

Lesson Plans: Writing a Ten-Minute Play

For students in grades: 9-12

Number of Sessions: 5

Time length of Sessions: 45-60 minutes

Description
<p>How can your students build connections and understanding to the world around them through their own words and ideas? Join us as we explore these ideas through an exciting Ten-Minute Play contest. The goal of Dramaworks Young Playwrights Contest and Festival is to motivate young people to learn about themselves, their individuality and self-worth by writing an original play. This project inspires creativity by giving each student a voice in creating their own Ten-Minute play. Each submitted play will be adjudicated by a professional theatre practitioner using a carefully constructed rubric. A number of student Ten-Minute plays will be selected as semifinalists and given dramaturgical assistance for suggested revisions. After resubmission, ten winning plays are chosen and given a professional director and cast for a performance at Palm Beach Dramaworks. The winning playwrights will also receive a cash prize and a published copy of their script. Let's create!</p>
Rationale
<p>Palm Beach Dramaworks strives to enrich and profoundly impact the community in which we serve, and PBD does so with live, interactive experiences. This project supports our goal to introduce the transformative power of live theatre to a new generation, and connect each play to every heart and mind. As the oldest professional theatre company in Palm Beach County we continually seek thoughtful and powerful ways to expand and deepen the experiences of our audiences with innovative, challenging plays and programming that supports our motto of "Theatre to Think About."</p>
PBD Contact Information
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Expected Results

Language Arts Standards

LAFS.912.W.1.3

Write narratives to develop real or imagined experiences or events using effective technique, well-chosen details, and well-structured event sequences

LAFS.912.W.2.5

Develop and strengthen writing as needed by planning, revising, editing, rewriting, or trying a new approach, focusing on addressing what is most significant for a specific purpose and audience. (Editing for conventions should demonstrate command of Language standards 1–3 up to and including grades 9–10 on page 54.)

Theatre Standards

TH.912.O.1.4

Write an original script or a dramatic adaptation of a literary work to demonstrate knowledge of theatrical conventions.

TH.912.O.3.4

Create a performance piece to document a significant issue or event.

Logistical Factors

The school will need:

- A stopwatch or timer for timed activities
- Ability to play music in the classroom (optional)
- One strong Ten-Minute play to be used as a reading assignment. [Ten Minute Play](#)
- Photographs of two to three people in situations of conflict. Photos: [1](#) [2](#) [3](#) [4](#) [5](#) [6](#)

CLASSROOM LESSON #1

Essential Question: What is a Ten-Minute play?

Bell Work: Write the words “Ten-Minute play” on the board. Invite students to brainstorm a large list of words, phrases, and ideas that come to mind when they hear the phrase.

Materials: Character Conflict Worksheet: [Character Conflict Worksheet](#); **Conflict photographs for writing exercise:** Photos: [1](#) [2](#) [3](#) [4](#) [5](#) [6](#)

Ask the following reflection questions: (5-10 minutes)

- What do you see on the board?
- Based on our descriptions of a “Ten-Minute play” how would you define it?
- You will be writing individual Ten-Minute plays. What do you imagine will be one of the biggest challenges? What do you think are the advantages of creating original stories and narratives in this format? How might a Ten-Minute play tell a story quickly and efficiently?

Vocabulary: Conflict: Character: Protagonist: Antagonist

Ⓞ **Activity #1: Imaginative Writing: Freestyle/Freethought (10 Minutes)**

→ **Students should have a notebook or loose paper, and a writing implement. Set the timer for ten minutes, and explain the following guidelines:**

- The goal is quantity not quality
- Write as quickly as you can
- Write without limitations
- Don't stop to edit or revise anything
- Don't stop to understand what you are writing; don't analyze it
- Don't attempt to think logically about your writing
- Don't pay attention to grammar, spelling, or punctuation
- Don't pay attention to margins or lines on the page; write everywhere
- If you cannot think of something to write, write about that
- Don't cross out anything you write
- If something you are writing about is embarrassing, painful, or frightening, write about it

→ **Benefits of freewriting**

- Frees the imagination
- Removes the self-censoring 'switch' in a writer's creativity
- Allows writers to work through and shift fears and anxieties
- Relieves the anxiety of working under pressure

→ **Reflection** What did you experience? Was it easy or difficult?

