

Drama—Theatre Arts 11

April 20-April 24

Time Allotment: 20 minutes per day

For use during at-home instruction, Spring 2020 only

Student Name: _____

Teacher Name: Mr. Andrew Ward

Packet Overview

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Additional Notes:

Academic Honesty

I certify that I completed this assignment independently in accordance with the GHNO Academy Honor Code.

Student signature:

I certify that my student completed this assignment independently in accordance with the GHNO Academy Honor Code.

Parent signature:

Monday, April 20

Drama Unit: Playwrighting

Lesson 4: Looking back and looking ahead; Showing the action

Objective: Be able to do this by the end of this lesson.

1. Be able to plan forwards and backwards while thinking about your script, develop dimensionality with characters.

Introduction to Lesson 4

Now you will begin to devise a plot for your broader story and world you have created. You will arrange those plot points into a rough scenario before you begin drafting the play. That scenario and those plot points will probably change as you discover the play, but they anchor your work.

Looking Back and Ahead

Look back and ahead for your characters. Unless they die in the course of this play, your characters' lives will continue after this slice of action you're choosing, just as they began before the drama opens. The end of a play is not necessarily the end of a character.

Exercises

Each character in your play is the main person in his/her life story. For your One Act play, you will need at least two characters, and more if you think it necessary. In three to five sentences per character do the following:

1. Write each person's name and, in the space provided, their life story as it relates to the world of your play, including what will happen to the character after the drama concludes.

- a. Character 1's Name: _____

- b. Character 2's Name: _____

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c. Character 3's Name (optional): _____

d. Character 4's Name (optional): _____

e. Character 5's Name (optional): _____

Showing the Action

Vivid drama often occurs without words. Besides the characters, scenery, objects, and costumes, theatricality includes lighting and sound, the theatre space itself and possibly multiple spaces. The theatrical items you call for aren't mere set dressing or period flair—they contribute to theme, character, and story. They enrich the forward movement of a scenario while giving the audience sensory experiences to associate with your main ideas. Theatrical elements add layers to a drama. Engage your audiences, thoughts, memories, and senses without words.

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Exercises

Is there an object that appears at some point with which the character has a strong emotional connect? A recurring sound—like a foghorn or a passing train that stimulates associations and meaning? Something in the clothing, the light, a melody that functions theatrically for your character(s) and us? Think of your favorite movies, does a certain song play when a character appears? Or is there an iconic figure in a film you like who always wears a certain hat, or carries a certain item that people associate him or her by?

For each character, imagine at least one theatrical element that can convey something important about him or her. Write about its meaning for the character as well as the effect its use might have on your audience, in three to five sentences.

a. Character 1's Name: _____

b. Character 2's Name: _____

c. Character 3's Name (optional): _____

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d. Character 4's Name (optional): _____

e. Character 5's Name (optional): _____

Tuesday, April 21

Drama Unit: Playwrighting

Lesson 5: 1. Using the past, Character voice

Objective: Be able to do this by the end of this lesson.

1. Refer to character history to give context and depth to character and plot, learning to write with the character's voice instead of your own

Introduction to Lesson 5

Begin to discover your character's pasts and hear their voices. Drama occurs in the present, onstage, because of personalities, relationships, conflicts, heartbreaks, and passions that happened well before current time. No matter the structure or style, investigate character's pasts before the action you envision.

Exercises

For each character, consider what from their past makes them happy or unhappy. Write them below in three to five sentences:

a. Character 1's Name: _____

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b. Character 2's Name: _____

c. Character 3's Name (optional): _____

d. Character 4's Name (optional): _____

e. Character 5's Name (optional): _____

Character Voice

Work on developing your character’s voices and speaking styles. While they will inevitably have some of your voice in them, they must also be different from you and from each other. Inventing personalities is one of the most enjoyable aspects of dramatic writing.

To give your characters distinct voices, it may help to imagine each one as someone you know or a performer, public figure, or celebrity who speaks in a way you can easily mimic. Imagine the play cast with actors you think fit the roles. Think of people you’ve seen in interviews or watched perform whose voices and speaking styles are quickly recognizable.

Exercises

For at least one of your characters, but more if you would like, write a three to five sentence monologue in their voice where they speak about what they think about the other character when the other character is not around.

1. Character’s name: _____

Wednesday, April 22

Drama Unit: Playwrighting

Lesson 4: Dualities, Illuminating Differences

Objective: Be able to do this by the end of this lesson.

1. Consider inner contradictions and conflicts which exist in your characters, find ways to show differences between your characters through dialogue and action

Introduction to Lesson 6

It's often said that our strengths are our weaknesses, and vice versa. Often a person's first impression masks something very different within. Give your characters opportunities to shed masks and surprise us with what they reveal.

