

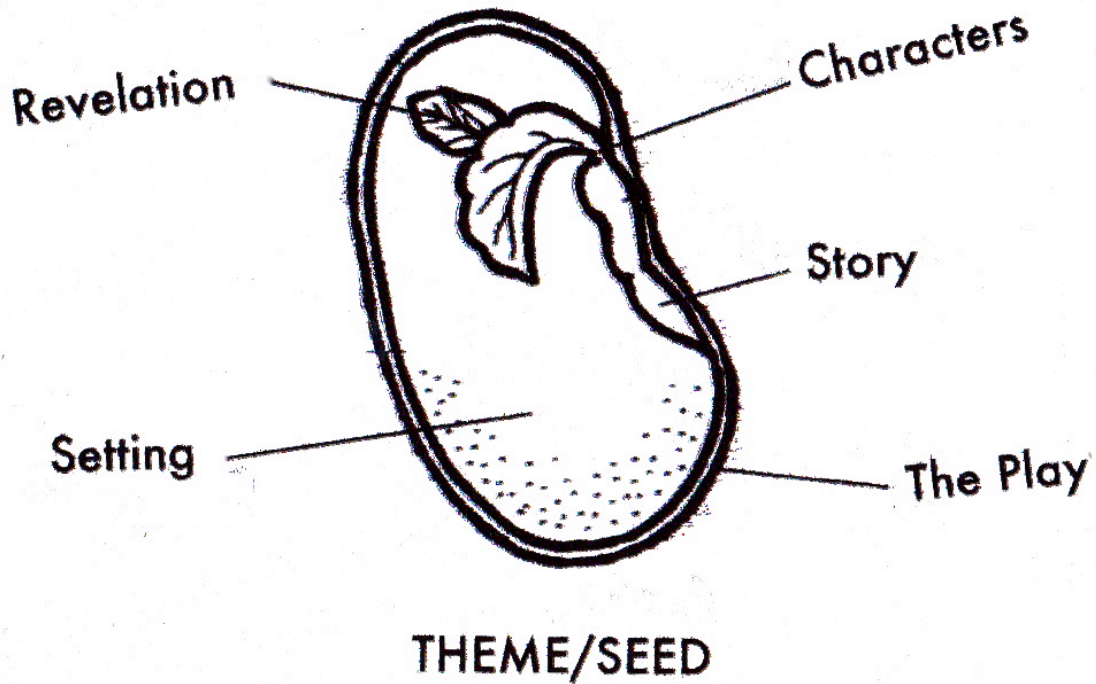
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period #

# WALLY'S WORKBOOK FOR PLAYWRITERS



By Wally  
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# INTRODUCTION

"Our ears are in excellent condition."

- John Cage

This workbook will assist you in the creation of a new play. Your life experience, imagination & research can provide you with a story worthy of sharing with a live audience.

What characters will you bring to the stage?

Where will you set the action?

What will you and the audience discover?

"Playwright" uses the root *wright* which means: to create. You are writing more than a script, you are creating a whole world in which something happens that matters.

Good luck! Enjoy yourself.

- Wally

If you agree to create a play then sign and date here now.

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Dedicated to my daughters and art-in-education. Special thanks to Daniel, Ginger and Patrick of Theatre Development Fund, Daisy Ramos, and finally to past, present and future students.

# ART-MAKING RULES

Rule 1: Trust yourself.

Rule 2: Students pull everything out of your teacher and out of your fellow students.

Rule 3: Teachers pull everything out of your students.

Rule 4: Consider everything an experiment.

Rule 5: Be self disciplined - follow someone wise or smarter than yourself in a good way.

Rule 6: Nothing is a mistake. There's no winning or failing only making.

Rule 7: The only rule is to work - it will lead to something.

Rule 8: Don't try to create and analyze at the same time. They're different processes.

Rule 9: Be happy whenever you can manage it. Enjoy yourself. It's lighter than you think.

Rule 10: "Break all the rules even your own rules. How do we do that? By leaving plenty of room for X quantities." - John Cage

Helpful hints: Always be around. Come or go to everything. Go to classes. Read anything you can get your hands on. Save everything - it might come in handy later.

Originally written by Sister Corita, 1967

What PLAY have you seen lately? \_\_\_\_\_

What do you remember seeing or hearing during this experience?

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What was this play about?

Write the **THEME/SEED** of this play, not the plot but the thought.

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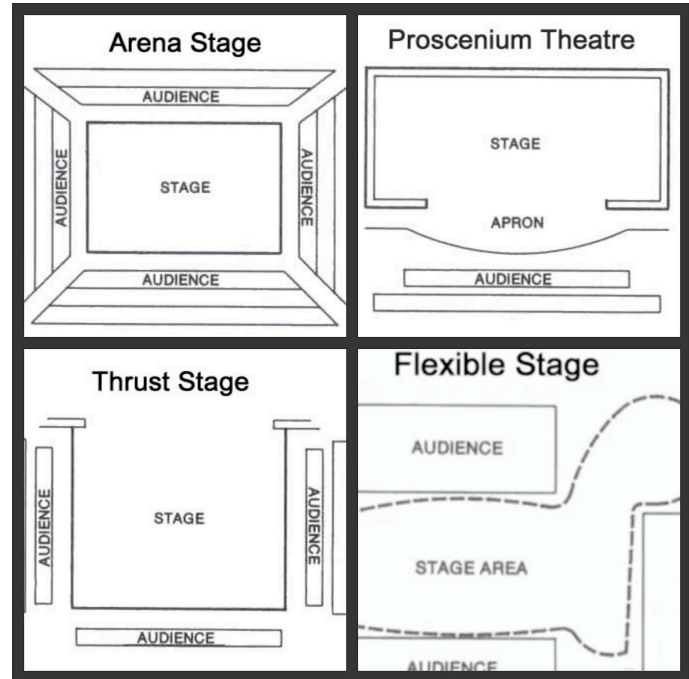
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## What is **THEATRE**?

NOW brainstorm and write all the words you associate with **live theatre**.



**WHY** does THEATRE exist? What is the function of theatre?  
What happens to an audience, to the playwright and the performers?  
**NOW** brainstorm and write about the purpose of **THEATRE**?



Listen to a story. Title: \_\_\_\_\_  
Identify characters and settings:

Quotes:

What was this story about?  
Write the **THEME/SEED** of the story, not the plot but the thought.

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**HOW** do you make theatre? Begin by breathing and purposefully listening.