⊙ **Activity #2: One-Minute Story Improvisation Exercise: Spontaneous Creation (10 Minutes)**

→ **This exercise helps verbally free participants from self-censorship**

- Invite one student to the front of the classroom to be the contestant
- Assign another student to be the timekeeper
- Ask the class for a story topic that they think the contestant knows absolutely nothing about. The topic should be absurd, obtuse, imaginative, and out of the ordinary. Examples: “The abundance of rainbow-colored fish in Malaysia” or “The daily habits of Zulu warriors”
- Explain to the contestant that they have one minute to teach the class or talk in-depth about the topic. The contestant will have to use their imagination to discuss all aspects of the topic
- There are no restrictions, except classroom rules
- They may not stop talking until “time” is called. (Side coaching from the teacher may be needed at first. Remind the contestant to stay on topic or keep speaking of an aspect of the topic they might be ignoring)
- Set the timer for one minute, and announce that time starts when you say “Begin”

→ **Invite as many students to be the contestant as time allows**

⊙ **Activity extension (optional). Multiple One-Minute Stories – Concentration and clarity**

- Invite two contestants to the front of the classroom
- Give each student a topic
- Have one student speak to the class, and have the second student slightly behind and to one side of the first student. The second student does not shout or try to thwart the first student, but calmly speaks their topic “into the ear” of the first student.
- Set the timer for one minute, and announce that time starts when you say “Begin.”

⊙ **Activity #3: Creating Character: Every person has a story to tell (10 minutes)**

→ **Conflict is the most important aspect of good storytelling**

- Define conflict, protagonist, antagonist; Glossary found on page 15
- Distribute a photograph showing conflict to each student, or have examples in Google Drive, Edline, or on your board
- Talk through the character profile questions on the **Character Profile Worksheet**
- Students begin work on writing a character profile for each person in the photograph

→ **A writer should fully know and understand the background and history of every character in his story**

⊙ **Homework**

- Complete the character profile for each person in the photo
- Write a one paragraph story about the conflict as seen in the photo. Use examples or character traits from the CHARACTER PROFILE to define the conflict
- Assignment due at the next Young Playwright’s class

⊙ **Exit slip: Reflection:** Allow each student to share one word or phrase that comes to mind when you hear the phrase “Ten-Minute Play.” It’s alright to repeat!

CLASSROOM LESSON #2

Essential Question: What is a Ten-Minute play?

Bell Work: Write the words “Well-Made Play” on the board. Invite students to brainstorm a large list of words, phrases, and ideas that come to mind when they hear the term.

Materials: paper and writing implement; **Freytag Pyramid: Elements of a Play; Conflict photographs** (see Lesson #1)

Ask the following reflection question:

- What do you think are the components of a strong, effective play?

Vocabulary: Dramatic Action; Introduction; Exposition; Inciting Incident; Rising Action; Conflict, Climax, Falling Action; Resolution; Objectives; Obstacles

⊙ Icebreaker: What's in a Name? (7 Minutes)

- Have students divide into groups of two
- Give each student one minute to tell the other student the reason they were given their first name. If they do not know the answer, it is alright
- After one minute, switch and have the second student share the reason they were given their first name
- After both students have an answer, have each share the other's story with the class

→ **Note: it's important for playwrights to create strong, clear names for their characters. The character's name might inform the traits, behavior, or objectives of that character.**

⊙ Activity #1: Cluster Writing. Imagining All Aspects of an Idea (7 Minutes)

- Write one word in the center of a piece of paper and circle it. You may assign a word, or have students choose a word of their own. Examples: Respect; Change; Responsibility; Pride; Dignity; Fear; Future, etc
- Cluster write for 5 minutes

→ **Explain the guidelines:**

- Free associate words, phrases, sentences, images, and doodles that relate to that word
- Write or draw without limitation or censorship
- Don't stop to edit or revise anything
- Don't stop to understand what you are creating; don't analyze it
- Don't pay attention to grammar, spelling, or punctuation
- Don't cross out anything you write

