalling shroud, opened it with the knife which Faria had made, drew the corpse from the sack, and bore it along the tunnel to his own chamber, laid it on his couch, tied around its head the rag he wore at night around his own, covered it with his counterpane, once again kissed the ice-cold brow, and tried vainly to close the resisting eyes, which glared horribly, turned the head towards the wall, so that the jailer might, when he brought the evening meal, believe that he was asleep, as was his frequent custom; entered the tunnel again, drew the bed against the wall, returned to the other cell, took from the hiding-place the needle and thread, flung off his rags, that they might feel only naked flesh beneath the coarse canvas, and getting inside the sack, placed himself in the posture in which the dead body had been laid, and sewed up the mouth of the sack from the inside.

Practice the paragraph and answer the following:

1. What is the tone of the paragraph? Does the tone change?
2. What is the pace of the paragraph? What examples of sentence structure support your choice of pace?
3. What part of the paragraph is best suited to a pause?

**Complete AFTER your group completes the script about YOUR character.**

### Character Profile Worksheet:

Character's Full Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Family: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

What Makes You Laugh? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

What Makes You Mad?: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Describe A Childhood Memory: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Describe Your Bedroom (or Another Important Place To You): \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Individual Question (write Your Own Questions, Then Answer It): \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_



# RECITING POETRY

## QUALITIES OF A STRONG RECITATION:

### **Physical Presence:**

Ease and comfort with the audience. Engagement with the audience through physical presence, including appropriate body language, confidence, and eye contact—without appearing artificial.

### **Voice and Articulation:**

All words pronounced correctly, and the volume, rhythm, and intonation greatly enhance the recitation. Pacing appropriate to the poem.

### **Dramatic Appropriateness:**

The dramatization subtly underscores the meaning of the poem without becoming the focal point. The style of delivery is more about oral interpretation than dramatic enactment. Avoid affected character voices and accents, inappropriate tone and inflection, singing, distracting and excessive gestures, or unnecessary emoting.

### **Level of Complexity:**

A poem with complex content conveys difficult, sophisticated ideas, that are challenging to comprehend and express. A poem with complex language will have intricate diction and syntax, meter and rhyme scheme, and shifts in tone or mood. Poem length should also be considered in complexity. Please keep in mind that longer poems are not necessarily more difficult. Poems with significantly challenging content and language may not need length to show complexity.

### **Evidence of Understanding:**

The poet's words should take precedence, and you should be able to voice them in a way that helps the audience to understand the poem better. To do this, you must effectively use intonation, emphasis, tone, and style of delivery.

The meaning of the poem should be powerfully and clearly conveyed to the audience. The interpretation should deepen and enliven the poem. Meaning, themes, allusions, irony, tones of voice, and other nuances should be captured by the performance. The interpretation should never obscure the meaning of the poem.

### **Overall Performance:**

The recitation should become more than the sum of its parts.

- Did you captivate the audience with the language of the poem?
- Did you bring the audience to a better understanding of the poem?
- Did your physical presence, voice and articulation, and dramatic appropriateness all seem on target and unified to breathe life into the poem?
- Did you understand and show mastery of the art of recitation?

### **Accuracy:**

Any missed or incorrect words during the recitation will be noted and marked, with small deductions for each. If you rely on the prompter during your recitation, points will also be subtracted from your score.

## #7 Poetry Out Loud Scoring Rubric

Watch the video performance of a high school student's Poetry Out Loud poem recitation and then score the student using the rubric below. Explain your very high or very low scoring at the bottom under "Comments".

	<b>Weak</b>	<b>Below Average</b>	<b>Average</b>	<b>Good</b>	<b>Excellent</b>	<b>Outstanding</b>
<b>Physical Presence</b>	Stiff or agitated; lacks eye contact with audience, appears uncomfortable	Timid; unsure; eye contact and body language reflects nervousness	Body language and eye contact unsure at times but confident at others	Comfortable; steady eye contact and confident body language	Poised; body language and eye contact reveal strong stage presence	Authoritative; body language and eye contact show compelling stage presence
<b>Voice and Articulation</b>	Inaudible; slow; distracting rhythm; singsong; hurried; mispronunciations	Audible, but quiet; maybe too loud; monotone, paced unevenly; affected tone	Clear, adequate intonation, even pacing	Clear, appropriate intonation and pacing	Very clear, crisp effective use of volume, rhythm, intonation and pacing	Very clear, crisp mastery of rhythm and pace, skillful use of volume and intonation
<b>Dramatic Appropriateness</b>	Poem is overshadowed by significant distracting gestures, facial expressions, inflections or accents; acting out of poem; singing; over-emoting; inappropriate tone	Poem is secondary to style of delivery; includes instances of distracting gestures, facial expressions, and vocal inflections; inappropriate tone	Poem is neither overwhelmed nor enhanced by style of delivery	Poem is enhanced by style of delivery; any gestures, facial expressions, and movements are appropriate to poem	Style of delivery reflects precedence of poem; poem's voice is well conveyed	Style of delivery reflects internalization of poem; all gestures and movements feel essential to poem's success
<b>Level of Complexity</b>	Simple content, easy language, short length	Straight-forward language and content, moderate length	One element of challenging content, language, or length	Contains two elements of challenging content, language, or length	Contains very challenging content and language, length is appropriate to complexity of poem	Contains extremely challenging content and language; length is challenging for a poem of this complexity
<b>Evidence of Understanding</b>	Obscures meaning of poem	Doesn't sufficiently communicate meaning of poem	Satisfactorily communicates meaning of poem	Conveys meaning of poem well	Interprets poem very well for audience, nuanced	Masterfully interprets poem for audience, deftly revealing poem's meaning
<b>Overall Performance</b>	Ineffective or inappropriate recitation; does disservice to poem	Inadequate recitation; lackluster; does disservice to poem	Sufficient recitation; lacks meaningful impact on audience	Enjoyable recitation; successfully delivers poem	Inspired performance; shows grasp of recitation skills and enhances audience's experience of the poem	Captivating performance, whole equals "more than the sum of the parts"; shows mastery of recitation skills

**Comments**

## #8 POETRY AS THEATRE - UNDERSTANDING THE TEXT

Name of Poem: \_\_\_\_\_

Author: \_\_\_\_\_

1-What is the general story of poem?

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2-What are the dominant images in the poem?

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3-What is the dominant emotion in the poem? \_\_\_\_\_ Explain this emotion below.

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Is there more than one? \_\_\_\_\_ If "yes", Explain the other emotions represented.

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4-What is the most important line in the poem? Explain why is it the most important?

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5-Are there any characters in the poem? \_\_\_\_\_ If so, list the characters below.

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6-What problem or issue are these characters facing in the poem?

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## #9 Poetry Out Loud Scoring Rubric

Watch the performance of your selected classmate's poem recitation and then score the student using the rubric below. Explain your very high or very low scoring at the bottom under "Comments".

	<b>Weak</b>	<b>Below Average</b>	<b>Average</b>	<b>Good</b>	<b>Excellent</b>	<b>Outstanding</b>
<b>Physical Presence</b>	Stiff or agitated; lacks eye contact with audience, appears uncomfortable	Timid; unsure; eye contact and body language reflects nervousness	Body language and eye contact unsure at times but confident at others	Comfortable; steady eye contact and confident body language	Poised; body language and eye contact reveal strong stage presence	Authoritative; body language and eye contact show compelling stage presence
<b>Voice and Articulation</b>	Inaudible; slow; distracting rhythm; singsong; hurried; mispronunciations	Audible, but quiet; maybe too loud; monotone, paced unevenly; affected tone	Clear, adequate intonation, even pacing	Clear, appropriate intonation and pacing	Very clear, crisp effective use of volume, rhythm, intonation and pacing	Very clear, crisp mastery of rhythm and pace, skillful use of volume and intonation
<b>Dramatic Appropriateness</b>	Poem is overshadowed by significant distracting gestures, facial expressions, inflections or accents; acting out of poem; singing; over-emoting; inappropriate tone	Poem is secondary to style of delivery; includes instances of distracting gestures, facial expressions, and vocal inflections; inappropriate tone	Poem is neither overwhelmed nor enhanced by style of delivery	Poem is enhanced by style of delivery; any gestures, facial expressions, and movements are appropriate to poem	Style of delivery reflects precedence of poem; poem's voice is well conveyed	Style of delivery reflects internalization of poem; all gestures and movements feel essential to poem's success
<b>Level of Complexity</b>	Simple content, easy language, short length	Straight-forward language and content, moderate length	One element of challenging content, language, or length	Contains two elements of challenging content, language, or length	Contains very challenging content and language, length is appropriate to complexity of poem	Contains extremely challenging content and language; length is challenging for a poem of this complexity
<b>Evidence of Understanding</b>	Obscures meaning of poem	Doesn't sufficiently communicate meaning of poem	Satisfactorily communicates meaning of poem	Conveys meaning of poem well	Interprets poem very well for audience, nuanced	Masterfully interprets poem for audience, deftly revealing poem's meaning
<b>Overall Performance</b>	Ineffective or inappropriate recitation; does disservice to poem	Inadequate recitation; lackluster; does disservice to poem	Sufficient recitation; lacks meaningful impact on audience	Enjoyable recitation; successfully delivers poem	Inspired performance; shows grasp of recitation skills and enhances audience's experience of the poem	Captivating performance, whole equals "more than the sum of the parts"; shows mastery of recitation skills

**Comments**

## #10 Self Critique of Poetry Recitation:

Look at the categories and specifics below and on the lines provided briefly discuss each one as it relates to your performance. Be as fair and honest as you can be about your performance. Only you really know how hard you worked and how difficult this was for you to accomplish. While you acknowledge your effort also give ideas of how you could improve your performance on each specific section. Please notice that Section II: Memorization, counts for more in the overall grade. Take a moment to explain this and how it affected your approach and preparation of the monologue.

I. Pre-presentation—

	0	1	2	3	4	5
A. Worked consistently and conscientiously during allotted class time						
B. Worked seriously on understanding and developing role						
C. Completed all related assignments in a timely manner						
D. Took criticism cheerfully and applied it to presentation						

II. Memorization—

	0	3	7	10	13	15
A. Learned lines verbatim (word for word)						
B. Used personal cues to help with lines through movement or emotion						

III. Interpretation—

	0	2	4	6	8	10
A. Used movements that helped interpret poem but did not overshadow the poem itself						
B. Developed a style of delivery appropriate to the poem						
C. Internalized both the meaning and the overall feel of the poem						
D. Projected the essence of the poem to the audience						

IV. Voice—

	0	2	4	6	8	10
A. Good diction						
B. Correct pronunciation						
C. Appropriate rate, pitch, tone, and volume						
D. Projected voice well						
E. Proper phrasing and emphasis, using punctuation, not poem breaks						

V. Body—	0	2	4	6	8	10
A. Appropriate posture and stance for the poem						
B. Appropriate gestures for the poem						
C. Appropriate facial expressions for the poem						

Total /50

**AFTER COMPLETING YOUR SELF-CRITIQUE, GRADE YOURSELF ON THE LINE ABOVE AND TURN IT IN. APPLY YOUR SELF-CRITIQUE TO IMPROVE YOUR PERFORMANCE FOR FUTURE PRESENTATIONS.**



## THIRD QUARTER OBSERVATIONS & ACTIVITIES



The activities this quarter are to help you build character and grow as an actor, individually and in a group. Each assignment allows you to learn more about acting as an art-form and to grow as a theatre participant. There are short articles included that will introduce and assist your understanding of various aspects of theatre. Take your time with these and apply each as described.