**"I let characters and symbols emerge from me as if I were dreaming.  
Writers who try to prove something are unattractive to me, because  
there is nothing to prove and everything to imagine.  
So I let words and images emerge from within.  
If you do that, you might prove something in the process.  
- Eugene Ionesco**

**What will go into the greatest act of theatre you can create?**

# **THE PLAYWRIGHT'S RUBRIC**

## **A GOOD PLAY**

- tells a story
- is typed and follows the play format
- conveys a clear theme / seed
- connects with the audience
- introduces interesting characters
- has an attack, crisis and revelation

## **A GREAT PLAY**

- is a "good play" plus
- uses the stage poetically
- utilizes music, movement and color
- is unpredictable (surprise!)
- gives us an unforgettable experience

## **AN EXCELLENT PLAY**

- is a "great play" plus
- challenges important issues
- offers a solution to a difficult problem
- is emotionally open, with deep thought
- is timeless
- leaves the audience wanting more

# SCRIPT NOTATION

## Stage Directions

Described within parenthesis, what is happening on stage, how and where?  
Types of stage directions commonly used are:

**ACTION** - what is happening and where is it located on stage: (*Nina walks to the window downstage. David looks out. Louise runs upright.*)

**RELATION** - specifying who or what a character is talking to: (*To the audience.*) or (*Aside.*) or (*To [a specific character].*)

**QUALITY** - to convey how a character expresses herself, using short directions before the spoken line: (*nervous*), (*whisper*) or (*overlapping*)

**TEMPO** - composing rhythm of thought using: (*Beat.*), (*Pause.*), (*Long pause.*) and (*Silence.*)

**TECHNICAL** - sounds or songs that are heard and any important shifts in light, video or projections: (*Video of a moonrise.*) (*Lights up on Daniel in the library.*) (*The song "Blue Moon" is heard.*)

## Punctuation

Few people speak in proper English. Playwrights use punctuation to help convey the rhythmic sense of a character's speech.

- . = the period means a full stop
- , = a comma means a slight pause
- ... = ellipses conveys thought interrupting word flow
- = hyphen specifies a detail of a thought without stop
- ! = exclamation points make a line louder ( $\leq 3$ )

**CAPS** = the loudest possible

**Note:** Always capitalize the first letter of a sentence and finish with a punctuation mark.

**NOW** find examples of script notation in the play that follows.



# HOPSCOTCH

By Daisy Ramos



## CHARACTERS

**VANESSA**, 11 years old, wears her hair loose as if she just came out of the hair salon; fingernails are painted and very neatly dressed.

**SUZY** (Vanessa's cousin), 11 years old, wears a high ponytail, but the rest of her hair hasn't been combed; chewed fingernails and uniform is extremely wrinkled.

**MS. CASTRO**, 36 years old, a fashionable teacher with chalk on fingers and clothes.

## SETTING

Schoolyard during lunch. Late 1980's.

*(Lights up on Vanessa and Suzy as they are getting ready to play hopscotch during lunch. Both girls wear identical school uniforms, but there is a great disparity in appearance between the two. Suzy is drawing the game on the ground with chalk.)*

**Vanessa:** You know what I'm going to be when I grow up? A teacher. So I can tell everyone what to do.

**Suzy:** You already tell people what to do, hello. *(Holds up chalk to imply she was told to set up the game.)*

**Vanessa:** *(whining)* I don't want to get dirty.

**Suzy:** *(laughing)* Well get ready. Name one teacher who doesn't have chalk on their clothes.

**Vanessa:** Oh man, you're right.

**Suzy:** ... I want to be a cop.

**Vanessa:** A cop? A cop is for boys.

**Suzy:** No it's not. Girls can be cops too.

**Vanessa:** I thought you wanted to be a dancer.

**Suzy:** I changed my mind last night.

**Vanessa:** Last night?

**Suzy:** Yeah - I just want to put away the bad guys, like Superman. *(Gets up from the ground extending her arms as if she was flying and wipes her hands on her uniform.)*

**Vanessa:** You need to stop watching so many cartoons. Don't you think you're too old for that already? *(Takes out cherry chap-stick from her pocket and applies it to her lips.)* I'll go first.

**Suzy:** Yes teacher. Everyone loves superheroes, so you're never too old. I'm going to be She-Ra.

**Vanessa:** Not everybody, I don't. She-Ra is not real so you cannot be She-Ra.

**Suzy:** Do you remember when Ms. Castro said, "You can become anything you want in life."? So I'm going to be a real super hero, a cop.

**Vanessa:** You're afraid of the dark and you're going to be a superhero? Nice try.

**Suzy:** I'm afraid of ghosts, you can't arrest ghosts.

**Vanessa:** You're crazy.

**Suzy:** There's nothing wrong with wanting to protect people.

**Vanessa:** From what? Skeletor?

**Suzy:** Ha! So you do watch cartoons. Because Skeletor is from He-Man.

**Vanessa:** That's because Johnny watches that all the time. Cartoons are fake, so wake up.

**Suzy:** I am awake. *(under her breath)* I just wish I could arrest him. *(Stops playing, takes out a lunchable from her backpack and sits on the bench)*

**Vanessa:** *(Approaches Suzy and sits next to her.)* Arrest who? Give me one.

**Suzy:** *(giving her a cracker)* My dad. *(chews on fingernails)*

**Vanessa:** *(places cracker in her mouth)* Tio? *(almost chokes)* Uncle Billy?

**Suzy:** Yes. *(angrily)* I can't wait to arrest him.

**Vanessa:** What! How could you say that about your own father?

**Suzy:** I wish he wasn't my father.

**Vanessa:** I wish he was mine.

**Suzy:** Trust me. No you don't. *(Drinks from her juice box.)* You don't know him.

**Vanessa:** How can I not know my own uncle? I would give anything to have your dad. Are you going to eat that?

**Suzy:** No take it. I would give anything, not to live with him.

**Vanessa:** At least you have a dad.

**Suzy:** Well he doesn't act like a dad.

**Vanessa:** Well to me he does. A father is someone who cares and every time I see him he always makes sure I have money and something to eat.

**Suzy:** That's just it. He acts like a dad to you and like Mr. Perfect to everyone meanwhile he treats us like dirt. He's so fake!

**Vanessa:** You're just jealous. *(Takes out pocket mirror and checks her face.)*

**Suzy:** No! I'm just sick of pretending! Try living with someone who insults you. Doesn't allow you to look out your own window. Yells at you all the time to do this, do that ... and last night hit your mother so hard ... that she hit the floor *(pause)* and you can't do anything about it. *(Trying hard not to cry.)*

**Vanessa:** You're lying.

**Suzy:** *(surprised)* What? *(adamant)* I don't lie.

**Vanessa:** Everybody lies.

**Suzy:** Well I don't. It's the truth. *(crossing over heart)* Cross my heart, hope to die. Te lo huro, I swear.

**Vanessa:** I don't believe you *(beat)* she would've called my mom and told her.

**Suzy:** No she wouldn't because she knows her sister would do something about it.

**Vanessa:** Whatever.

**Suzy:** Every time you've slept over my house, you've heard them fight.

**Vanessa:** Yeah, but all parents fight, it's part of being married.

**Suzy:** But -

**Vanessa:** Regardless, your mother is always happy / I've never seen her with a black eye.

**Suzy:** *(overlapping)* That's because she's scared of him / I can't believe you, why are you taking his side?

**Vanessa:** He's my uncle. *(in a threatening voice)* He's like a father to me. So you better not tell anyone about this.