⊙ Discussion: The Parts of a Story (10 Minutes)

- Review the definitions of “protagonist” and “antagonist.” Glossary on page 15
- Define the parts of a story with the Freytag Pyramid.
 - Introduction; Exposition; Inciting Incident; Rising Action (building conflict); Climax; Falling Action; Resolution
- Define “objective.” Each character has a driving intention that they **MUST** achieve
- Define “conflict.” Does each character want something desperately? Do they want something different?
- Define “obstacles.” The protagonist and antagonist have objectives that clash, creating obstacles for one another

⊙ **Activity #1: #2: Write it Concisely (15 minutes)**

- Return to the conflict photograph
- Write a one-minute play using dialogue from the conflict you see in the photograph and from the Character Profile you created
- The story should fit on one page of paper
- The one-minute play should have a strong inciting incident, conflict, climax, and resolution
- All dialogue should be “active,” and contain none or very little past tense conversation

→ **Optional:** You may also decide to complete this activity as a **Homework** assignment

⊙ **Exit slip:** Reflect: Allow each student to share one word or phrase that comes to mind when you hear the word “Conflict.” It’s alright to repeat!

CLASSROOM LESSON #3

Essential Question: What is a Ten-Minute play?

Vocabulary: Tragedy; Comedy; Farce; Surreal/Fantasy; Musical; Tragic Flaw, Catharsis

Materials: Paper and writing implement; [Treatment Worksheet](#); a published Ten-Minute play for the reading assignment: [Ten-Minute Play](#)

⊙ Icebreaker: Pass the Story (10 minutes)

→ An improvisation exercise to create and “rehearse” the parts of a story

- Seat students in a circle, as tightly as possible
- One student begins the story with an opening sentence
- Moving clockwise, every student contributes just one sentence to the story
- Note: students should create an inciting incident, rising action, climax, falling action and a resolution
- Note: Before starting, suggest creating a maximum of two to three characters, including a protagonist and an antagonist
- The students should create as much conflict as possible
- If the class is large, the story should end after one revolution of the circle. In a small class, set the number of rotations as two, three, or four
- At first, side coaching may be necessary to keep the story on track, and to complete a full story by the end of the circle
- Students not currently speaking should not side coach nor try to influence the direction of the story
- Repeat the exercise several times, starting with a different student each time and telling a completely new story

→ **Note: eventually, there should be no pauses between sentences**

⊙ Discussion: Theatre Styles

→ Understanding the core theatre styles gives students ideas for choosing a style for which they resonate

- Tragedy/Drama essentials:
 - The condition of the protagonist’s life progresses from good to bad
 - A ‘tragic flaw,’ according to Aristotle, brings about a protagonist’s downfall
 - The fate of many people is tied to the protagonist. Therefore, his or her downfall is a catastrophic event
 - The purpose of tragedy or drama is ‘catharsis,’ which “cleanses the soul of fear and pity.”
 - In a tragedy, there is typically a death at the climax
- Comedy essentials:
 - The condition of the protagonist’s life progresses from bad to good
 - Comedy is usually about ‘common’ people who are living a dramatic situation, but the story is treated humorously
 - Types of comedy include romantic comedy, satirical comedy, and black comedy, in which humor is found in the gloomy or macabre
- Farce essentials:
 - The protagonist’s life progresses from bad to good
 - The protagonist is in a serious situation that is highly improbable and extremely dire. The situation usually includes pratfalls and slapstick
 - The protagonist has an even more rewarding conclusion at the climax

- Surreal/Fantasy essentials:
 - The story can be either a drama or a comedy
 - The story is typically otherworldly and includes human, non-human or unusual characters
 - The setting does not necessarily take place on Earth or in a typical location
- Musical Theatre essentials:
 - The story can be a drama, comedy, farce, or surreal/fantasy
 - The story includes songs. Songs are sung when the emotion becomes so great, speaking words is no longer sufficient to tell the story: Note: original lyrics and melodies music also be original when submitting a Ten-Minute musical play
 - Musicals can have text and songs, or be completely sung-through. Sung-through musicals contain no or very little spoken text