# Introduction to the Stanislavsky System of Acting

## Technique [tek-neek]

The manner and ability with which an artist, writer, dancer, athlete, or the like employs the technical skills of a particular art or field of endeavor.

When we first start acting, technique is usually the farthest thing from our minds. We do it because it's fun, or because our friends are doing it, or because we want to meet new friends, or because we want to be in the spotlight and so on.

However, when the time comes that we want to improve as actors, there are a number of approaches and techniques to explore. The right technique is something that can be used whatever the role, whatever the play, whatever the situation. Certainly it's not for everyone - only the individual actor can determine what's going to work best for them. But as a form of character development, this approach to acting goes a long way to building a three-dimensional human being on stage.

## Who is Stanislavsky?

Constantin Stanislavsky (or Konstantin Stanislavski) was born in Moscow, Russia in 1863. He started out as an actor (Stanislavsky is actually his stage name) and moved on to become a director and teacher. He co-founded the Moscow Art Theatre in 1898; the company was the first to produce Anton Chekhov's *The Seagull*. This is where he developed a new approach to acting, using the company as a lab and trying ground. It took years of experimenting to get to what is now known as the Stanislavsky System.

As an actor, Stanislavsky saw a lot of bad acting - what he termed as artificial. Stanislavsky wanted actors to work on characters from the inside (instead of the outside) and thus create more of a "true" or "real" (i.e. not artificial) performance. He also wanted to address how actors can keep a role fresh performance after performance after performance. It's not something an actor can leave to luck - there has to be some sort of technique involved. Stanislavsky's thought process toward acting differed greatly from the way actors traditionally approached their roles. In fact, it changed actor training forever.

Stanislavsky developed a number of processes such as Emotional Memory, Objective and Super Objective, and the "Magic If". All of which are taught in drama classes and theatre schools to this day. They have also found their way into other techniques such as Method (Stanislavsky's System is often confused for Method Acting) and Meisner. Stanislavsky developed his program over a period of years. It was forever changing; aspects such as Emotional Memory, which were important in the beginning, became less so as the process evolved. The System is outlined in three books: An Actor Prepares, Building a Character, and Creating a Role. Stanislavsky also wrote his own biography: My Life in Art.

## The Process

What is it?

The Stanislavsky System is an intense character development process that strives to make a performance "real" and not artificial. In order to achieve this realism, the system is used to:

- Bring an actor's experiences into the role.
- Expand an actor's imagination.

Stanislavsky believed that in order to make a character true, the character must be approached from the inside. That means drawing on the real inside life of the actor, most specifically drawing on memories. The actor also has to create the inside life of the character: the character has to have inner thought, back story, beliefs, and so on, just as a real person does. When the actor answers questions about the character, they should speak in the first person. "I am..." "I want..."

The use of the imagination is very important: the system is not about working out your problems on stage as therapy! Stanislavsky always focuses on the art of the process: "Love the art in yourself, not yourself in the art."

### **How to Use It?**

The System has a set vocabulary of terms. These terms represent specific exercises to be used as the actor works on the script. The exercises are appropriate for any character and any script.

## **The Terms**

**GIVEN CIRCUMSTANCES** - The given circumstances are the character details in the script - the facts the playwright gives the actor. They are unchangeable. Focus attention on the Geographical, Social and Historical elements in the script.

Sample questions to ask:

- Where am I?
- What is my specific location?
- What year is it?
- What relationships do I have?
- What has happened before the play begins?

**SUPER OBJECTIVE** - This is also referred to in some books as the SUPER TASK. The Super Objective is the main theme of the play. The subject of the play. Everything drives toward the Super Objective.

Some examples:

- The Glass Menagerie: True Escape is impossible
- Hamlet: Revenge
- The Crucible: Good vs Evil

**OBJECTIVE** - This is also referred to in some books as the TASK. Once the overall theme of the play is established, break the script down into sections. The objective is the goal for your character in each section. It's what the character would like to see happen at the end of the section; what they want. This is not necessarily what happens, but this is what the character is striving for.

It is the actor's job to focus on the objective and strive to complete it, no matter what stands in the way. To understand and apply this, you should divide the play up into sections (this may already be done by the author (ie: scenes). For each section you should know what your character wants and what action they are going to take to get that want.

**MAGIC IF** - Your character is in a specific situation. The Magic If answers the following question: "What would I do if I were in the same situation?"

The "If" is very important. Again, this about your real life experiences, in combination with your imagination. The situation is not real, and the system doesn't assume you have ever been in that situation. But knowing yourself, what would you do? How would you act? Take the imaginary situation and make real life decisions as to how you would behave.

It's crucial to determine the "do" in the question. What action would you take?

**EMOTIONAL MEMORY** - This is also called AFFECTIVE MEMORY. In the system, the actor does not "act" emotions. You don't act sad, or happy, or mad. With Emotional Memory the actor remembers a situation when he/she felt the same, or similar, emotions as their character. Recalling the situation leads to emotion.

What's important about this exercise is that the actor must not force a memory, or bring up something hurtful. It's a play, not therapy. It's important not to, as Stanislavsky says, "assault the subconscious." Past memories are used (as opposed to present situations) because they are more controllable. The actor can also use situations they were not directly involved with - it could be a something they saw, read about or heard about.

Sense Memory is an offshoot of Emotional Memory. The actor recalls a memory, and tries to put all five senses to the memory. What did you see, hear, taste, touch, smell? If you're working on a play and haven't done this type of work before, I would suggest choosing one moment. How can emotional memory help you develop your character at this moment of the play?

**INNER MONOLOGUE** - Also referred to as SUBTEXT. These are the character's thoughts. What's going on inside the character during a scene? Creating the subtext is part of developing the inner life of the character.

## **Stanislavsky Speaks**

Here are a few quotes from Stanislavsky himself about acting and creating a character.

"In the creative process there is the father, the author of the play; the mother, the actor pregnant with the part; and the child, the role to be born."

"Love the art in yourself, not yourself in the art"

"What does it really mean to be truthful on stage? Does it mean that you conduct yourself as you do in ordinary life? Not at all. Truthfulness in those terms would be sheer triviality. There is the same difference between artistic and inartistic truth as exists between a painting and a photograph: the latter produces everything, the former only what is essential; to put the essential on canvas requires the talent of a painter."

"Put life into the imagined circumstances and actions until you have completely satisfied your sense of truth."

"If you know your character's thoughts, the proper vocal and bodily expressions will naturally follow."  
"When we are on stage, we are in the here and now."

"One must not confuse the 'theatrical' with what is truly theatrical. The theatre undoubtedly demands something special that is not to be found in life. So the task is: to bring life to the stage, while avoiding the 'theatrical' (which destroys life) but at the same time respecting the nature of the stage itself."

"Imagination creates things that can be or can happen."

"Create your own method. Don't depend slavishly on mine. Make up something that will work for you! But keep breaking traditions, I beg you."

AND...

"There are no small parts. Only small actors."

## #1 APPLYING THE STANISLAVSKY METHOD

### MAGIC IF

Exercise: You are in a play that takes place at a bank. As your character is finishing up with the teller, a bank robber enters and shoots a gun into the air.

If you were in a similar situation, what would you do? Would you be a coward or a hero? Would you yell? Would you hide behind someone? Would you run out? \_\_\_\_\_

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How would this information help in your character development? \_\_\_\_\_

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### EMOTIONAL MEMORY

Exercise: As if you were preparing a two-person scene, read the selected scene and then identify the main emotion expressed in the scene. For example, Envy.

Recall a memory from your own life where you felt Envy. Write the memory down. Be specific. Try to use the five senses in your description. For example: "My best friend and I tried out for the same part in the school play. She got it and I didn't. I tried to be happy for her, but I wasn't. I couldn't look her in the eye. I made my voice sound happy, but I knew I was exaggerating and I think she did too. My stomach hurt and I had to hold it. I thought I was going to throw up."

Do an improv involving Envy. It does not have to be the scenario of your memory. But, keep your memory in your mind. Remember how you acted.

NOW: With a partner, choose a two person scene from those offered. Determine the emotion in the scene. \_\_\_\_\_

Recall a memory from your own life where you felt \_\_\_\_\_. Write the memory down using as many of the five senses as you can. \_\_\_\_\_

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### INNER MONOLOGUE

Exercise: Take the scene you selected. With your partner, sit facing each other. Another partner pair sits with the script and reads out the lines for the characters. After they hear their line, the actor speaks aloud the subtext for the line. To do that, the actor completes the sentence, "I want to..."

# **My Father Went To Switzerland And All I Got Was This Lousy T-Shirt**

By Lindsay Price © 2007

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There are two chairs seated side by side, to imitate the front seat of a car. MR. JACKSON is a driving instructor. Sits with a clipboard in the passenger seat, impatiently. EUGENIE runs on. She throws herself into the driver's side chair.

EUGENIE: Hi! I'm sorry I'm late, I'm not too late am I?

MR JACKSON: (looking at watch) Actually you're –

EUGENIE: (interrupting) Mrs Kushko is just a - oh she's so (she waves her hands about) about talking in class and I said I don't do it on purpose, and she said if I was going to waste her time by talking in class, then she was going to waste my time by talking after class. And I had to listen to her talk! Can you imagine? Do you think she's allowed to do that?

MR JACKSON: Perhaps we should –

EUGENIE: (interrupting) I explained to her that it wasn't on purpose and I explained about my driving lesson and I was going to be late, but she wouldn't listen. "Every time you open your mouth I add another five minutes." That's what she said. I really tried to explain but "every time you open your mouth I add another five minutes." That's what happened. That's why I'm late.

MR JACKSON: Are you finished?

EUGENIE: Um, I think so.

MR JACKSON: All right. Thank you for your very long, long, long, explanation. Shall we go? Hands in the ten and two position please.

EUGENIE: The whole thing is so unbelievable! Do you know what she talked about?

MR JACKSON: What? Who?

EUGENIE: Mrs Kushko. Do you know what she talked about?

MR JACKSON: I don't want to know.

EUGENIE: (not hearing) Switzerland. Can you imagine? I couldn't believe it. She goes to Switzerland every summer. I go to the mall, she goes to Switzerland. And she has so much fun in Switzerland. And they make the best chocolate in Switzerland. I think I know everything there is to know about Switzerland.

MR JACKSON: (impatient) Eugenie.