**Suzy:** You sound just like my mother, *(in her mother's shaky voice)* "It's okay, I'm okay, don't say anything okay?"

**Vanessa:** You never betray your family.

**Suzy:** Wrong. You should never hurt your family and last night he almost killed her. So guess what! I'm not going to listen to you or my mother ... *(Suzy sees Ms. Castro walking across the yard. Suzy gets up and begins to run towards Ms. Castro screaming.)* Ms. Castro! Ms. Castro!!

*(Vanessa tries to run after her, but stops mid-way. Suzy reaches Ms. Castro and Vanessa looks away.)*

**Ms. Castro:** *(looking baffled)* Yes, Suzy?

**Suzy:** *(Catching her breath, with her hands on her knees ... takes two deep breaths and exhales.)* Got a minute?

*(Lights out. End of play.)*

What is Hopscotch about? Write the **THEME/SEED** here:

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# CHARACTERS

Plays begin with characters that audiences can relate to.  
How does a playwright create characters that convey meaning?  
What meaning does the audience get from listening to them?

Plays put characters in challenging situations so they can act.

**NOW** describe yourself as a character, use any name you prefer.

\_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_,  
NAME                      AGE                      PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION  
\_\_\_\_\_  
EMOTIONAL DESCRIPTION

Describe a challenging character that you know.

\_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_,  
NAME                      AGE                      PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION  
\_\_\_\_\_  
EMOTIONAL DESCRIPTION

**WHAT** unforgettable event brought the two to a crisis?

What's the **STORY** contained in the moment of crisis?

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(use back of this page if necessary)

# SETTING

The **setting** is the best place for a play's THEME/SEED to be explored. Every detail of the setting clarifies where we are **and what the play needs**.

A playwright uses **stage directions** to describe a play's setting and action. A play begins with details of the play's background and what is found on **stage**.

**NOW** imagine the setting of Tennessee Williams' The Glass Menagerie and draw it like a map on the stage plot below.

Place the **fire escape** √, the **dining table** ■, the **sofa** D, the **portrait** ✧ and the **menagerie** ♥ within the empty stage below.

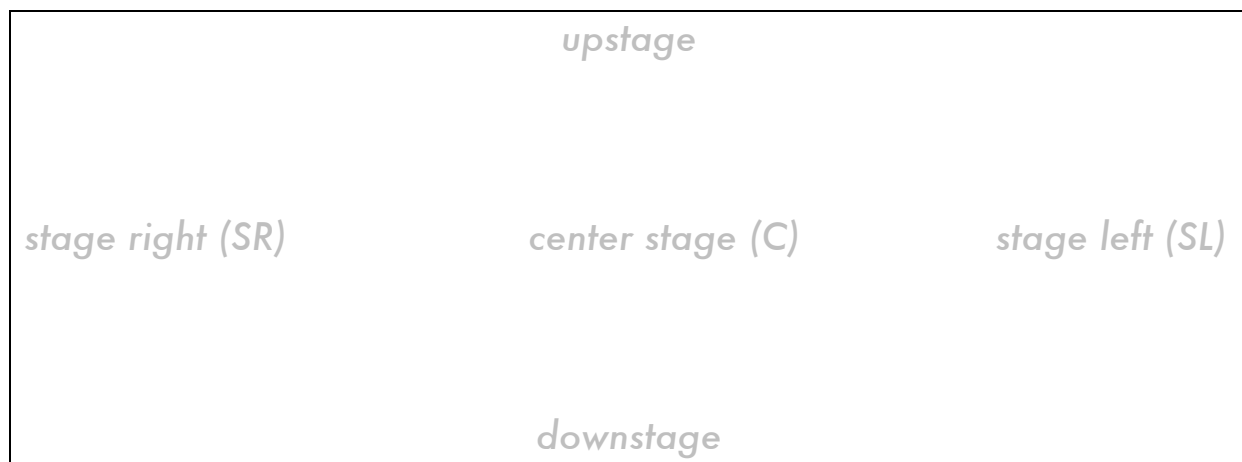
*(The Wingfield apartment is in the rear of the building ... The apartment faces an alley and is entered by a fire-escape, the landing of it and steps descending from it are included in the set.*

*The scene is memory and is therefore non-realistic. Memory takes a lot of poetic licence. The interior is therefore dim and poetic.*

*At the rise of the curtain, the audience is faced with the dark, grim rear wall of the Wingfield tenement building, which is flanked on both sides by dark, narrow alleys which run into murky canyons of tangled clothes-lines, garbage cans, and the sinister lattice-work of neighbouring fire-escapes. It is up and down these alleys that entrances and exits are made during the play.*

***Downstage** is the living-room, which also serves as a sleeping-room for Laura, the sofa unfolds to make her bed. **Upstage centre** is the dining-room. In an old fashioned cabinet the glass menagerie sits. A blown-up photograph of the father hangs on the wall of the living-room, facing the audience.*

*The audience hears and sees the opening scene in the dining-room through both the transparent fourth wall of the building and the transparent gauze of the dining-room arch. It is during the opening scene that the fourth wall slowly ascends out of sight.)*



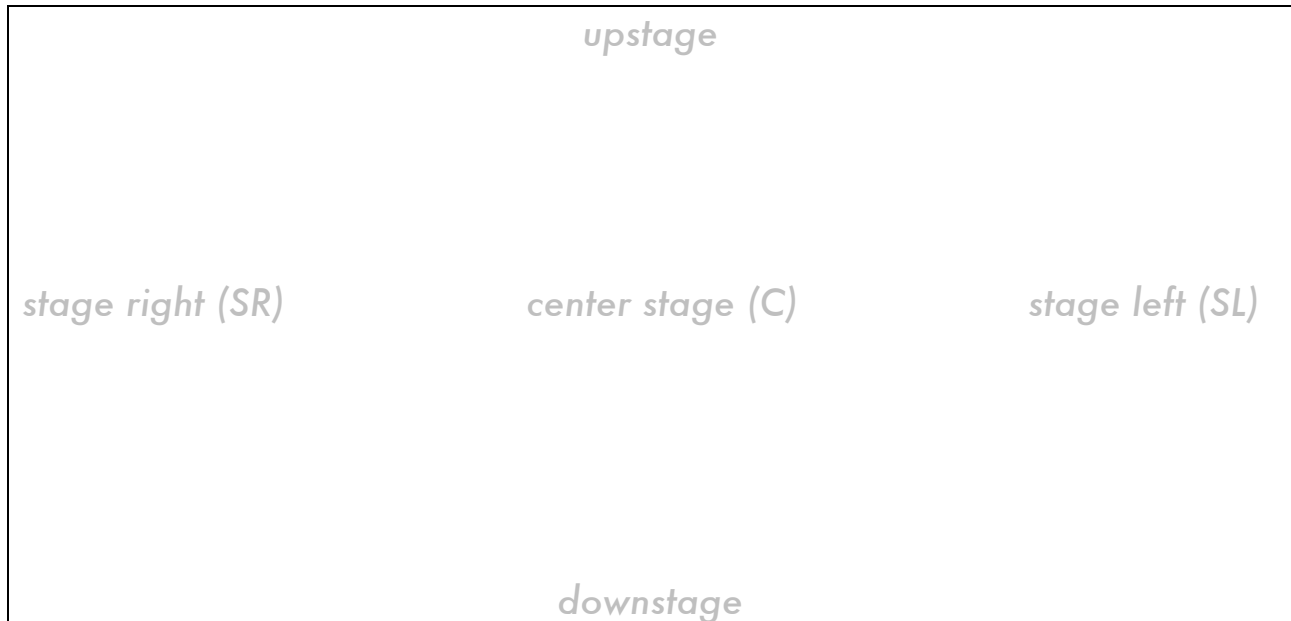
**NOW** write the **TIME & PLACE** of an event.