⊙ **Discussion: Define a play's setting**

- The setting for the play is very important. The setting should support the dramatic action, defining the protagonist's objectives
- The setting for a Ten-Minute Play should encompass one to two locations at most. A short play must be told as quickly and efficiently as possible without the constant shift in locations. (Note: A Ten-Minute play should not be structured like a film)

⊙ **Activity #1: Finding Your Inspiration (5 minutes)**

→ **Use the following prompts to inspire student playwrights to discover their own voice and point of view**

- Find inspiration for your Ten-Minute play by choosing a topic that is REALLY important to you, and a subject for which you are passionate
- Tell a story that you NEED to tell

→ **On a piece of paper or in a journal, students should brainstorm ideas that speak to them personally**

- Suggest the following topics verbally or make a list on the board: Life in school; Life at home; Events occurring in the community; Events occurring in our country; Events occurring in the world; Two opposing views meeting and colliding/debating; Injustice; Misconnection; Change; Respect; Ownership; Responsibility; Pride; Dignity; Value; Empathy; Fear; Future; Expectations

→ **Discuss with the class that the day and time the action takes place in their play is different than any other day in the life of their character(s). Why is this day different than any other day?**

⊙ **Activity #2: Your Ten-Minute Play Treatment (10 minutes)**

→ **Define a treatment created specifically for a play**

- A treatment is a written summary or outline of the play and includes:
 - The inspiration for the story
 - The main conflict
 - The connection between the characters, the inspiration, and the conflict
 - A summary of the introduction, inciting incident, rising action, climax, falling action and resolution
 - Who is the protagonist and what is their main objective?
 - Who is the antagonist and what is their main objective?
 - Where is the play set? A Ten-Minute play should be set in a maximum of one or two locations

⊙ **Homework: Read a Ten-Minute Play and Complete Your Play Treatment**

- Complete a two paragraph summary of your Ten-Minute Play with the **Treatment Worksheet**
 - Assignment due at next Young Playwright's class
- Read a published Ten-Minute Play. Distribute an example of an effective **Ten-Minute Play**

→ **Exit slip: Reflect: "...It Made Me Think."**

- As a class, go around the circle and share one thing today that you learned about playwriting. Begin with one word or one short phrase, and end with "...it made me think." For example, "in a tragedy, the protagonist's life progresses from good to bad...it made me think."

CLASSROOM LESSON #4

Essential Question: What is a Ten-Minute play?

Vocabulary: Exposition, Active Voice, Passive Voice, Narrator

Materials: Music for writing exercise; paper and writing implement for writing exercise

⊙ **Activity #1: Imaginative Writing + Music (optional): Freestyle/Freethought (10 Minutes)**

→ **Ten-Minute freewriting exercise.** The goal is quantity not quality. Instrumental music of any kind may inspire students to write creatively. Music can be played from your own source, or from YouTube. Suggestions included classical, New Age, meditation, instrumental pop or jazz, etc. Links to several options are below.

→ **Explain the guidelines:**

- Write as quickly as you can
- Write without limitations
- Don't stop to edit or revise anything
- Don't stop to understand what you are writing; don't analyze it
- Don't attempt to think logically about your writing
- Don't pay attention to grammar, spelling, or punctuation
- Don't pay attention to margins or lines on the page; write everywhere
- If you cannot think of something to write, write about that
- Don't cross out anything you write
- If something you are writing about is embarrassing, painful, or frightening, write about it

→ **Youtube music options for classroom writing activities:**

- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qy2vsYRZ5DI>
- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FpNbOelt8OU>
- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oZ1CE1qAjA8>
- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bBoDjxLpAzY>
- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OGMJ2b-3eCk>

⊙ **Discussion: Reflect and review the Ten-Minute play treatment (7 minutes)**

- Discuss any challenges or questions about the treatment homework assignment
- Have two or three students read their treatments to the class

⊙ **Discussion: Review the Ten-Minute Play homework assignment (7 minutes)**

→ **Reflect with the following questions:**

- Can you identify the narrative arc in the play? The beginning, middle, and end of the story?
- Describe the author's point of view. What was the author trying to say or express?
- Who was the protagonist and who was the antagonist, and why?
- What was the main conflict?
- What did you learn about a Ten-Minute play by reading this play?
- What emotions did you experience or see reflected in the story?