EUGENIE: Go ahead. Ask me something. I'm positive I know it.

MR JACKSON: I would prefer to see you driving rather than hear you talk about Switzerland. All right? Hands in the Ten and Two position, please.

EUGENIE: And you know what else? She's been going to Switzerland ever since she was ten years old. Her father took her.

MR JACKSON: To Switzerland?

EUGENIE: Her father took her.

MR JACKSON: To Switzerland.

EUGENIE: Can you imagine? Her father wanted her to see the world. And he took her to Switzerland!

MR JACKSON: (almost muttering) Well bully for her.

EUGENIE: Huh?

MR JACKSON: Will we be driving at any point today Eugenie?

EUGENIE: Oh. Right. Sorry. Yes. Let's go.

MR JACKSON: Hands in the ten and two position. (ONE doesn't move) Eugenie. You're not doing it.

EUGENIE: Huh?

MR JACKSON: Driving?

EUGENIE: Oh. Right. Mr. Jackson?

MR JACKSON: Yes?

EUGENIE: Did your father ever take you anywhere?

MR JACKSON: What?

EUGENIE: I don't mean Switzerland. Who's dad does that? I guess Mrs Kushko's does but that's not normal.

MR JACKSON: Eugenie. This is a driving lesson. This is not therapy.

EUGENIE: I just wondered. I mean, we've been sitting here, side by side for weeks now and –

MR JACKSON: Eugenie. We're not friends. I am the teacher and you are the student.

EUGENIE: I know but -

MR JACKSON: I'm not going to discuss this further with you. We are here to drive and driving is the only appropriate topic of discussion and that's the only thing I want to hear you talk about for the remainder of this lesson. Is that understood?

EUGENIE: Yes.

MR JACKSON: Now for the last time, hands in the ten and two position. Perhaps we can leave the parking lot.

EUGENIE does not move. She turns her head away as if she is trying not to cry, and failing. She gives a sniff. MR. JACKSON looks upwards and gives a sigh.

MR JACKSON: Are you upset?

EUGENIE: (with a little whimper) No.

MR JACKSON: Yes you are.

EUGENIE: No.

MR JACKSON: Clearly you're upset.

EUGENIE: (really trying not to cry) No.

MR JACKSON: I'm sorry. I snapped. I shouldn't have. Just forget I said anything.

EUGENIE: Ok. (she sniffs)

MR JACKSON: Can we wipe the slate clean?

EUGENIE: (trying not to cry) Uh huh.

MR JACKSON: (this is a bad thing) Are you crying?

EUGENIE: (trying not to cry) Uh uh.

MR JACKSON: You are.

EUGENIE: (crying) No I'm not!

EUGENIE cries full out, MR. JACKSON looks totally freaked out.

MR JACKSON: Really Eugenie. Don't cry. I'm begging you. I'm not good with crying. I've never been good with crying. It's the one thing..... ok. Ok. It was the Switzerland thing. That really irked me. Not you telling me, but that someone had a father who would...

EUGENIE amps up her crying.

MR JACKSON: I'll tell you anything you want, just don't cry! Take a breath, take a big breath and suck those tears back into your head. Suck them right back into your head. Suck em back. (EUGENIE is still crying) Ok, don't suck. Let them all out. Get it all out of your system. Sure. Ah, Ah, Eugenie! You were wondering, you wanted to know if my father ever took me anywhere. I'll tell you. Ok? Will that help?

EUGENIE makes some noises, that might be words, but can't be understood because of her crying.

MR JACKSON: Did my father ever take me anywhere? No he never did. I'm an only child and he never took me anywhere. He's a lawyer. A big shot lawyer. Big cases. Always working and he was always busy. I was supposed to understand. But a kid doesn't understand squat. A five year old wants to play and go to the beach and make sandcastles. An eight year old wants to ride bikes in the park. A twelve year old wants to go rollerblading. My dad didn't see it that way. How's this? Is this working?

EUGENIE gives a whimper, she's clearly listening.

MR JACKSON: Ok. The only time my dad ever paid attention to me is when I worked too. When I had homework, or when I was working on a project, we were peas in a pod. I would make up homework, just so he would spend time with me. Then I started doing spelling bees. My dad loved spelling. He would quiz me for hours. And one year, I went all the way to



MR. JACKSON: nationals. I got to the finals of nationals. My dad was beaming, I saw him in the audience. I was so happy. I got to the finals and missed on my last word. Suffrutescent. Suffrutescent. Shrub like. Somewhat Shrubby. Language of origin? Can you use it in a sentence? Are there any other pronunciations? Suffrutescent. Suffrutescent. (really taking time with this) S-U-F-R-U-T-E-S-C-E-N-T. I thought I had it. I was all set to sit down and “ping.” The bell that tells you the word is spelled wrong. The bell of doom. For whom the Bell tolls. “Ping!” S-U-F-F-R-U-T-E-S-C-E-N-T. I knew it had two “F’s.” I knew it. I’d spelled it right before. And my dad, my winner of a dad he didn’t congratulate me for how far I’d gone. He didn’t say, good show, better luck next time, you did great, I love you. He said I didn’t try hard enough. If I had tried I would have won. I would have got the word and then, and only then, would he have been proud of me.

By now EUGENIE is completely wrapped in the story and has stopped crying.

EUGENIE: That’s terrible!

MR JACKSON: That’s when I knew my dad was an ass. That’s when I concocted my plan for revenge.

EUGENIE: (with wide eyes) What did you do?

MR JACKSON: Ha ha! I went to high school. Top marks every year. The highest marks in my class. Scholarships to wherever I wanted to go and whatever I wanted to do. I was a star. Star quality. Something really to be proud of. My dad insane over the moon. I’m the talk of the town. University, same thing. Top marks every year. The highest marks in my class. I’m really going to be somebody. But then, oh then, right in the last year, right in the last second. BOOM!

EUGENIE: What?

MR JACKSON: I dropped the ball. Dropped everything. Dropped out of everything. Failed it all. Ignored all protests and pleas. Toppled my tower and laid it to ruin. And with the rubble scattered at my feet, I looked my dad in the eye and said (triumphantly) “That’s for the spelling bee, Dad!” And he.... Kicked me out of the house. And now I live in a rat hole. And I teach brain dead teenagers, no offence,

EUGENIE: None taken.

MR JACKSON: I teach them how to drive. I teach driving. (all of a sudden puzzled, realizing this isn’t really a triumph) Boy. I sure showed him.

EUGENIE: How come we got stuck with the mean dads? How come we didn’t get the dads who take us to Switzerland?

MR JACKSON: Oh, what could be so wrong with your dad? I’m sure my story is a thousand times worse than yours.

EUGENIE: It’s not revenge worthy I guess.... It’s still mean though.

MR JACKSON: What happened.

EUGENIE: I asked my dad to go driving with me. To practice? And he laughed at me. He said no. He said he’d never get into a car with me. I’m too silly. I’m just a silly girl and I’ll probably be silly for the rest of my life. And it wasn’t a nice, “You’re too silly.” Silly was defiantly a bad thing to be.



MR JACKSON: Yeah, that would suck.

EUGENIE: I am silly. But, he wrote me off. For the rest of my life. I don't like that. He's supposed to be there for me, isn't he? That's what I thought.

MR JACKSON: You should show him. Show him he's wrong.

EUGENIE: You really hold a grudge don't you? (she sighs) Forget it. (she wipes her eyes) Ok. Let's drive.

MR JACKSON: Ah, Eugenie, I don't think you're in the best frame of mind –

EUGENIE: I want to drive. I want to do something right today.

MR JACKSON: I think the best thing to do would be for me to drive, and we go get a coffee somewhere.

EUGENIE: You said it yourself. We're not friends. You don't have to baby me.

MR JACKSON: Eugenie –

EUGENIE: Am I silly? Do you think I'm silly?

MR JACKSON: I –

EUGENIE: I'm asking. Come on, what do you think?

MR JACKSON: You do.....talk..... a lot.

EUGENIE: About silly things.

MR JACKSON: I didn't say that.

EUGENIE: But you're thinking it aren't you. Aren't you!

MR JACKSON: You don't have to get mad at me. I'm not your dad.

EUGENIE: Am I a good driver?

MR JACKSON: Eugenie, don't make me answer that.

EUGENIE: Am I a good driver?

MR JACKSON: You... talk... a lot.

EUGENIE: T hat makes me a bad driver?

MR JACKSON: It doesn't help.

EUGENIE: We should be on the same side here. Our dads suck. Don't coddle me. Help me! Tell me I'm a bad driver. Tell me!

MR JACKSON: Yes you're a bad driver! A terrible driver. You hardly look at the road, you're always looking out for your friends, you want loud music playing, you never brake properly and you never, never, never, hold your hands in the ten and two position. It drives me crazy! I hate the days when I have lessons with you because I'm never entirely sure the car is going to make it out alive! I'm waiting for the day you smash into a telephone poll because you want to hold the steering wheel with your fee47

There is a pause.

EUGENIE: Ok. Thank you.

MR JACKSON: I shouldn't have said that. I should never have said that.

EUGENIE: I asked you to.

MR JACKSON: It's not professional. I have officially thrown every shred of professionalism out the window. I do deserve to live in a rat hole and teach brain dead teenagers.

MR. JACKSON smushes his face into the clipboard.

EUGENIE: Mr Jackson?

MR JACKSON: (still with his face in the clipboard) What?

EUGENIE: Can I become a better driver?

MR JACKSON: Sure. (lifting his head) Sure you can. You practice, you learn and you –

EUGENIE: Don't talk.

MR JACKSON: It would help.

EUGENIE: Ok. Hands in the ten and two position. (she does this) Ready when you are. (she turns and looks at MR. JACKSON who is staring at her) What?

MR JACKSON: What are you going to do about your dad? I know, I said we're not friends, but if you don't mind me asking.

EUGENIE: Well, I'm going to take these driving lessons, become a better driver, pass my driving test with flying colors, and then I'm going to find my father and run him down in the street.

MR JACKSON: Eugenie!

EUGENIE: Maybe back over him a couple of times for good measure.

MR JACKSON: (totally speechless) Eugenie you - you can't – You –

EUGENIE: (with a grin) Kidding!

MR JACKSON: You can't say things like that!

MR. JACKSON fans his face with the clipboard.

EUGENIE: I thought you'd like it. Being all revengy and grudgy and stuff.

MR JACKSON: Don't do that again! You almost gave me a heart attack.

EUGENIE: Sorry. (she sighs) I don't know what I'm going to do about my dad. I kinda liked who I was. Silly and everything. Now I don't know.

MR JACKSON: I....I don't know how to say this. This is sort of a friend thing. This is going to sound stupid coming from me but....don't you let him bring you down.

EUGENIE: Is this where you tell me to keep my chin up?

MR JACKSON: Seriously. I mean it.

EUGENIE: Seriously, I'll try. First step driving.

MR JACKSON: Hands in the ten and two position.

EUGENIE: Roger. Let's rock and roll!!!! (she looks over at MR. JACKSON) Kidding!

