



Teacher Notes for Writing a Play

After studying a group of short stories, you may be ready to introduce students to writing a play. First, read the article "[An Audience of One's Peers](#)," then decide what kind of play would be best to assign to your class.

If possible, arrange for a final performance of the best two or three plays your students write. This performance may be a practiced reading for other classes or a full performance in your theater space for an invited audience of families and friends. Knowing their work will be seen by their peers or families and friends will encourage the students to do a better job on the assignment.

Make arrangements to have computers available at appropriate times during this project. At least one person from each group will be assigned the responsibility to make a final draft of the group script.

During the preliminary stages, students can be graded on completing each step. The drafting stage would not be an appropriate time to grade on an evaluative level using letters or percentages. It is better to keep the students focused on the process rather than the grades. Anyone who completes the assignment on time should receive full credit. Although students who do not complete a particular step receive no credit for that step, each of them should be encouraged to participate fully in each group meeting. Their contributions can be valuable to the final script.

As the students work in groups, you can use the opportunity to take notes about their behavior during group work. Have a few pages of mailing labels on a clipboard. As you circulate among the group, listen for kinds of comments each members make. Write your observations on the type of assistance each students gives. If possible, quote the students, then later you can add reflective comments. These notes can be affixed to the students record sheets and referred in small print to when you write narrative reports of their progress. It is helpful to have printed on the label student names. This will remind you observe all of the students by the time the group meetings have finished in preparation of the play.

Black line masters are provided for use during a class discussion on elements of a play. Permit the students to generate a list, and then have students write the elements on their worksheets. Refer to the article or notes below for possible responses.

Optional Responses:

- A. What is a play? Use the definition from your own anthology or this one:
*Drama is a literary work written to be acted, that tells a story through speech and actions of the characters.*¹
- B. What are basic elements of a play script
1. dialogue
 2. stage directions
 3. props
 4. lights
 5. sets

¹ "Glossary of Literary Terms" *ScottForesman Literature and Integrated Studies*. Scott-Foresman: Glenview, Illinois. 1997, p.817.