⊙ **Discussion: Review Character, Story Arc, Setting (5 minutes)**

→ **Character**

- All characters should be believable and have strong, complex emotions, thoughts, and lives
- A writer should know their characters inside and out: their personality, history, and flaws

→ **Story Arc**

- A play begins with an introduction, followed by the inciting incident, rising action with conflict, the climax, falling action, and a resolution

→ **Setting**

- A setting informs the action
- The time of day informs the action
- Your Ten-Minute play is for the stage, and not for film or television
- It's best to set your Ten-Minute play in one location, and avoid car chases, explosions, or the need for special effects

⊙ **Discussion: The Active Voice (7 minutes)**

→ **Understanding the difference between an active and passive voice**

- A play is meant to be seen and not read

→ **Explaining active text**

- An active voice tells the story through dialogue in the present tense
- The characters are actively engaged in the moment they are speaking
- Some dialogue may reflect on a past event or situation, but should be used sparingly
- Refrain from using unspoken stage directions to tell the story

→ **Explaining expositional text (passive voice)**

- Exposition explains background information that may be necessary to explain the history of an event or something in the life of a character. Passive exposition should be used only sparingly in a Ten-Minute play
- Exposition is discussing action or events, rather than showing it actively unfold in the moment
- Narration is exposition, and is typically a cinematic device. If needed, it should be used only sparingly in a Ten-Minute play
- The passive voice is writing about events that occurred in the past tense

⊙ **Activity #2: Passive Voice in Practice (7 minutes)**

→ Write a one paragraph, reflective story about something that happened to you in your childhood, preferably transformational in your life. Explain everything you remember in detail. For example, "When I was ten, we spent a week in Haiti helping earthquake victims..."

⊙ **Homework: Transforming passive voice into active voice**

- Using the passive voice paragraph written during class, transform the past tense narrative into active dialogue as if it were occurring in the present tense
- Write a two page play using yourself as the protagonist and any character you included in your reflective paragraph. Try to remain accurate in adapting your story, but feel free to be creative. Your two page play should have a strong inciting incident, conflict, climax, and resolution
- Assignment is due at the next Young Playwrights class session

CLASSROOM LESSON #5

Essential Question: What is a Ten-Minute play?

Vocabulary: Archetype (Optional)

Materials: [Play Formatting Guide](#)

⊙ **Icebreaker: What is your favorite stage play? (5 minutes)**

→ Allow every student the opportunity to name their favorite stage play

⊙ **Activity #1: Party Quirks (Optional) (10 minutes)**

→ This advanced exercise is for developing characters using an archetype and a human “quirk.”

- Choose a party “host” and send them out of the room or to a corner of the classroom where they cannot hear the following instructions
- Choose three students and take them out of the room or to a corner where your discussion is private. Have students brainstorm a unique archetype and quirk for each person. They should be unique, absurd, but not overtly difficult. The archetype and quirk will influence the way each person walks, talks and interacts with the “host” and other guests. For examples of archetypes and quirks, see below
- The party “host” begins by improvising the setting up for a party, perhaps speaking out loud to themselves while they “work.” No scenery or props are needed; everything should be mimed
- Each guest should ring a doorbell” or knock on “the door” to the host’s “home.” Be sure that the guests arrive at 30-second intervals rather than all at once.
- The host answers the door for the first guest. The guest immediately embodies their archetype and party quirk while the host suggests they help themselves to the food. The guests should walk, talk, and interact using their archetype and quirk.
- Once the second guest has arrived the host is allowed to start guessing what the guests’ archetypes and quirks are, but must do so while in character. For example, the host may guess by saying “Please help yourself to chips and dip, cowboy who thinks he’s the smartest person in the room,” or “Have a seat and rest those feet, football player who has a phobia about spiders.
- Once a player’s archetype and quirk has been guessed, they leave “the party.” After the host guesses the quirk, the game is over and a new group of players is chosen

→ Side coaching may be required at first to ensure that the guests are communicating in character, and that the host continually communicates with the guests.