She smiles at MR. JACKSON, who smiles back.

THE END

## GIVEN CIRCUMSTANCES WORKSHEET

Play: My Father Went To Switzerland And All I Got Was This Lousy T-Shirt

Character: Eugenie

What do I know about my character?: (Name, Age, Family Unit, Social Class)

My name is Eugenie (odd name for a girl? Where did it come from?) I am a student. I am at least 16 as I am learning to drive. I am in school. I am taking driving lessons. I mention my dad.

Where am I? (America, Canada, City, Small Town)

It's not specified where I am. But obviously, I'm in an English speaking modern country, where it's not in any way out of the ordinary for girls to take driving tests.

What is my specific location? (House, playground, Department Store)

I am in the parking lot of my school. I am in the front seat of a car.

What year is it? Is the year significant?

It is the present day.

What relationships do I have? (Describe them)

Mr. Jackson my driving teacher. I like to talk to Mr. Jackson. I feel comfortable enough to share my feelings with him. My Dad. I am upset with him. I thought he would always stand up for me, and I have just found out this is not the case. Mrs Kushko. I don't understand why someone would take her to Switzerland.

What has happened before the play begins? (Significant events of the past)

I have had many driving lessons with Mr. Jackson. I was in trouble with Mrs Kushko for talking too much. My father has told me I'm a silly girl. He dismissed me. I thought he would always stand up for me, and I have found out this is not the case.

# OBJECTIVE WORKSHEET

Character: Eugenie

What is the Super Objective for the Play?

The way parents treat their children, affects them forever.

How does the Super Objective affect my character?

I am reeling from my father's comments from beginning to end.

Section	Objective	Action
1. Hi I'm sorry I'm late, I'm not too late am I?	To explain why I'm late. To be understood. To not be dismissed.	To talk so I am heard. To hide what's really upsetting me.
2. Do you know what she talked about?	To understand why Mrs. Kusko's father treated her so well.	To talk so I am heard. To hide what's really upsetting me.
3.Huh?	I want to talk about my father. I'm too scared to bring him up directly.	To open up to Mr. Jackson for the first time.
4. Really, Eugenie. Don't begging you.	I want to go home. I don't want to go home and see my father.	I am trying not to cry. I am trying to be cry. I'm invisible.
5. How come we're stuck with the mean dads?	I want to tell Mr. Jackson the truth. To tell him why I'm really upset.	To reveal what's wrong.
6. I want to drive.	I want to know what Mr. Jackson thinks of me-truthfully.	To press Mr. Jackson to reveal his opinion.
7. Mr. Jackson?	I want to prove my dad wrong. I want to like myself the way I did before.	To find some humor. To make Mr. Jackson laugh.

Play: My Father Went To Switzerland And All I Got Was This Lousy T-Shirt

Character: Eugenie

**EMOTIONAL MEMORY** – Choose one moment to use Emotional Memory.

What is the specific moment?

"I am silly. But, he wrote me off. For the rest of my life."

What is the emotion?

In this moment I feel an emotion of disappointment and worthlessness. Not good enough.

What is the memory?

The moment in my life when I felt something similar, is when I was twelve years old. My father taught at a School for the Arts and I was very much into drama. For a whole year my father told me that I was going to be able to go to his school and I was so excited. Then, overnight, he told me I wasn't going. It was in a very off-handed manner, as if it didn't mean anything. I was so disappointed. I was crushed and I thought it was because I wasn't good enough to go. My stomach plunged. It felt like there was a rock in my stomach. I cried. My body felt heavy. I never confronted my father at the time as to why I couldn't go and it wasn't till years later that I found out the real reason. To this day I remember the feeling of being told I couldn't go to that school.

How does this help my performance?

The feeling of the hardness in my stomach. The heaviness of the body. Not talking to my father – being silent. Thinking I'm not good enough. Going from one extreme to the other.

**MAGIC IF**

What would I do if my father dismissed me?

I'd like to think that I would stand up and say something. But if I'm being truthful, it's more likely that I'd clam up. I would stare daggers at him, and hunch my shoulders. I would stomp away. I would pretend that I didn't care what he said, even though I would care quite deeply. Then I would go away and cry by myself.

**INNER MONOLOGUE**

What is the subject for your character?

My subtext for this character is that I am hurt by what my father said. I want to believe I am not worthless. I am trying not to believe I am worthless. I will crumble if I believe I am worthless.

## #2 STANISLAVSKY UNDERSTANDING THE CHARACTER

### GIVEN CIRCUMSTANCES WORKSHEET

Play: \_\_\_\_\_

Author: \_\_\_\_\_ Character: \_\_\_\_\_

What do I know about my character?: (Name, Age, Family Unit, Social Class)

Where am I? (America, Canada, City, Small Town)

What is my specific location? (House, playground, Department Store)

What year is it? Is the year significant?

What relationships do I have? (Briefly describe them)

What has happened before the play begins? (Significant events of the past)

### OBJECTIVE WORKSHEET

Character: \_\_\_\_\_

What is the Super Objective for the Play?

How does the Super Objective affect my character?

*Section (Opening line/Closing line), Objective (complete the sentence "I want...", use verbs), and Action (what you're going to do)*

Section	Objective	Action

Play: \_\_\_\_\_ Character: \_\_\_\_\_

**EMOTIONAL MEMORY** – Choose one moment to use Emotional Memory.

What is the specific moment?

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What is the emotion?

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What is the memory?

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How does this help my performance?

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**MAGIC IF**

What would I do if my father dismissed me?

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**INNER MONOLOGUE**

What is the subject for your character?

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# #3

## Illustrating Character Traits

### Group Word Knowledge Activity

**Directions:** Students will receive a list of five words and will have the period to create illustrated character trait mini-posters for **each** of the words.


**Students will take one of four roles...**

**Researcher:** looks up the definitions of character traits. Remember, it's important to **choose the right definition**.

**Recorder:** writes on the project paper. You are responsible for the word, the definition, and the description of the action.

**Director:** thinks of actions that show the character traits, helps the researcher put the definitions in to your own words, also presents the project.

**Illustrator:** draws pictures that show the character traits. Other students should help color.

<p style="text-align: right;">The character trait →</p> <p style="text-align: right;">The definition →</p>  <p>A drawing showing how the character trait could be implied or indirectly linked to a character→</p>  <p style="text-align: right;">A _____ character might...→</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Description of how the character trait could be shown.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Gregarious</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;">One who is friendly, sociable, or likes company.</p>  <p style="text-align: center;">A gregarious character might shake hands with new people they meet.</p>
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Rubric

<b>Defintions:</b> Did you define all five words? Did you define them correctly?	1	2	3	4	5
<b>Illustrations:</b> Did you illustrate word meaning? Does it look presentable?	1	2	3	4	5
<b>Explanations:</b> Did you explain how your illustration shows the word meaning?	1	2	3	4	5
<b>Quality:</b> Overall quality, neatness, artistry, and penmanship.	1	2	3	4	5

# Why Observation Is Crucial to Acting

By Ana Mărgineanu | Posted Dec. 4, 2012, 2 p.m. | [www.backstage.com](http://www.backstage.com)



It is my favorite because it's easy. You do not need a rehearsal space, special equipment, or a dedicated time. It is called "observing," and I'm pretty sure I'm not the first one to tell you about it. But it is such an important tool so I think it's worth reminding.

When you are on the subway in the morning, take a moment and look at the people around you. Chose one in your mind and try to really observe him or her. **What is this person like? What age? What makes him absolutely unique? What was the reason you chose him? Name three qualities that make this person different from all the others on the train. Can you pick up a gesture he is doing? If not, can you imagine one that would match him?** For example, touching his chin when nervous.

Then the true fun begins. Try to imagine the life of this person, who must be your hero by now. I will call him/her "A." **What does A do for a living? Does A have a family? Where is A going now? What is the biggest problem A has to solve? What is A dreaming about? If you would dramatize A's life, what type of play would it be? A love story? A drama? A comedy? Why? Imagine a scene with A. Imagine the way he/she talks. Go in your mind as detailed as you can (depending on how many stops you have, of course). The secret is not to invent random things. Everything you come up with has to have a reason reflected in the real person in front of you.**

Once you are at home, pick up one of your theater books, and chose a play you already know. It can be a classic, or maybe something you are working on now. Open the book randomly, and take the first character you see. Try to read a scene, imagining that you cast A as that character. The bigger the gap between the character in the play and you're a, the better. For example, let's say that you picked Shakespeare's Juliet, and your A is a homeless looking guy in his 60s who was eating peanuts. Read the scene from that guy's perspective. For example, he is in love for the very first time (but he also has a back pain, etc). Don't forget the peanuts! Play with it until it doesn't feel ridiculous anymore.

Sometimes it might just not work. Remember it is just an exercise and is meant to widen your area of acting. Other times, the result is so fresh, so interesting, and so beautiful, you may want to keep it in mind and add it to your repertoire. The more you play, the easier it gets to make connections and to create unique characters.

Give it a try. Next time you are on the subway, give that solitaire on your phone a break and play this game instead. And if you have a moment, let me know how it worked for you. I'd be happy to hear.

*Ana Mărgineanu is a Romanian theater director. She recently started PopUP Theatrics, a site-specific theater company, in partnership with Tamilla Woodard. Ana's work has been presented in the main cities of Europe as well as in New York. Her shows won multiple awards, including "Best Play" at London Fringe Awards ("The Sunshine Play") and "Best Show" at the Romanian Comedy Festival ("5 Miraculous Minutes"). She is also an alumnus of The Lincoln Center Directors Lab, and a founding member of The Internationalists. Ana worked as an associated professor at the National University of Theatre and Film, Bucharest, and she has lead acting workshops in Athens, Bucharest, New York and Mexico. For more information, visit [www.anamargineanu.com](http://www.anamargineanu.com).*



## #4 OBSERVING PEOPLE

Date \_\_\_\_\_ Name \_\_\_\_\_ Period \_\_\_\_\_

Topic: Character from a Play

Write at least 5 sentences describing a person you saw and heard during the day-someone in a class, on the bus or in a location you visited. Try to answer each question suggested in the previous article. In class, find a script and try reading a character AS the person you observed. Work with a partner using the same script and a different character to create a version of a scene using the people you observed as the characters. Be prepared to show this scene to the class as a reading.

This image shows a single sheet of white paper with horizontal ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page. There are no margins, text, or other markings on the paper.

## **Observation in Acting – Details and Their Importance**

An actor's observation is a very important and is something that will help any aspiring actor to become more aware of their surroundings and little details. Professional actors have become amazing observers and this is how they are able to put themselves in other people's shoes and gives them the opportunity to act out other roles. Actors who are just starting out will be able to do roles that fit their personality the most but this does not mean that you will be doing the same roles forever. To become a better, you must improve your observation skills and it will help you become the best actor ever.