Dualities

Imagine inner contradictions and dualities within your characters. A person might deliberately have two "selves". Young Prince Hal in *Henry IV* pretends to be a scoundrel so when it's time for him to ascend the throne as Henry V he will seem to have become an entirely new person.

Exercises

Choose the opposite character (or merely a different one if you have more than two) from the one you wrote a monologue for yesterday. Write a three to five sentence monologue for this character, in their voice, where they observe dualities or contradictions in the other character that you wrote about.

1. Character name: _____

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Illuminating Differences

Plays use theatricality to amplify character conflict while also focusing the audience on key aspects of theme and story. Recall Monday's exercise of "Showing the Action". Imagine your characters paired off with the other (or each of the others). Imagine a theatrical element—visual or aural—that has meaning for one character, but has a different meaning for the other character. This is what we mean by amplifying character conflict.

Think about the vial that Friar Lawrence gives to Juliet for her to fake her death. To him, it is a simple distilled plant ether, a liquid medicine and nothing more. To her it is something that could potentially kill her, a mysterious potion, almost magical. Think about how your other characters view the theatrical elements that you wrote about on Monday.

Exercises

Write each character's reaction to or feelings about one other character's item, in their own voice. You should not exceed more than three to five sentences per character.

a. Character 1's Name: _____

b. Character 2's Name: _____

c. Character 3's Name (optional): _____

d. Character 4's Name (optional): _____

e. Character 5's Name (optional): _____

Thursday, April 23

Drama Unit: Playwrighting

Lesson 4: What's it all about?; Beginning dialogue

Objective: Be able to do this by the end of this lesson.

1. Work with themes to give your play a cohesive and unifying feeling, and take the first steps to having characters engage in dialogue with each other (no longer in monologue about the other).

Introduction to Lesson 7

A play isn't an essay, but it should inspire feelings and thoughts. Themes are the "filling" that connects dramatic elements, the "soul" of the play. Some writers begin with a theme in mind while others discover it as they write. Explore the possible thematic content of your play so that you can incorporate it into characters, plot, theatricality and language from the beginning.

It is helpful to have more than one theme so each plays off the other(s) and helps the other(s) resonate. As you write you will struggle to find ways not to hit the audience over the head with a message but rather let characters argue and examine the views, shadings, confusions, and rationales associated with your theme. A theme is dynamic—not just a slogan that is repeated but rather a philosophical or metaphysical

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discovery that emerges as characters interact and reveal themselves. It should be challenged, it should expand.

Exercises:

1. As the author, write about your own feelings, beliefs, questions, and confusions about theme(s) in your play. Be honest about personal experiences with this theme. Be specific about actions you took or actions taken against or for you. Write three to five sentences below.

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Beginning Dialogue

The language you employ to illuminate interactions and themes helps to audience join in. You've been working in monologue with some dialogue. Now that you know your characters better and are beginning to hear their voices, put those characters into dialogue. Each character must speak differently from the others—how much differently depends on the world and the relationships you've created.

Don't be frustrated if you have trouble keeping them "in voice". The more your characters speak, the better you'll write them in voice. Writing freely is the goal for you in this project, not writing perfectly.

Exercises:

Find plays you own or find a play available to read online and read dialogue from them at random. Pay attention to how characters force reactions from each other. Analyze how each one's diction, vocabulary, and rhythms are consistent and distinct from the other's. Spend at least 10 minutes on this exercise, taking notes if you think it will be helpful to you.

Friday, April 24

Drama Unit: Playwrighting

Lesson 8: Minor Assessment: Writing Your First Scene

Objective: Be able to do this by the end of this lesson.

1. Write a full scene of conflict between two characters

Minor Assessment Instructions

You are responsible for writing one scene. The general rule of thumb is that one page of dialogue is equal to one minute of running time in a play. Since we are going for a thirty-minute play, by the end of the year, you will need at least thirty pages of dialogue between characters for your finished first draft.

Plays are divided into scenes. Scenes should be somewhere between 1.5 and 2.5 pages, with 2 pages being the average. For your play, you must have between 12 and 20 scenes (depending on how long your scenes are).

Lets try writing one of those scenes. You may not end up using this scene in your draft, or, you might end up revising it, or you might end up making your play center around this scene. You may choose between the following prompts to write your scene (but you must write on one of them and you may not yet come up with a scene prompt of your own:

- a. Have one character teach another how to do something. The one being taught should either have difficulty understanding or contradict the other or should somehow make confusion and tension between him/her and the one teaching them. The outcome can be serious or funny, what you will.
- b. Have two characters argue over their memory of a shared experience.

Because you are going to need to keep this scene for your records, you must type this up, or write on separate pieces of paper that you keep. You may send me a word document, or take pictures of the

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document and send it to me via email. I am not providing space in the packet for you to write this out, as I would like you to keep this scene for your writing in the weeks to come.