**TIME** \_\_\_\_\_

**PLACE** \_\_\_\_\_

**What needs to be on stage?** \_\_\_\_\_

**NOW DRAW A STAGE PLAN** of it.



**AUDIENCE**

Write the opening stage directions for this event. What's happening?

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Given the setting of your event what is the play about?  
Why are we here?

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# NOW PLAYING

YOU are invited to make theatre.

Plays are an opportunity for others to listen to your perspective.  
Be thoughtful and make something that means something to you.

All plays come from somewhere. Your play comes from your:

experience - the source of your brilliance

imagination - allows anything and everything to be possible

research - enables discoveries of truths worthy of sharing

NOW begin a new play on the following page. Make an event happen.

CHECK ONE of the following theme/seeds to write about:

This play is about how food can bring people together.

Can love help conquer big problems?

This play is about \_\_\_\_\_  
fill in the blank

All plays set up an event. CHECK ONE - This event can be:

an enactment of a realistic script that has a time and place where  
characters do something, usually performed on stage

( \_\_\_\_\_ enters \_\_\_\_\_.)  
character specific setting or location

an exploration of an idea or story where a theme is explored from  
different perspectives and multiple art forms

(Lights up on \_\_\_\_\_.)  
place in the world or thing

a social experiment or happening with the audience on their feet and  
interacting through a world of the playwright's creation

(The audience enters \_\_\_\_\_ and they  
an environment  
\_\_\_\_\_.)  
action

NOW turn the page and write this play in your native language.



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TITLE

By \_\_\_\_\_

**CHARACTERS:**

NAME	AGE	PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION

TIME: \_\_\_\_\_

**What time of day and year?**

PLACE: \_\_\_\_\_

**Where are we? Be specific.**

SETTING: \_\_\_\_\_  
WHAT IS ON STAGE?

\_\_\_\_\_

( \_\_\_\_\_  
WHAT IS HAPPENING? STAGE DIRECTIONS.

\_\_\_\_\_ )

\_\_\_\_\_ :

\_\_\_\_\_ :

\_\_\_\_\_ :

\_\_\_\_\_ :

# QUESTIONS

If you could ask **yourself** any question, what would it be?

If you could ask a **parent** a question, what would it be?

If you could ask a **peer** a question, what would it be?

If you could lunch with **someone you greatly admire**,  
who would it be? \_\_\_\_\_

What would your **first question** be?

Ask the **Universe** a question, what is it?

**What is your central question?**

---

**NOW** choose a setting of Sandy Skoglund or Jee Young Lee and take its character and setting to inspire a play about your central question.



By \_\_\_\_\_

CHARACTERS:

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

TIME: \_\_\_\_\_

PLACE: \_\_\_\_\_

SETTING: \_\_\_\_\_

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

( \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_ )

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# I, THE PLAYWRIGHT

WHAT DO YOU KNOW ABOUT LIFE AND THE WORLD?

Make a list of things **you are sure** about.

WHAT ARE YOU UNSURE OF ABOUT LIFE AND THE WORLD?

Make a list of things you **think** you know but aren't sure.

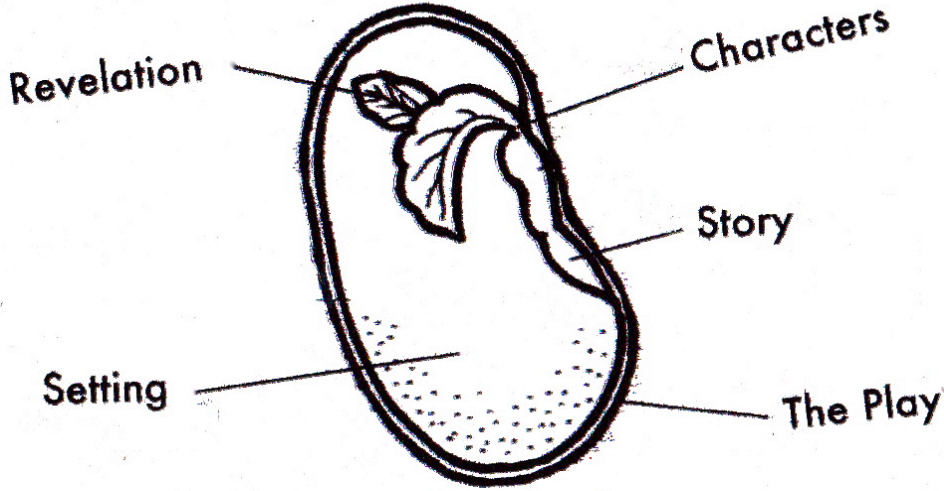
WHAT DO YOU WANT TO KNOW ABOUT LIFE AND THE WORLD?

Make a list of **QUESTIONS** you have.

**NOW** put a star next to the things that matter the most to you.

# IDENTIFY THE THEME/SEED

NOW below write a draft of the theme/seed for your play.  
What will you investigate, explore and challenge?



THEME/SEED

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NOW read your draft. Can this inspire my greatest play?  
Is it important enough to yield delicious and nutritious fruit?  
Will this play entertain & enlighten?

If NO then go to the page of Prompts on page 35 to instigate a story OR  
turn to page 36 for a list of non-fiction storytelling websites.

If YES then write the theme/seed of your play.  
Connect your thoughts into one sentence or question.

My play is about \_\_\_\_\_

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(What will your main character learn?)

# RESEARCH

**NOW** push your thought onward. Ask a question that leads to more questions.  
Your play wants to dig, reach and follow the theme/seed toward its greatest expansion.

*TO DO: Listen to the world around you. Look at everything and be prepared to write any and all of your thoughts or dialogue as it comes.*

***Always have a notebook available.***

**What do you know about your theme/seed?**

Make a list of as many things you are sure about.

**What don't you know about it?**

Make a list of QUESTIONS you have.

**What are you looking for? Where can you find answers?**

Make a list of RESOURCES and PEOPLE you can go to.

List three keyword searches:

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_

**NOW** find images, articles, songs, videos and text that can enrich the play.

Make notes.



# NON-TRADITIONAL APPROACHES

**IF** your play wants to be an event, experiment or exploration then you can build your act of theatre piece by piece.

**NOW** identify material that illuminates aspects of your theme/seed.

What **KNOWLEDGE** or **TEXT** can be useful?

What **SONG** or **TYPE OF MUSIC** do you hear?

What type of **DANCE** do you see?

What **IMAGES** do you see?

What **VIDEO** or moment from a **MOVIE** is usable?