### **Do Your Homework To Know Who You Are**

You will hear actors who talk about "doing their homework" to prepare for a role and this is mainly trying to know more about the character and how they can prepare themselves to play that role. Becoming an actor can be very tiring because you will always be convincing your mind that you are the character that you will be playing and this can be very taxing. However, becoming a better actor means that you will be a better observer because this is the first step to actually doing your homework.

### **The Importance Of Observing Little Details**

Little details about a character will be very important because this is what helps define the character and the way the role will be played. These little details that you observe everyday in people will help you get a better understanding of how people are and you will then be able to expand your ability of portraying them. Many actors get "typed" and then aren't able to expand their range of roles because they're stuck in a labeled slot. An actor's observation skills is key to the expansion of an actor's role range.

### **An Observation Exercise**

A good way to improve your acting skills is to add to your list of acting exercises and do them consistently while growing your personal process. This observation exercise is fun and very useful! It will help you to really discover fine details about your characters. In fact, this exercise is yet a further extension of the character exercise. This first step is to visualize your role and then put yourself in the casting director's shoes!

By getting good at observing the world around us, you will be able to perfect your roles. This exercise is a wonderful way of helping yourself to become the best actor that you can be.

<http://rogersactingtips.com/>

## #5: CHARACTER BIOGRAPHY

As an actor, you must understand your character as a real person, and the one way to accomplish this is through compiling a biography of the character in the selected play.

Take your time when answering the questions. Because some of the questions require a scene-by-scene answer, do not expect to finish this worksheet within a single sitting. The goal should not be how quickly you can answer these questions, but rather, how accurately and detailed you can answer the aforementioned questions.

### First Section - When?

Within this first section strive to answer all of the following questions as detailed as possible.

- What year is it?
- What month(s) does the story take place?
- What time of day is each scene your character in?
- How is the weather within each individual scene?
- How does the time of year, month and time of day of each scene affect your character?

### Second Section - Who?

- What is the personal history of my character?
- What is my self-perception?
- What is my moral self-perception?
- What is my mental self-perception?
- What is my social self-perception?
- What is my spiritual self-perception?
- What do I wear in each of the scenes?
- What are my relationships?

### Third Section - Where?

- What are my surroundings within each scene?
- In what city/state/country am I located?
- How does my current physical location (i.e., city/state/country) affect my life?

### Fourth Section - Why?

- What is my simple objective for each scene?
- What is my motivational impulse for each scene?
- What is my primary (overall) objective?

### Fifth Section - How?

- What obstacles must I overcome in each scene?
- What are the primary (overall) obstacles preventing me from achieving my objective?
- What am I willing to do in order to achieve my objective?

## Observe other people

Observation and the actor. Hamlet says, in his acting advice to the players; 'Hold the Mirror up to Nature'. Can you do that? Can you reflect reality? Can you mirror the characteristics, mannerisms, voice and actions of real people. Observe other people and note how they move and how they talk. Listen to their speech patterns. Watch what happens physically to them as they get expressive. Watch and learn. Acting is the study of human nature. Take what you have seen in real life and apply it to your acting. When a person sits do they lounge, or do they sit up straight? In A Midsummer Night's Dream, Puck calls the actors 'mimics'. Actor's mimic real-life people. In fact, learning to mimic other people's voices and movements, is all some other actors do. The more successful an actor is at holding up the mirror to another person, the more he or she seems to submerge themselves in that character. When looking at a role, think of it in terms of real people that you have seen, and work on the outward voice, movement and characteristics of that particular person. In that way, you are not imagining you are the character from the inside out, but from the outside in. Carefully constructed characters based on observation can be a very effective way of creating your on-stage character. You will learn from real-life character studies how people change speeds in their voices, how they punctuate sentences, how they end sentences in upward inflections if they want to be heard and dwindle off if they don't really want to be heard or if they have lost their way. Observe the stillness of a real person in a time of crisis, the way emotions are betrayed in their voice. Observation will teach you how a person moves in real life, how they relax, what happens to them physically if they are upset, how someone moves when they want something and how someone moves when they are rejecting someone or something. As an actor, be the mirror that reflects human nature.

[http://www.bottletreeinc.com/more\\_acting\\_tips\\_young\\_actors.html](http://www.bottletreeinc.com/more_acting_tips_young_actors.html)

## #6 OBSERVATION OF REAL PERSON

Date	Name	Period
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Topic: Description of a Real Person #1

Write a description of a real person. Be as specific and complete as you can. Be prepared to present this person to the class in a short improvisational scene.

[illegible]

## #7 A REAL PERSON

Date \_\_\_\_\_ Name \_\_\_\_\_ Period \_\_\_\_\_

Topic: Description of a Real Person #2

Write a description of a real person. Be a specific and complete as you can. Be prepared to present this person to the class in a short improvisational scene.

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## #8 A REAL PERSON

Date \_\_\_\_\_ Name \_\_\_\_\_ Period \_\_\_\_\_

Topic: Description of a Real Person #3

Write a description of a real person. Be a specific and complete as you can. Be prepared to present this person to the class in a short improvisational scene.

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## Imagination

Imagination and the young actor. One very important tool to develop is your imagination. Acting is play, and the imagination is such an obvious tool to use when you are playing and yet most actors do not use this simple and powerful tool. If you can imagine, you do not need any emotional or mental tricks to prop up your performance. How do you become a prince of Denmark who mourns the loss of his murdered father? Use your imagination. What kind of world is London in the eighteenth century for a poor pie shop owner, who is also a woman, and on her own? Use your imagination. What would it be like to live in another country, another time, in another body? You trust yourself and use your imagination. If you are currently involved in a play, there are things like consonants, upward inflections, tempo, emotion and character to think of, but if you imagine how that person would talk and move and what inspires that character to speak the lines that he or she does, a lot of the technical tricks will fall into place. If you imagine what the character is trying to tell the audience, what the character is trying to tell her mother, his girlfriend, or him or herself, then the world of acting will open up to you. Most young actors do not use their imaginations nearly enough. They don't work at it. Turn off the television, put away the Ipad, forget facebook for awhile, and do something that engages the imagination like reading, or walking, or sitting in a field of flowers. Take time out of your life to think and to imagine. Your task as an actor, is to convince the audience that you are the character you are playing. If you can't convince yourself, how can you convince anyone else?

Imagination is a powerful tool. Use it!

[http://www.bottletreeinc.com/more\\_acting\\_tips\\_young\\_actors.html](http://www.bottletreeinc.com/more_acting_tips_young_actors.html)

## #9 USING IMAGINATION

Read the short monologue below:

*If you push me in that mud puddle one more time, I'm gonna...I'm gonna...my mom said calling people a Poopy-Head is not a nice thing to do, but you are not doing a nice thing to me, so I just might have to call you that. And yeah, so I have mud on me now, but it's not poop, and having poop on your head is a lot grosser! You think that's funny? Okay! You can laugh. Maybe you'd like some mud on you then? What—are you gonna run away now? Go tell your mom that I was gonna throw mud on you? When she looks at you in your yellow, ugly, clean flower dress and then looks at me, with all this mud on my jeans and in my hair—do you think she's gonna care what I was gonna do to you? When look at what you really did do to me! Go ahead and laugh and run home. I don't care. Cause my mom can wash my jeans out. But I had your little library book in my pocket when you pushed me in the puddle. And Mrs. Jenkins is not gonna be happy you ruined more of the school's property. Cause you can't wash mud from a library book.*

<http://www.tameddaugh.com/monologues.html>

Now, using your imagination, answer each of the following questions.

1. When did this happen?
2. How old are you?
3. Where are you?
4. What happened right before you said this?
5. How do you feel right now?
6. Why do you feel this way?
7. What is your objective when you say this?
8. What stands in the way of you reaching your objective?
9. What are you willing to do to reach your objective?
10. What could happen next?

# #10 MONOLOGUE CHARACTER ANALYSIS

DIRECTIONS: Using your previous knowledge, awareness, prior observations and imagination to describe the background and personality of your chosen character. Be sure to use the text of the monologue whenever possible to complete your answers. **On you own paper**, answer each question as completely as possible. Answer each question with “I am...” or “I want...” or other related “I” statements.

