

BROADWAY 101

A Comprehensive Study Guide
covering everything that is Broadway.

Playwright

Playwright Activity #1: "What if. . ." - Creative Writing Exercise

In groups of 2

- Many myths and fairytales center on the premise of an evil spell being created by an antagonist, which is then broken through the tenacity, cleverness, and pure virtue of the protagonist.
- Research and find three myths or fairytales that work with this premise. For example, in the fairytale, *Sleeping Beauty*, a curse is cast on a princess to fall into a deep sleep when she touches a spinning wheel's spindle before the sun sets on her sixteenth birthday. The spell is broken only by true love's kiss, which comes in the form of a handsome prince.
- Select two existing myths or fairytales and create alternate versions to the original. These alternative versions do not necessarily have to end on a happy note.
- For each story, create a new title, and two "What if..." questions that connect to the tale but require the tale, as we know it, to change in various ways. For example: What if the prince kisses the sleeping princess and she turns to stone?

Myth/Fairytale #1

Original title: _____ New title: _____

Version 1 - What if...

Version 2 - What if...

Myth/Fairytale #2

Original title: _____ New title: _____

Version 1 - What if...

Version 2 - What if...

Myth/Fairytale #3

Original title: _____ New title: _____

Version 1 - What if...

Version 2 - What if...

- After the two questions are written for each myth or fairytale, write a short scene for the story's two principle characters using one of the 'what if' scenarios.

Activity #2: The 1-Minute Play

On your own

WHO

Imagine two characters with some kind of relationship. It could be friend/friend, sister/brother, parent/child, boss/employee, or even two people who have never met. Write a short description of each character: their name, age, what they look like, what their personality is, and anything else you can think of.

WHERE

Pick a setting for these two characters. Is it someplace they are familiar with (home, work, school, a store, a street corner) or someplace they've never been before? Describe the location you've chosen.

WHAT

Now we get to the good part: what happens? Every play, even a one-minute play, has a beginning, middle and an end. The beginning shows us who the characters are, where they are and what they are doing. Then something happens - there's a crisis, and one or both characters have to make a decision or take action. The end shows us the result of that decision or action.

Imagine you are writing about the most important day in your characters' lives, a day they will never forget. What happens to them?

HOW

Now that you know what happens, write the script. Good dialogue gives us clues to the characters (How do they talk? What words do they use?) and their relationship to each other (you talk differently to your friend than to your teacher or your boss). Remember that in one minute you need a beginning, middle and an end.

Activity #3: The One-Act Play

A short play is called the One-Act. Due to its limited length, the one-act play typically includes less complex plots. Like a short story, it contains only the most essential elements. It tells the story, illustrates its characters, presents its theme and ends rather quickly. Using this format, it is important that short plays adopt a clear, straightforward, and engaging story.

A story/play, including the one-act play, is comprised of three parts.

Part 1 includes:

The setup; establishing the conflict; introducing the characters, symbols, themes, and setting.

Part 2 includes:

The complication; the rising action; the turning point (usually occurs in the middle); and the character development.

Part 3 includes

The resolution; the outcomes after the turning point; the climax (which occurs close to the end); and resolving the conflict.

In groups of 2

- Choose a play topic from: http://www.thewritesource.com/writing_topics/#inc
- From your selected topic, begin writing a 10-minute, one-act play for 2-5 characters that is approximately 10-15 pages in length. Use the following steps to help guide and structure your writing.
 - Decide what your play will be about;
 - Clearly outline the play's action for parts 1, 2, and 3;
 - Write short character descriptions;
 - Think of a creative, clever, and unique way to end the play.
- Once you've established the plotline for your one-act play, create a structural statement that summarizes your story in two sentences. This is good exercise and way for writers to be succinct and targeted in their story elements.
 - [*Protagonist*] is in [*Situation*] and must accomplish [*External Goal*].
 - But can [*Protagonist*] defeat [*Antagonist*] when [*Climax happens*]?

The first sentence defines the story premise.

The closed (yes-no) question simplifies the story for the writer and reader toward the story's emotional core of what is happening.