*Create a .doc to store material. Compile everything. Look and listen to it.*  
**NOW** on the next page write an **INVENTORY OF MATERIAL** that conveys the **STORY** of your play's question or simply write out the full story.





The traditional signposts of dramatic structure are  
**ATTACK, CRISIS & REVELATION**

**NOW** identify the Attack, Crisis and Revelation in your story by writing them out on the lines below.

**ATTACK:** moment when the conflict is planted in the audience's mind – when the action begins

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**CRISIS:** moment when the conflict comes to a point where something or someone has to change

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**REVELATION:** outcome of the crisis, something is learned or revealed

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*What characters can REFLECT on their actions to REVEAL something that can lead them and an audience to a TRANSFORMATION?*

**WHO ARE YOUR TWO MAIN CHARACTERS?**

include name, age and description

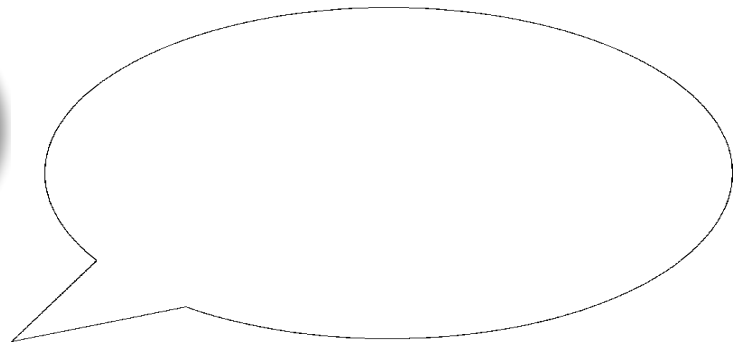
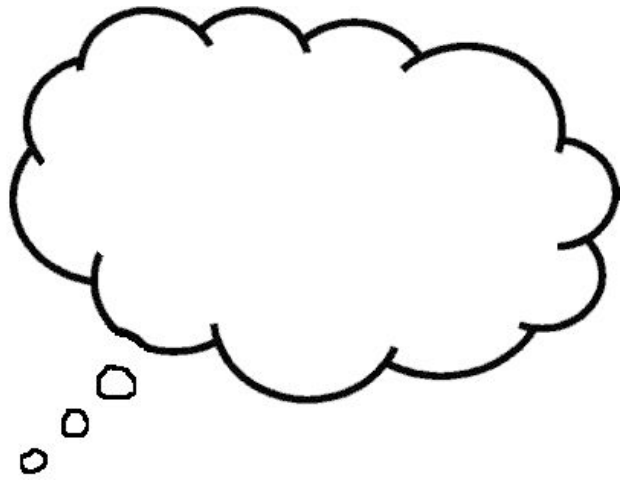
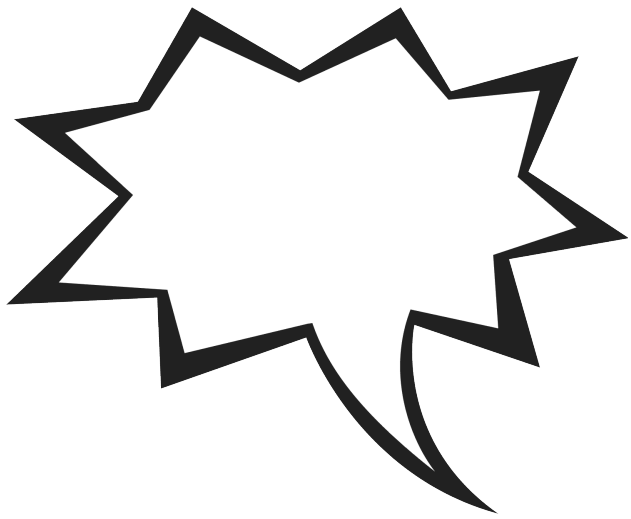
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**NOW** on the following two pages detail your two main characters. Fill in the bubbles as if you are the character speaking or thinking.



**NAME**

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**AGE**

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**DESCRIPTION**

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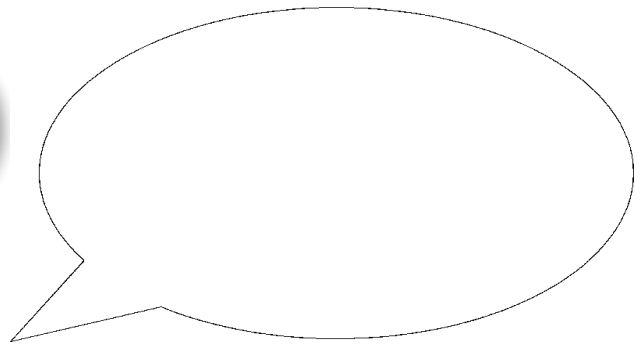
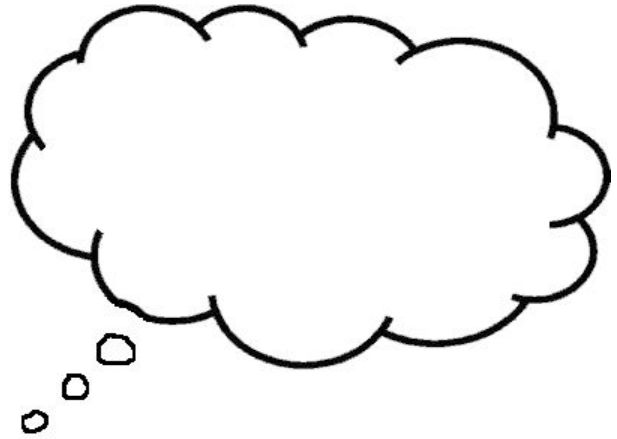
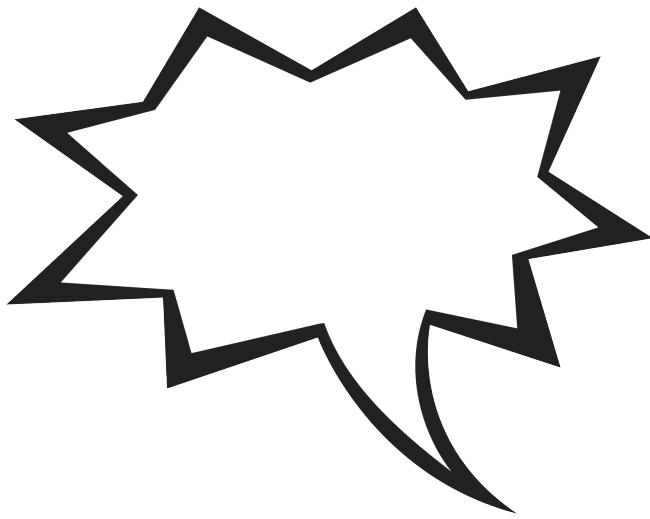
**FILL IN THE BUBBLES**  
with

*"I WAS BORN ..."*

*"TODAY ..."*

*"I WANT ..."*

*"I'M GOING TO ..."*



**NAME**

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**AGE**

-----

**DESCRIPTION**

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**FILL IN THE BUBBLES**  
with