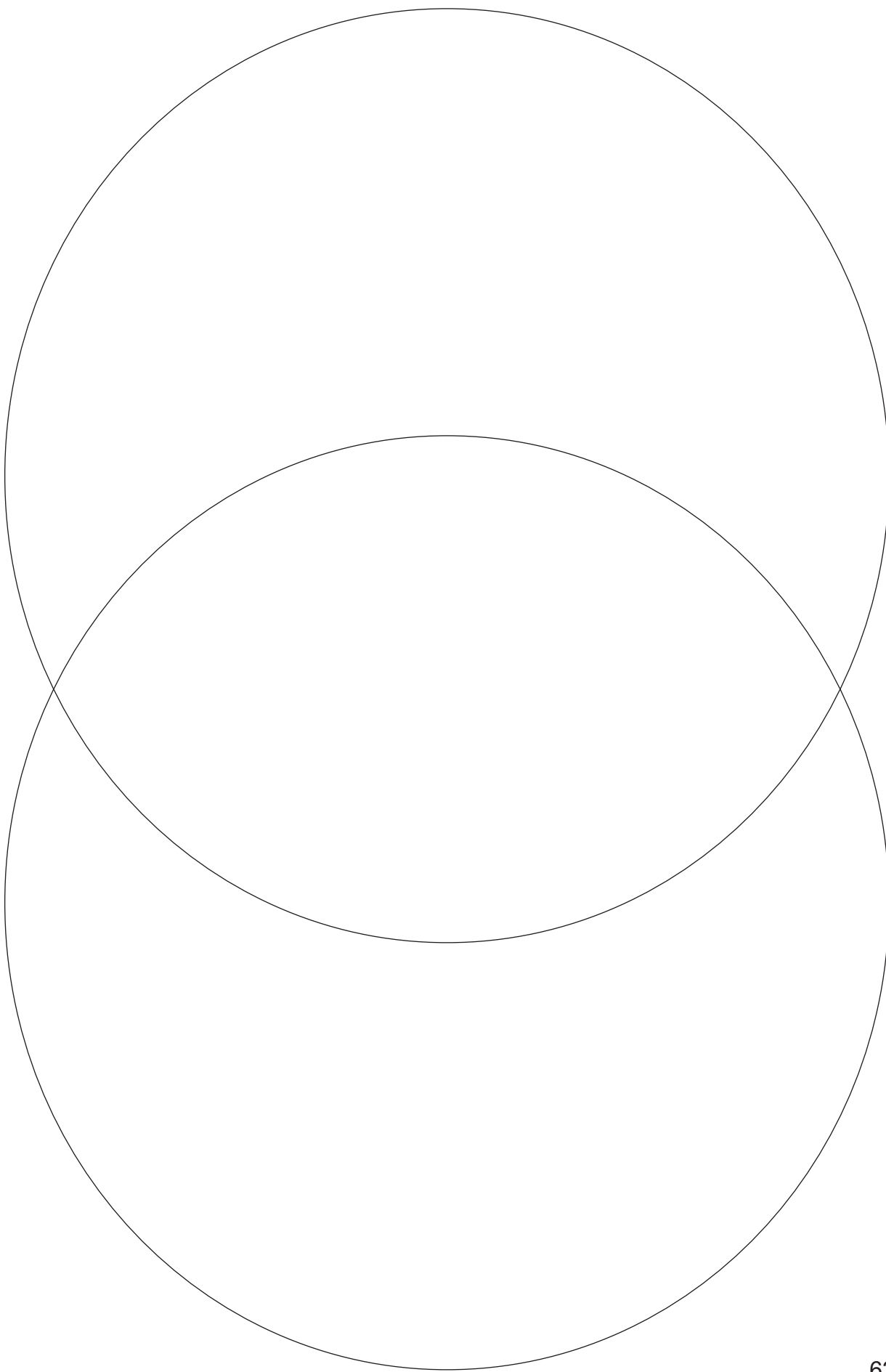
CHARACTER NAME \_\_\_\_\_

1. Write a brief Physical Description of your character as a real person. Include your ideas about appropriate height, weight, facial features, hair color, and skin color/tone. Be sure to note any outstanding physical characteristics, traits or conditions that help make this character unique. Use descriptive terms (adjectives) to create a verbal picture in the reader's mind. Make sure you incorporate any information from the text in this description and then explain why you believe the character looks like this.
2. Describe this character's stance, posture, walk, movements and common gestures. Include any physical habits or mannerisms that this character might have that help create the physicality of the character.
3. Is the movement and gesture used by this character broad or limited? What about this character lets you know this information?
4. When does this monologue take place?
5. Where is the character at the time of the monologue?
6. Describe the character's intelligence and education.
7. What happened before the monologue?
8. Where does this character live?
9. What is the family's economic and social status?
10. What job or position does this character hold? (This could be “student”)
11. What attitudes, beliefs, or values does the character have and how are they shown?
12. How does the character feel right now? How do you know this?
13. What is the objective of the character?
14. What obstacle does the character need to overcome to achieve objective?
15. What would you, as the character, be willing to do to achieve your objective?

Complete the Venn Diagram that follows to compare and contrast yourself to the character in the monologue you selected. Use as many descriptive traits as you can - at least 12-15.

CHARACTER

ME





## FOURTH QUARTER OBSERVATIONS & ACTIVITIES



The activities this quarter are to help you grow as an actor, a playwright, and to gain understanding of other aspects of theatre, such as costuming and scene design. Some of these activities you will complete individually and some in a group. Each assignment allows you to grow as a theatre participant and to experience the many sides of theatre. There are short articles included that will introduce and assist your understanding. Take your time with these and apply each as described.



# 10 Elements of Great Monologues

by Gabriel Davis

*(printed and shared with permission from the author)*

Adapted by Gretchen D. Hall

<http://www.monologuegenie.com/monologue-writing-101.html>

Element #1: Your character must have a strong want. Think about the times you have become the most aggressive, upset, or combative. Most likely, if you felt this strongly, it was related to something you wanted or cared about very much. A character in a monologue needs to want something badly. Without a strong want there is no drama – or comedy for that matter. Whatever it is your character wants, we need to hear that want clearly behind the words they're speaking.

Element #2: The monologue must have high stakes. Meaning, there is something important or significant at stake for your character. If the character doesn't get what they want, what will be the consequence? Without stakes, a monologue is a walk in the park, its unimportant. When working on developing your monologue, ask yourself: what is at stake for this character?

Element #3: Variety of Tactics/Persuasive Moves. A great monologue has a character use a variety of tactics to achieve their want. The more inventive you are in giving your character persuasive moves to make, the more interested in that character the audience will be. If the monologue has an internal struggle going on, where the character is trying to convince themselves of something, then ask yourself: What must the character do to persuade themselves to take an action they know they need to, or to face something difficult, or to change something about themselves? The possibilities – and tactics – are limitless.

Element #4: Hook Opening. A good journalist, novelist, magazine writer always needs a hook—a killer first line that pulls the reader in and makes them want to read the next line, and then the next, and the next. There are a number of different kind of hooks. A hook can be a headline, the “Thesis” or “Argument” hook, or the Relationship Dynamics hook. No matter what type of hook you use, it should peak the audience's attention. Then the rest of the monologue has to fulfill the excitement and expectations it sets up.

Element # 5. Button Closing. When your monologue ends, you don't want the audience to wonder, is he/she done? Is this a dramatic pause? You want your ending to be clear. A “button” can bring the thoughts expressed in the monologue to a conclusion. Often it is the moment when a character finally accepts something, finally overcomes an obstacle, finally figures something out, or comes to a decision point. What is a decision point? The moment when a character is ready to take – or is taking before our eyes – a decisive action. Think of a monologue like a mini-play. The arc of the monologue should build to this final line. If the monologue's hook opening brings a question into the audiences mind, the button close should answer it.

Element #6. Include detail that engages the senses! What should a monologue make us do? Empathize! One of the most effective ways to engage your audience is to engage their senses. We all share a common five senses, and using them to describe something that happened to us brings our audience right into the experience with us. Talking about ideas, situations and feelings without linking them to sensory experience may work when connecting with people in real life, but it generally tends to be less effective for stage and screen. Writing that taps into our senses holds incredible power to move us.

Element #7. Character overcomes internal obstacle(s). Some of the most interesting monologues feature internal struggles. Watching a character conquer their own self-doubts in the course of a speech or soliloquy will hold an audience's attention. Good writing is complex and layered—a monologue can have a character grappling with both internal and external forces simultaneously.

**Element #8. Balance Past and Present Action.** So many monologues get stuck in the past, recounting stories that don't connect with the here and now. A great monologue connects with the present even when it discusses the past. So, as you write a monologue that has your character recount a story, think of how they are using it as a tactic to accomplish something with whomever or whatever they're speaking to now. Here are a few examples of how a character can use past events to deal with their own internal obstacles: A character may recount a painful memory—something that is holding them back—in order to heal. To fight sadness in the moment, a character may recall a happier time. To fight weakness in the moment, a character may recall a story that illustrates their strength. Walk the tightrope between past and present action well and you'll be on your way to a strong monologue.

**Element #9. Discovery!** We don't want to see a character do something they've done a million times in the same way they've always done it. A monologue is dramatic when the monologist doesn't know exactly what they're going to say until they say it. Often we are seeing a character come to a realization, a personal discovery, or a new or more complete understanding of something for the first time. We do not want to know where the monologue is going to end when it starts. The element of surprise, of discovery, of unexpected directions, twists and turns makes for an entertaining journey.

**Element #10. Exercise restraint to build dramatic/comedic tension.** A character trying hard not to cry is much more interesting than one all-out-bawling for two minutes straight. Most of us try to avoid displaying strong, overwhelming emotion. A good monologue shows that struggle to keep strong emotions under-wraps. That's not to say you can't have a character have intense emotional outbursts, only reserve those expressions for key moments—perhaps the climax of your monologue. Have your character work, just as a real person would, to keep powerful emotions bubbling up just under the surface under control. It builds expectation—are they going to lose it? Are they going to maintain their cool exterior? What a character doesn't say, or doesn't do—what they might be on the verge of doing—tells a story that contains inherent dramatic tension.

While skimming this tutorial fast when you're in a rush will definitely help you get a decent monologue done on deadline, not everyone strikes gold their first time putting pen to paper. So don't get frustrated if your first isn't the monologue of your dreams. If you are patient with yourself as you work through these 10 Elements and apply them in your writing you will see results.

If you're serious about writing great audition material, I recommend coming back to these 10 Elements over time to get the most out of them. If you put in the investment of time and energy to learn and absorb each of the elements here, and if you read lots of monologues to see how these elements are used, you'll have the tools to write great audition material consistently. You'll begin to gain insights into what makes a monologue work and why many fall flat.

As you read and study monologues for the 10 Elements, you'll find that some monologues contain several of the elements discussed here, while others may only feature one or two of them. Start by tracking which elements each monologue you encounter is using. Ask yourself some basic questions. Are the elements you identified in the monologue used effectively by the author? Why or why not? How are they used? Having specific examples of each of the Elements is the key to building a depth of understanding. Keep a list of the monologues that use the elements effectively. Build your list and keep good notes. Which elements recur again and again? Which ones do you encounter less frequently? Use this knowledge to imagine your own truly unique piece; one that will stand out from everything else out there. The more you understand how the monologues you admire use these elements, the easier it will be to write killer audition material on a consistent basis yourself.

# #1

## YOU AS A CHARACTER

If you were a character in a play or monologue, how would you describe the elements of your character?

1. Appearance \_\_\_\_\_

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2. Personality \_\_\_\_\_

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3. Background \_\_\_\_\_

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4. Motivation \_\_\_\_\_

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5. Relationships \_\_\_\_\_

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6. Conflicts \_\_\_\_\_

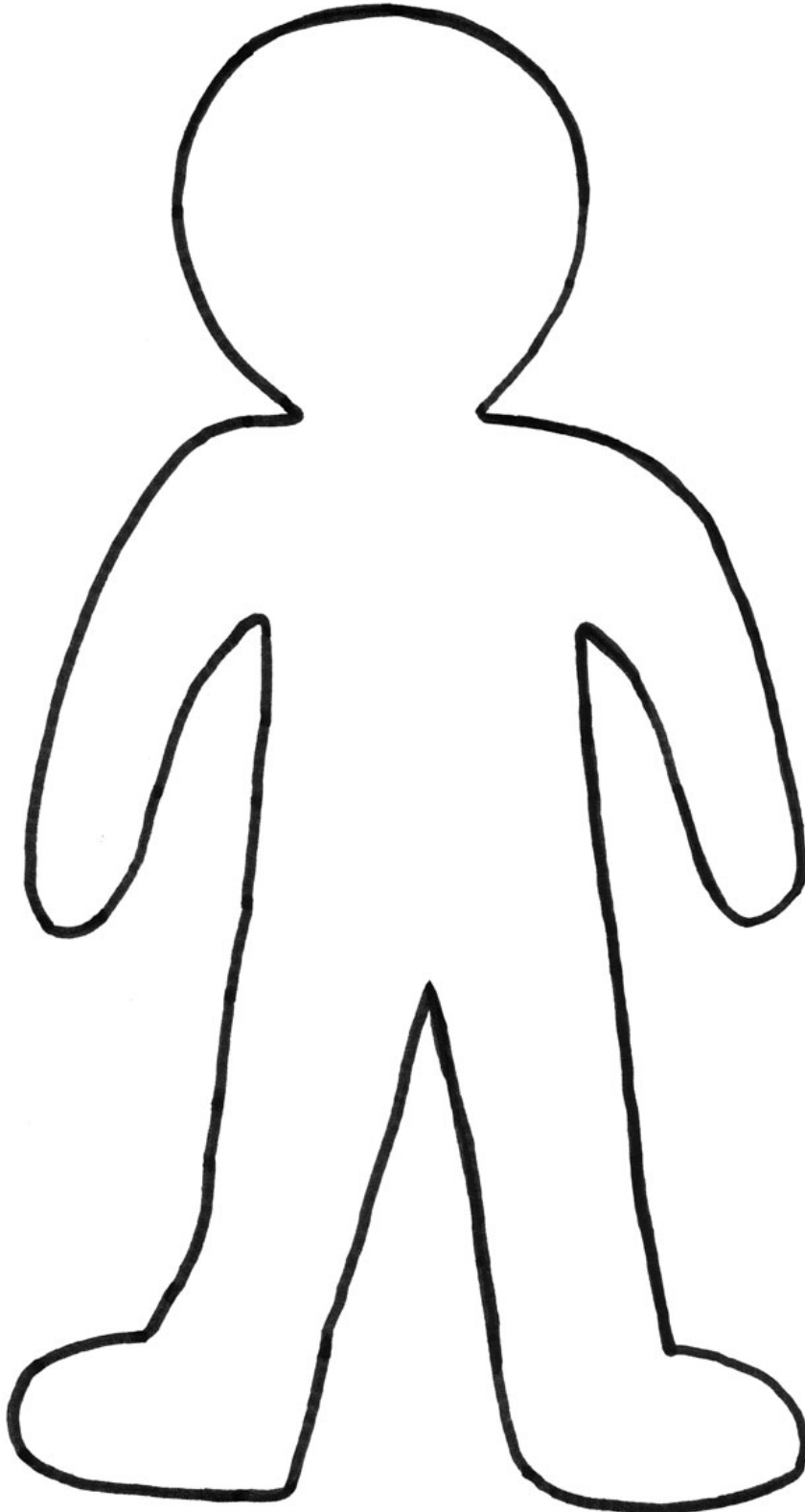
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## #2 CHARACTER OUTLINE