⊙ **Discussion: Final review of what constitutes a well-made Ten-Minute play (10 minutes)**

→ Story Arc

- A play begins with an introduction, followed by the inciting incident, rising action with conflict, the climax, falling action, and a resolution
- In a Ten-Minute play, the inciting incident typically happens within the first two minutes of the play

→ **Conflict**

- The main conflict is between the protagonist and the antagonist
- A protagonist should have something serious at stake, and a consequence if they don't get it
- Time is important for the protagonist. There should be pressure to reach their objective
- The protagonist and antagonist have a driving objective that they must achieve
- Obstacles. The protagonist and antagonist have objectives that clash, creating obstacles for one another
- There are two major types of conflict:
 - External conflict: a protagonist or antagonist struggles with an outside person or force. Characters may oppose one another physically or philosophically, or natural forces such as earthquakes or poverty may be the main struggle
 - Internal conflict: a protagonist or an antagonist struggles with inner anxieties or with making a decision that may impact themselves or others. A character may struggle with saving themselves or saving their child, or with whom they would like to ask out for a date.
- A protagonist doesn't always win their objective at the end

→ **Active vs. Passive Voice**

- A play is meant to be seen and not read
- An active voice tells the story through dialogue in the present tense
- The characters are actively engaged in the moment they are speaking
- Some dialogue may reflect on a past event or situation, but it is used sparingly
- Refrain from using unspoken stage directions to tell the story
- Passive dialogue explains what is happening rather than speaking it actively in the moment
- Passive dialogue discusses action, not revealing it in the moment
- Narration is exposition, and should be used sparingly or not at all
- Passive voice is writing about events in the past
- Avoid using stage directions as much as possible to tell the story. Feel free to allow characters nonverbal action to move the story forward

→ **Setting**

- A setting informs the action
- The time of day informs the action
- Your Ten-Minute play is for the stage, and not for film or television. Therefore, create one to two locations at most
- Try to avoid car chases, explosions, or the need for special effects

→ **Character**

- All characters should be believable and have strong, complex emotions and thoughts
- A writer should know their characters inside and out: their personality, history, and flaws
- Limit the number of characters in a Ten-Minute play. Too many characters diffuse the main conflict. Two characters are ideal; six should be the maximum
- Each character's name should support the character's traits. Be creative and thoughtful

→ **Theatre Styles**

- Choose a theatre style that you feel best suits the story you need to tell
- In tragedy or drama, the condition of the protagonist's life progresses from good to bad
- In comedy the condition of the protagonist's life progresses from bad to good
- Types of comedy include romantic comedy, satirical comedy, and black comedy, in which humor is found in the gloomy or macabre
- In farce, the protagonist's life progresses from bad to good
- The protagonist is in a serious situation that is highly improbable and extremely dire. The situation usually includes pratfalls and slapstick
- In a surreal/fantasy plays, the story can be either a drama or a comedy
- The story is typically otherworldly and includes human, non-human or unusual characters
- In musical theatre, the story can be a drama, comedy, farce, or surreal/fantasy
- The story includes songs. Songs are sung when the emotion becomes so great, speaking words is no longer sufficient to tell the story

⊙ **Ten-Minute Play Treatment Revision: Peer Review (10-15 minutes)**

→ **Small group peer mentorship to share and reflect on one another's work.**

- Divide the class into groups of two, three or four
- Allow each student playwright to read their Ten-Minute play treatment to their small group
- Small groups should listen for and give feedback on the conflict, character objectives, the style (drama, farce, etc.), the setting and time of day, and their overall impressions of the story
- Encourage each group to start with positive feedback and follow-up with constructive feedback on the playwright's main conflict as well as details expressed in the treatment.
- The goal is to encourage each playwright to write a strong and effective Ten-Minute play.