***"I WAS BORN ..."***

***"TODAY ..."***

***"I WANT ... "***

***"I'M GOING TO ..."***

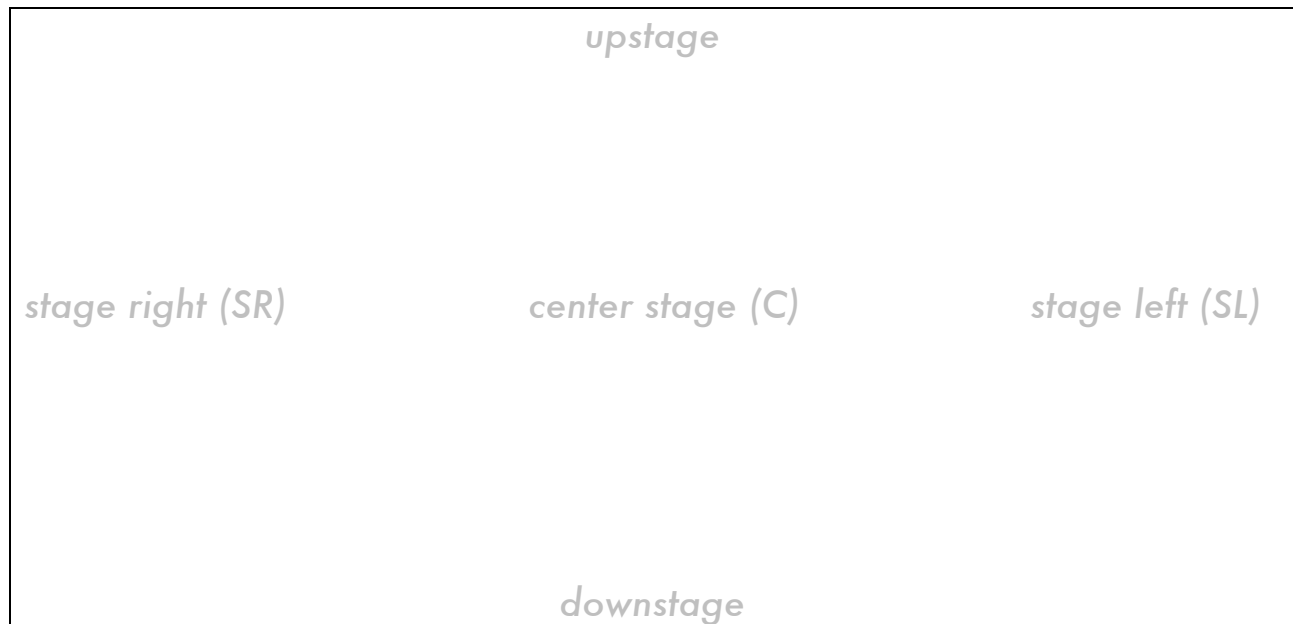
# SET YOUR STAGE

Where are you setting your play?  
What is the background? What is on stage?  
Describe specific details.

SETTING: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

TIME: \_\_\_\_\_  
PLACE: \_\_\_\_\_

**DRAW A MAP** of what is on stage.



## AUDIENCE

**NOW** write the opening action. What is happening on stage?

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

(Turn the page and start creating your play!)

**Each play should include the following:**

Something magical, something personal, music and one of each kind of stage direction (see page 8) most especially, silence.

---

by \_\_\_\_\_

CHARACTERS:

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

TIME: \_\_\_\_\_

PLACE: \_\_\_\_\_

SETTING: \_\_\_\_\_

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

( \_\_\_\_\_  
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\_\_\_\_\_  
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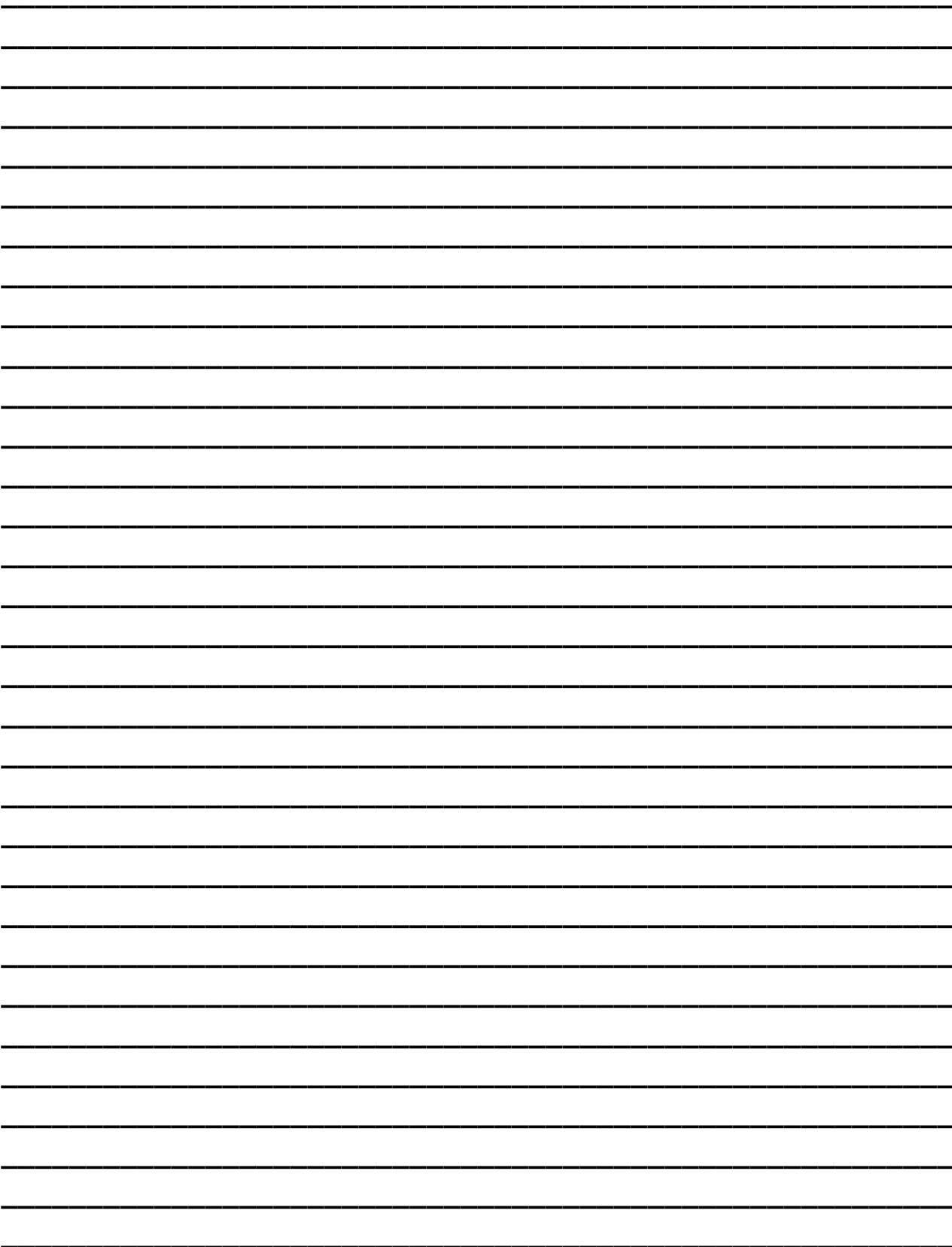
\_\_\_\_\_  
:

\_\_\_\_\_  
:

**NOW continue** writing the first draft.

Lined writing area consisting of 24 horizontal lines.