Write character traits on the outside of the character...thoughts and feelings on the inside. Color the outline to indicate character mood...Draw a face to show emotion most common to the character.



### **#3**

## **I AM...**

Complete each sentence with words or phrases in a manner so as to create yourself as an unique and school-appropriate character. Concentrate on the time and place you were when you experienced the event about which you will be writing. Then, when complete, using your own paper or a digital device (computer, cell-phone, tablet), write a personal monologue about yourself as a character expressing the hopes, dreams, and feelings shown here..

I AM (two special characteristics of the character such as “funny”)

I WONDER (something the character is curious about)

I UNDERSTAND (something the character accepts as true)

I SAY (something the character believes in completely)

I DREAM (something the character wants more than anything)

I TRY (something the character makes an effort to do)

I HOPE (something the character hopes for in the future)

I THINK (something the character finds important)

## #4

# STUDENT MONOLOGUE CRITIQUE

Complete this form for the partner you observed in rehearsal. The goal is to assist the other student in developing a believable and captivating performance.

AUTHOR: \_\_\_\_\_ CRITIC \_\_\_\_\_

1. How does the student-author use direct and indirect references to the object or memory to create drama?
2. How does the monologue begin and does it catch the attention of an audience? (hook)
3. How does the monologue effectively introduce the major memory and/or object? (hook)
4. What does the character **want**?
5. What **consequences** will the character face if the want is not achieved?
6. What **tactics** does the character use to achieve the goal?
7. Identify points of emotional importance to the character portrayed. (details)
8. Identify several, at least 3, character traits of the character. (details)
9. What **internal obstacles** does the character need to overcome?
10. How did the character touch the **five senses** of the audience?
11. How did the character connect **past with present** in the monologue?
12. What did the character **discover** about him/herself in the course of the monologue? What long-term effect did the event, memory or object have on the character?
13. How did the performer handle the emotions of the event? (restraint)
14. What was the **“button”** that allow the audience member to recognize the end of the monologue?
15. How could the writer/performer improve his/her monologue and/or performance?



# Costume designer

Costume designers create the look of each character by designing clothes and accessories the actors will wear in performance. Depending on their style and complexity, costumes may be made, bought, revamped out of existing stock or rented. Their designs need to faithfully reflect the personalities of the characters in the script.

The shapes, colors and textures that a costume designer chooses make an immediate and powerful visual statement to the audience. Creative collaboration among the costume designer, the director and the set and lighting designers ensures that the costumes are smoothly integrated into the production as a whole.

- Stage costumes can provide audiences with information about a character's occupation, social status, gender, age, sense of style and tendencies towards conformity or individualism. As well, costumes can:
  - reinforce the mood and style of the production
  - distinguish between major and minor characters
  - suggest relationships between characters
  - change an actor's appearance
  - suggest changes in character development and age
  - be objects of beauty in their own right.
- Costume designs also need to include any accessories such as canes, hats, gloves, shoes, jewelry or masks. These costume props add a great deal of visual interest to the overall costume design. They are often the items that truly distinguish one character from another.

## The designer's work

Costume designers begin their work by reading the script to be produced. If the production is set in a specific historical era, the fashions of this period will need to be researched. To stimulate the flow of ideas at the first meeting with the director and the design team (set, costume, lighting and sound designers), the costume designer may want to present a few rough costume sketches. This is also an appropriate time to check with the director on the exact number of characters needing costumes, as any non-speaking characters the director plans to include may not have been listed in the script.

It is the costume designer's responsibility to draw up the costume plot. The costume plot is a list or chart that shows which characters appear in each scene, what they are wearing and their overall movement throughout the play. This helps track the specific costume needs of every character. It can also identify any potential costume challenges, such as very quick changes between scenes.

When the director and production team have approved the costume designer's preliminary sketches, she or he can draw up the final costume designs. The final designs are done in full color. They show the style, silhouette, textures, accessories and unique features of each costume.

Once the show opens, the designer's work is essentially complete. Now it's normally the job of a wardrobe assistant to make sure that every aspect of the production runs just as the designer intended, time after time, until the production closes.

<http://www.aact.org/people/costumedesigner.html>

**#5**  
**EGG CHARACTER DESIGN**

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_ Period \_\_\_\_\_

This will be turned in with your Egg Character. Be sure it is complete and matches your finished Egg.

2 Quotes from your monologue  
to show how the character is  
feeling:

1. \_\_\_\_\_

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Description of how your Egg looks:

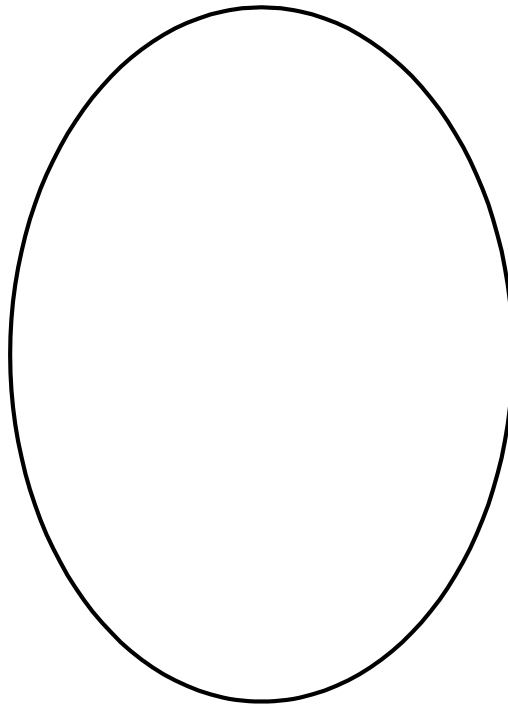
Costume: My egg character will wear \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ because \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

It will be made out of \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_.



2. \_\_\_\_\_

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Facial expression: My egg character will show

\_\_\_\_\_

and \_\_\_\_\_

because \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

I will show this by \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

# Playwright

Playwrights create scripts. Like other literary artists, playwrights tell stories through the words and actions of characters. While the work of the playwright can stand on its own as literature, its potential is fully realized only when the skills of all the other theatre artists combine to transform the script into a production of a play.

## **A playwright's tool kit needs to contain:**

- 
- a vivid imagination
- a gripping story to tell
- insight into what makes people tick
- a good ear for capturing the way people really speak
- working knowledge of the elements of dramatic structure
- an understanding of theatre's non-verbal means of expression—sound, movement, setting, costume, lighting, music, pacing and stage picture

While most playwrights, like most writers, work alone, sometimes they share the task of script creation with actors and directors in a process known as collective creation. Here everyone takes a hand in researching the story idea and developing the script. But because the skillful ordering and re-creation of events is central to the playwright's art, the final task of shaping the raw material into a coherent and effective script will normally fall to the playwright.

Playwrights may also develop a new script with feedback and guidance from a dramaturg. A dramaturg is the theatre professional primarily responsible for managing the literary aspects of a play's production. A dramaturg's feedback on a new script may be given at any point in the process, from the first draft all the way through to first rehearsals, depending on the individual situation. A new script can often be strengthened by the kind of feedback the playwright receives through a workshop process. Usually organized by a dramaturg, this process often involves a reading and/or scene study of the script by professional actors and a director.

Finally, it's a good idea to be familiar with the roles and responsibilities of the other key players in mounting a production.

<http://www.aact.org/people/playwright.html>



## #6

### Create a Character

**Directions:** Select a picture from the collection. Then complete the observation based upon visual cues, inference and your imagination.

**Initial reason for selecting this picture:** \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

#### I. Actual Observed Information:

*Describe what you actually can observe or determine by visual cues.*

General Appearance:

1. Gender: Male \_\_\_\_\_ or Female \_\_\_\_\_
2. Approximate Height \_\_\_\_\_
3. Approximate Age \_\_\_\_\_
4. Hair Color \_\_\_\_\_
5. Race \_\_\_\_\_
6. Skin Tone \_\_\_\_\_
7. Describe the person's Dress \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

8. Posture: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

#### II. Inferred Physical Characteristics:

*Describe what you can infer based upon your actual observation, your general knowledge of people and your applied imagination.*

9. Movement Characteristics: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

10. Realistic Mannerism(s) or Interesting Habits(s): \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

11. How do you think this person's voice would sound? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

### III. Created Internal Characteristics:

*Based upon your observed and inferred characteristics, use your imagination to create the internal characteristics of the person in the picture you selected.*

12. Background: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

13. Financial Status : \_\_\_\_\_

14. Education: \_\_\_\_\_

15. Job: \_\_\_\_\_

16. Role in Society: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

17. Family: \_\_\_\_\_

18. Hobbies: \_\_\_\_\_

19. Intellegence: \_\_\_\_\_

20. Health:

Physical: \_\_\_\_\_

Mental: \_\_\_\_\_

Emotional: \_\_\_\_\_

21. Attitudes & Important Beliefs: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

22. Personality and Temperament: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

23. Greatest Want or Need: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

24. Likes and dislikes: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

25. What phrase, statement or verbal expression would this person use frequently?

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

# 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?

## 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?

## **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?

## **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?



## #7

# Playwriting Questionnaire

Once you have decided on ideas for your play, use this questionnaire to help 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.)