(what happens next?)



*(get more paper or start typing)*



# QUOTES

Some playwrights begin their plays with a quote that contains the secret history of the play itself.

Tennessee Williams' The Glass Menagerie (1945)

Nobody, not even the rain, has such small hands. - e. e. cummings

August Wilson's The Piano Lesson (1990)

Gin my cotton

Sell my seed

Buy my baby

Everything she need

- Skip James

Tony Kushner's Angels in America - Part One: Millennium Approaches (1991)

In a murderous time

the heart breaks and breaks

and lives by breaking.

- Stanley Kunitz, "The Testing-Tree"

What quote can lead us into your play? **NOW** write the quotation:

---

# DEDICATION

Most playwrights will dedicate the play to someone that has a relationship to the play and/or to the playwright.

Edward Albee's The Zoo Story - for William Flanagan (1958)

Athol Fugard's "MASTER HAROLD" ... and the boys - for Sam and H.D.F. (1982)

David Mamet's Glengarry Glen Ross - This play is dedicated to Harold Pinter (1983)

August Wilson's The Piano Lesson - for my sisters and brothers, Freda, Linda, Donna, Edwin, Richard (1990)

To whom or what will you dedicate your play?

**NOW** write your dedication here:

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# ELEVATOR PITCH

IMAGINE that you have a chance to inspire a producer to send your play into production. You only have a couple of minutes between the first floor and the penthouse. What will you say?

The play is about *(enter THEME/SEED here)* \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

TITLE \_\_\_\_\_

SETTING *(when and where in the world)* \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

CHARACTERS \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

PLOT *(briefly, what happens?)* \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

REVELATION *(what does the audience learn?)* \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

# PLAY FORMAT

NOW type your play! Please use Times New Roman at 14 pt. for the play's text while the font for the play's title should use any font that conveys the feeling of the play. (Read it and edit. Print it then read/edit again. Send to [wally@mindspring.com](mailto:wally@mindspring.com))

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## Winterville

By Eric Wallach

*Winterville* is dedicated to the survivors of violence.

### CHARACTERS

AUDRIE BUTLER, 16, good looking girl with piercings and dark eyeliner. Book smart but naïve.

BRIAN BUTLER, 35, (Audrie's Father), short haircut with a farmer's build. He is an Iraq War veteran working as a security guard who shares custody of his daughter.

MONIQUE WILSON, 34, (Audrie's Mother), a charming travel agent; powerful, healthy and wise.

**TIME:** September 2012, first day of school

**PLACE:** Brian Butler's Home, 722 Dean Martin Blvd, Winterville, Ohio

*(The stage conveys a one family home protected by white aluminum siding that is falling off at the edges. In the home we see AUDRIE's bedroom which is decorated somewhere between her pink child's room and the modern suburban young lady. She has a smart phone and laptop yet everything else in the house seems just above poverty. We see into the bathroom and kitchen too. The set is designed somewhere between realistic and art with the whole back of the stage being a projection screen upon which texts and AUDRIE's computer screen can be seen.*

*Downstage there is a 'front lawn'. Lying face down on the grass is AUDRIE. Her shoes and phone are by her side. She doesn't move much as the audience enters. Quiet sounds of Winterville waking up are heard. Cars and trucks passing, birds chirping and a cool wind blowing. We hear Sam Cooke crooning Trouble Blues.*

*A doorbell, ding-dong. Houselights go quickly dark. BRIAN, dressed in a security guard uniform, opens the front door and sees AUDRIE.)*

BRIAN: Hey! Hey. *(running to her)* Hey Audrie, whaddya doing? You couldn't make it to the door? Come on, get up. Get up Audrie, what the ... I've got to get to work and you've got to get to school. Get up, now ... come on.

# READING AND RESPONDING TO THE FIRST DRAFT

*Read someone else's first draft and fill in the following:*

PLAYWRIGHT'S NAME \_\_\_\_\_

TITLE OF PLAY \_\_\_\_\_

WHAT DO YOU THINK THE PLAY IS ABOUT (THEME/SEED)?

WHAT DID YOU SEE? WHAT DID YOU HEAR?

WHAT QUESTIONS DO YOU HAVE?

*Read your own first draft and fill in the following:*

WHAT DO I SEE? WHAT DO I HEAR?

WHAT QUESTIONS DO I HAVE NOW?

HOW CAN THE PLAY DIG DEEPER AND REACH HIGHER IN THE  
SECOND DRAFT?

# PROMPTS

**NOW** if a seed has yet to form then read the following prompts and circle the one that may work for you.

What dream or experience have you had that could inspire a meaningful play?

**THE LAST WORD:** Is there a conversation that you've wanted to have that hasn't happened yet or can't happen in life? On page 23 write a story about a talk you'd like to have happen.

**DEFINING MOMENT:** Can you remember a time when you experienced a true sense of yourself? Or what about a moment that changed your life? On page 23 write a story about such a turning point.

**CHARACTER ASSASSINATION:** Is there a **person** or **idea** that you'd like to see change? Can you imagine a time and place where this could happen? On page 23 write a story that confronts something or someone.

**NEW WORLD:** Do you have a vision of a world where everything is different? What happens there? Dream and write. Page 23.

**PROBLEM PLAY:** Is there a problem in the world that you'd like to see solved? What's the best way forward? Show the problem and a solution through a story on page 23.

(After you've written your story on page 23, read it and identify your theme/seed on page 20.)

# SEARCHING FOR STORIES

If you need then search where good stories are free and accessible. Here is a list of five sources for real stories. NOW go to each site and on the lines below each show identify the name of a story that you discover:

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## **THIS AMERICAN LIFE** [www.thisamericanlife.org](http://www.thisamericanlife.org)

This is the greatest weekly radio show that features investigations and stories around central themes. Saturdays at 3pm on WNYC 93.9 FM. Free podcast available. Search for your theme in the Radio Archive.

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## **THE MOTH RADIO HOUR** [www.themoth.org](http://www.themoth.org)

Airs Wednesdays at 8pm on 93.9 FM, Saturdays at 2pm on 93.9 FM, and Saturdays at 7pm on AM 820. The Moth Radio Hour features true stories told live on stage without scripts, notes, props or accompaniment. Podcast available. Search the Archives for your theme.

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## **DEMOCRACY NOW! the war & peace report** [www.democracynow.org](http://www.democracynow.org)

This news hour investigates what is happening in New York and around the world. Independent, non-commercial show that presents honest and provocative news. Host Amy Goodman is a hero. Broadcast Mon - Fri at 8am on WBAI 99.5 FM. Podcast and espanol available. Search.