## #8

# PLAYWRITING CHECKLIST

Re-read and discuss your first draft script using the checklist below. Make corrections to fulfill each checkpoint so that your final draft will be a strong and interesting short play.

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

# Set Designer

- All the scenery, furniture and props the audience sees at a production of a play make up the set design. The set designer's job is to design these physical surroundings in which the action will take place. The overall look of the set also gives the audience information about the director's concept of the production

## The set should:

- suggest the style and tone of the whole production
- create mood and atmosphere
- give clues as to the specific time and place of the action
- offer creative possibilities for the movement and grouping of the actors

The set may also need to be designed so the backstage areas used by the actors and stage crew are kept out of sight from the audience. This will depend on the effect the director wants to create with the staging and on the type of stage the production uses.

All the things appearing on the stage other than the scenery are called stage properties, or props. Set props like furniture, draperies and decorations are the types of things that complete the set and they need to be part of the set design.

The set designer will normally read the script many times, both to get a feel for the flavor and spirit of the script and to list its specific requirements for scenery, furnishings and props. The time of day, location, season, historical period and any set changes called for in the script are noted. The set designer's focus here is on figuring out everything that may be needed based on the dialogue in the script. Stage directions tend to be ignored at this point in the process.

## Collaboration

The set designer will meet with the director and the design team (set, costume, lighting and sound designers), to discuss the details of the set and the director's interpretation of the play. The set, costume and lighting designers also meet and work together to ensure the creation of a unified look and feel for the production. A lively exchange of initial ideas and first impressions helps clarify the steps that each person needs to take in this intensely collaborative process.

## Designer's tools

Set designers use several tools to communicate their ideas to the director and the other designers. These include:

- a rough sketch of the set in the preliminary phase
- floor plans drawn to scale showing from above the general layout of each set and the placement of the furniture and large props
- front elevations giving a view of the elements of the set from the front and showing details like windows or platforms
- miniature three-dimensional models showing how each set will look when finished.

These visual aids help to ensure that all the theatre artists involved in the production understand each other.

Once the show opens, the designer's work is essentially complete. Now it's normally the job of the stage manager and backstage crew to make sure that every aspect of the production runs just as the designer intended, time after time, until the production closes.

**Master Carpenter**

The master carpenter's job takes the working drawings from the TD, and using them, builds the set. After a quick glance at the working drawings, the MC should be able to schedule the build, order lumber, and then just pass that information on to the crew chief and TD, who make sure that the carpenters are there at the appropriate times. In many theatres, these duties having been absorbed into the TD position. If your show can come up with a master carpenter, use them wisely.

**Master Painter**

A highly sought skill in most theatres, the MP is responsible for painting set elements under the direction of the set designer, but often the Master Painter has the freedom to choose many of the design elements him/herself.

**Carpenters/Electricians**

When sets need to be built or lights hung, shows need carpenters and electricians to do the grunt work of sawing, hammering, lifting, hanging. In many companies, no experience is necessary to serve in one of these roles as you will be taught on the job. Often, actors serve in these roles when they aren't needed in rehearsal.

<http://www.aact.org/people/setdesigner.html>

## #9

# SET DESIGN ANALYSIS:

1. Where and when does the play take place? (Be specific!)
2. What is the theme of the play?
3. How does the play make you feel? Are you happy, sad, excited, etc.? Explain what about the play makes you feel that way.
4. What locations are required by the play for each scene?
5. What happens in the play in each location?
6. Are the locations inside or outside?
7. Who lives/works there? Describe the most significant character for each location required.
8. What feeling should the viewer get when (s)he looks at the setting?
9. How can you help the viewer get that feeling?
10. What kind of set do you think would be most appropriate for this short play? (What do you think it should look like?)
11. Are there doors? If so, how many? Why? If not, how will you create the location(s)?
12. Are there windows? If so, how many? Why? If not, what will be needed to create the overall “feel” of the location and place?
13. Is furniture required? What pieces are required? What other pieces would help create the feeling you wish to achieve?
14. What style of furniture would be most appropriate?
15. Any other design requirements for a successful performance?



# HOW TO BE A BETTER STAGE ACTOR

1. Relax. Great actors spend their entire careers learning to relax the muscles in their face and body at will. Tension is very obvious when you are on stage. Your voice will sound thin and wavering, and your movements will be jerky and unattractive. To avoid these stiff and nervous displays when you're acting, it is essential to remain as relaxed as possible. Even a scene involving high drama calls for measured and calm concentration from the actor. So, act dramatic, but be calm inside, and don't work yourself up.
2. Focus your attention on something on stage. It could be another actor, a prop, etc. Keep yourself in the moment and never stare off into space. It is obvious to the audience if you are vagueing out and it is very distracting. Keeping in the moment enables you to remain in character and enhances the believability of the role and the play itself. Also, try not to play with your clothes, or use other nervous gestures, just look at the back of the theater, or your focus point, if you are tense.
3. Immerse yourself in the role completely. Forget that you are pretending and try to become the character you are playing. Envision how that person reacts to life, how that person dresses, walks, thinks and converses with others. Don't be afraid to act like someone else, Draw on these visualizations when portraying the character. Always stay in that state of mind when acting. If you try to pretend to be sad, it's an effort; if you are sad, it comes out in your acting well. Do not try to act the character - instead, be the character.
4. Remember that everything is exaggerated on stage. If you're up on a stage, you need to enunciate your words (speak clearly). All the emotions on your face need to be formed in a more intense manner but remember to stay relaxed. If you feel like you're over-acting, then you're probably acting just enough. Eyes, smile, facial expressions, gestures, etc., need to be more expansive and dramatic than you would ever make them in real life. Be careful if acting in front of a camera, however. Here you must be more subtle, as in real life, because a camera picks up subtleties very easily and broad and exaggerated movements suitable for stage acting often look "hammed up" on film.
5. Treat the little things as being very important. If you're performing for an audience either live, or on film, you need to do everything you can to make the audience believe the character that you're trying to be. If the script says that someone is talking too much, then portray a look or annoyance on your face and perhaps accompany that with impatient tapping of your foot. If you're supposed to be near tears, blink hard, look downwards and fiddle with your clothes, and try to stare without blinking until tears come. Little actions are amazingly noticeable, including very expressive facial features. Include as many of the senses as possible, such as playing music, putting on make-up, turning on some lights; anything that can make the room happy or sad to fit the character and role that you are trying to present. This includes changing your voice, this can be done by spending time with people who have the desired accent, learn the language and or get a voice coach. There are also CD's and books to help you master that accent!
6. Work on projecting. Invest in a cheap recorder (tape, CD, flash drive, whatever you are comfortable with.) Set the recorder far away from you, at least twenty feet( 6 meters), press record, back away. Speak a simple sentence, such as "My shirt is blue and my eyes are too!". Keep trying different sentences ("How now brown cow" is a famous one). Listen to how you sound in the recording. Kick up the difficulty by backing further away each time, causing you to project more.
7. Breathe and alliterate. Do numerous vocal warm ups to ensure that you do not strain your vocal cords. Concentrate on enunciating your words so that your voice comes across clearly. Try a complex sentence such as, "Why, oh why haven't you seen those rambunctious twins, Jill and Bill?". Try speaking this with or without emotion. Then replay the recording. Speaking clearly is very important, so, practice by "E-Nuh-Nnn-Css-lii-Ay-Ting" each syllable. Remember, however, that when you actually act, you can't do this! It simply an exercise that should be done in front of a mirror for practicing purposes.

8. Concentrate on your expressions. Facial expressions are very important and combining facial expressions with vocal responses is an important art of timing. Say a very simple "Oh!" in front of a mirror, each time watching your face and voice. Try the following moods: Sadness, awe, anger, fear, excitement, and any others you can think of.
9. Practice your lines incessantly.
  - ♦ Make many copies. Write them out or print them out, so that you can just find a copy anywhere. Keep a copy in your bag, your desk drawer, next to your bed, in the bathroom, at the kitchen table, on the wall, in front of a favorite window.
  - ♦ Read your lines at every opportunity possible - before you go to bed, when you wake up in the morning, waiting for a bus, cooking dinner. Recite the lines over and over again, remembering to include intonation and expressions so that these become second nature when you perform them on stage.
  - ♦ When you find a long passage, say the first line until you are comfortable with your intonation and phrasing. Then add the next line to the first. Practice your delivery on the first two lines until you are ready to add the next (or start with the last line, then the two last lines, so that by the time you get to doing the entire thing you will be very familiar with the last bit). Once you are comfortable with the lines, you can further explore the meaning of the passage and refine your delivery.
10. Meet people. Get to know a diverse group of people. You can't possibly act like someone you've never met. Talk to people you'd normally not think of spending time with; they can teach you more about different kinds of people and different perspectives on viewing our amazing world.
11. Learn from other actors. It is not cheating or losing your own voice to learn from others. Watch other actors and see what they do with the parts they're given; by doing this, you will learn a lot. You can see things they do that you might help you to further develop your own acting style and give you ideas for overcoming aspects of acting that you might be finding strange or difficult. Ask them questions and ask them for help. Most actors will be more than willing to offer you some advice.
12. Know your character as you know yourself.
  - What dreams does your character have?
  - Give the character details.
  - Decide where this character is going in the future.
  - What is the good, bad and the ugly in the character?
  - How would this character dress?
  - What important memories does the character have?
  - What makes the character happy?
  - What little things upset the character?
  - What is the character's favorite color? music? television show?
  - What bad habits does the character have?
  - What does the character do to strengthen his/her soul?
13. Don't fake it. One thing you should never do when working on a character is to do it as you have seen other actors do it. For one thing, you won't do it as well so why bother, and for another, it is like cheating on a test. You haven't really learned how to do the part. You are not holding the mirror up to nature, but rather you are holding up the mirror to a copy of human nature. To not think for yourself and blindly copy everything another actor has done is not doing your homework. Even if you get away with it, why bother? You are only cheating yourself. You are not seeing yourself in the part, but seeing another actor, in fact; you are seeing yourself as that other actor.



## #10

### Interview Questions for the Playwright(s)

First, listen to a reading or watch a rehearsal of the play. Then ask yourself these questions and answer them honestly and fairly. The goal of this is to help the playwrights improve their script. Please try to share with your classmates in such a way as to help them improve, but not to put their writing down. Remember... your turn is coming-so say things in a way you would want to hear them!

1. What did you like about the 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 the play?
5. What's the most important image or moment to you in the piece?
6. Did the characters all sound the same or like different people with distinct voices?
7. What did each character want?
8. Are the characters going after something that is critically important to them?
9. Were the stakes high enough?
10. What sections made you cringe?
11. Which ones surprised you?
12. Explain what the play is about in one or two sentences. (The clearer you are, the clearer it will be to your classmates.)
13. Is there anything you'd like to see more of? (A more developed relationship? More specific behavior from a character? Stronger needs?)
14. Were there any loose ends? (Is something introduced in the play that kind of drifts away?)