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## **STORY CORPS** [www.storycorps.org](http://www.storycorps.org)

StoryCorps provides Americans the opportunity to record, share and preserve the stories of our lives. Since 2003, StoryCorps has collected and archived more than 45,000 interviews all accessible on their website.

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## **THE NEW YORK TIMES** [www.nytimes.com](http://www.nytimes.com)

This is the paper of historic record with a world's worth of stories. Search the archives. Pick up a used copy. Open and read it.

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Here's a tragicomedy about the dread and humor of waiting. It was born from Samuel Beckett's experience and imagination, placing real feelings and thoughts in an unreal world.

# Waiting for Godot (1952)

by Samuel Beckett

Estragon  
Vladimir  
Lucky  
Pozzo  
a boy

## ACT I

A country road. A tree.  
Evening.

*(Estragon, sitting on a low mound, is trying to take off his boot. He pulls at it with both hands, panting. He gives up, exhausted, rests, tries again. As before. Enter Vladimir.)*

ESTRAGON: *(giving up again)* Nothing to be done.

VLADIMIR: *(advancing with short, stiff strides, legs wide apart)* I'm beginning to come round to the opinion. All my life I've tried to put it from me, saying, Vladimir, be reasonable, you haven't yet tried everything. And I resumed the struggle. *(He broods, musing on the struggle. Turning to Estragon.)* So there you are again.

ESTRAGON: Am I?

VLADIMIR: I'm glad to see you back. I thought you were gone forever.

ESTRAGON: Me too.

VLADIMIR: Together again at last! We'll have to celebrate this. But how? *(He reflects.)* Get up till I embrace you.

ESTRAGON: *(irritably)* Not now, not now.

VLADIMIR: *(hurt, coldly)* May one inquire where His Highness spent the night?

ESTRAGON: In a ditch. ...

NOW here is a timeless play, a modern myth that confronts real truths in an unreal situation.

# DUTCHMAN (1964)

by Amiri Baraka

## CHARACTERS

CLAY, twenty-year-old Negro

LULA, thirty-year-old white woman

RIDERS OF COACH, white and black

YOUNG NEGRO CONDUCTOR

*(In the flying underbelly of the city. Steaming hot, and summer on top, outside. Underground. The subway heaped in modern myth.*

*Opening scene is a man sitting in a subway seat, holding a magazine but looking vacantly just above its wilting pages. Occasionally he looks blankly toward the window on his right. Dim lights and darkness whistling by against the glass. ... Give the sense of speed. ...*

*The man is sitting alone. That is, only his seat is visible, though the rest of the car is outfitted as a complete subway car. But only his seat is shown. There might be, for a time, as the play begins, a loud scream of the actual train. And it can recur throughout the play, or continue on a lower key once the dialogue starts.*

*The train slows after a time, pulling to a brief stop at one of the stations. The man looks idly up, until he sees a woman's face staring at him through the window; when it realizes that the man has noticed the face, it begins very premeditatedly to smile.*

*The man smiles too, for a moment, without a trace of self-consciousness. Almost an instinctive though undesirable response. Then a kind of awkwardness or embarrassment sets in. ...)*

## Scene I

*Train roars. Lights flash outside the windows.*

*LULA enters from the rear of the car in bright, skimpy summer clothes and sandals. She carries a net bag full of paper books, fruit, and other anonymous articles. She is wearing sunglasses, which she pushes up on her forehead from time to time. LULA is a tall, slender, beautiful woman with long red hair hanging straight down her back, wearing only loud lipstick in some body's good taste. She is eating an apple, very daintily. Coming down the car toward CLAY. She stops beside CLAY'S seat and hangs languidly from the strap, still managing to eat the apple. ...*



LULA: Hello.

CLAY: Uh, hi're you?

LULA: I'm going to sit down ... O.K.?

CLAY: Sure.

LULA: *(Swings down onto the seat, pushing her legs straight out as if she is very weary) Oooof! Too much weight.*

CLAY: Ha, doesn't look like much to me. *(Leaning back against the window, a little surprised and maybe stiff.)*

LULA: It's so anyway. *(And she moves her toes in the sandals, then pulls her right leg up on the left knee, better to inspect the bottoms of the sandals and the back of her heel. She appears for a second not to notice that CLAY is sitting next to her or that she has spoken to him just a second before. CLAY looks at the magazine, then out the black window. As he does this, she turns very quickly toward him) Weren't you staring at me through the window?*

CLAY: *(Wheeling around and very much stiffened) What?*

LULA: Weren't you staring at me through the window? At the last stop?

CLAY: Staring at you? What do you mean?

LULA: Don't you know what staring means?

CLAY: I saw you through the window ... if that's what it means. I don't know if I was staring. Seems to me you were staring through the window at me.

LULA: I was. But only after I'd turned around and saw you staring through that window down in the vicinity of my ... legs.

What do you think DUTCHMAN is about (the THOUGHT not the PLOT)?  
 What question is the play asking?

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**What could THEME/SEED be for Dutchman?**

**What happens when a person suppresses their cultural heritage/identity?  
 or How are people manipulated and murdered by a crazy white society?**

**NOW see how plot articulates thought.**

The plot of Dutchman is that a white woman named Lula meets a younger bourgeois African-American man named Clay on a subway train. She boards the train eating an apple. **(ATTACK)** She sits down next to Clay and accuses him of staring at her. She seduces him and provokes him to break out of his quiet conformity. Clay stops her and tells her everything he feels about her and the luxury she represents. **(CRISIS)** Clay recoils from his murderous rage deciding to be silent about race relations.

**(REVELATION)** Lula murders him, orders the other passengers to dump the body and awaits a new victim.

# SUGGESTED READING

## PLAYS

- The Glass Menagerie by Tennessee Williams (1944)  
Waiting for Godot by Samuel Beckett (1952)  
The Bald Soprano by Eugene Ionesco (1958)  
Dutchman by Amiri Baraka (LeRoi Jones) (1971)  
Cloud Nine by Caryl Churchill (1979)  
Sam Shepard: 7 Plays by Sam Shepard (1984) (*Curse of the Starving Class*)  
Fires in the Mirror: Crown Heights, Brooklyn and Other Identities  
by Anna Deavere Smith (1993)  
Angels in America: A Gay Fantasia on National Themes  
by Tony Kushner (1993)  
Ruined by Lynn Nottage (2009)

## BOOKS

### *Acting for theatre*

- An Actor Prepares by Constantin Stanislavski (1938)  
Presence of the Actor by Joseph Chaikin (1972)  
Respect for Acting by Uta Hagen (1973)  
An Acrobat of the Heart by Stephen Wangh (2000)

### *Creating for theatre*

- Theatre and Its Double by Antonin Artaud (1938)  
Towards a Poor Theatre by Jerzy Grotowski (1968)  
An Empty Space: A Book About the Theatre: Deadly, Holy,  
Rough, Immediate by Peter Brook (1968)  
Shakespeare Our Contemporary by Jan Kott (1974)  
A Sense of Direction by William Ball (1984)  
Bad Reputation by Penny Arcade (2009)  
Jack Be Nimble by Jack O'Brien (2013)