⊙ **Discussion: Final words of wisdom (2 minutes)**

- Your Ten-Minute play topic should be REALLY important to you, and a story that you NEED to tell
- Write what you know; research what you don't know. If there is a reference, world event, etc. in your story, research it
- Be original and true to your voice as a human being. Do not try to emulate someone else's work
- A Ten-Minute play is ten to fifteen pages of dialogue
- The play must be in the proper format, and have correct spelling, grammar, and punctuation.

→ **Distribute the [Play Formatting Guide](#)**

⊙ **Homework: Write your Ten-Minute play**

- Using the treatment, begin writing your Ten-Minute play
- [Assign three to five days for a due date](#)
- After receiving the play, you may choose to offer suggestions, corrections, or revisions. If so, assign two to three days for revisions

SUBMISSION INFORMATION

⊙ **Next Steps: Submitting Your Students' Ten-Minute Plays**

- The deadline for submitting the plays is Friday, December 14 @ 5:00pm
- All plays must be submitted by the teacher or school. Palm Beach Dramaworks will not accept entries from individual students
- Teachers may use any lesson plans for the Dramaworks Ten-Minute play Contest. These plans are only a suggestion
- Palm Beach County high school students attending a public, private, or homeschooled group are eligible for this contest
- Plays must be submitted digitally. Please send a link from Google Drive, Dropbox, or email entries to: gcadwallader@palmbeachdramaworks.org.
- Plays must be submitted as Word or PDF documents
- Please be sure all plays have a title page with the following:
 - Title of play
 - Author
 - School
 - Teacher name
 - Teacher's email address and telephone number

→ **Please do not add or include any personal information for your students**

⊙ **The Process for Choosing Semifinalists**

- All plays are read by working theatre professionals
- All plays are scored using the PBD Young Playwrights Ten-Minute Play Contest [Rubric](#)
- The top 20 semifinalists are chosen to move to the next round
- The classroom teacher will be notified of semifinalists from their classroom
- Once notified, the teacher must reply to Palm Beach Dramaworks to inform us that the playwright was notified
- Individual feedback for each play is not available at this time

⊙ **The Process for Choosing Finalists**

- All finalists will be given dramaturgical feedback on their play. The feedback requires revisions by the playwright.
- All finalists are given one week to revise and resubmit their plays. Instructions on submitting revised plays will be sent to the classroom teacher at that time
- All finalists' plays are then read by a small committee of working theatre professionals
- All finalists' plays are scored using the same Young Playwrights rubric
- Ten winners are chosen
- Individual feedback will be available for all twenty semifinalists, and will be sent to the classroom teacher

⊙ **The Winning Plays: What to Expect**

- The ten playwrights whose plays are selected are given a workshop production of their plays with a professional director and actors.
- The winning playwrights are encouraged to participate in the rehearsal and development process. A detailed schedule is available in February.
- The ten plays are given a professional staged reading onstage at Palm Beach Dramaworks
- The ten playwrights are awarded a prize of \$250, plus inclusion in a published anthology of all the winning plays.

Thank you for your participation in the Dramaworks Young Playwrights Ten-Minute Play Contest and Festival! We look forward to reading your students' plays!

For more information, please see [Frequently Asked Questions](#) or email gcadwallader@palmbeachdramaworks.org

What do I need to know about Ten-Minute Plays?

Definition:

Here is the definition of a Ten-Minute Play from the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts:

A Ten-Minute Play is a play with at least two characters. It is not a scene, skit or sketch. Structurally, it should have a beginning, middle and end, just as any good one-act or full-length play. Reaching beyond the surface, the text should be enriched with subtext. Since we only have ten minutes to bring the story full circle, a dramatic conflict should be posed as quickly as possible. The resolution of that conflict is what plays out across the remaining pages. The true success of a Ten-Minute Play is reliant on the writer's ability to bring an audience through the same cathartic/entertaining experience that a good one-act or full-length play accomplishes; i.e., sympathetic characters with recognizable needs encompassed within a resolvable dramatic conflict.

Vocabulary/Terms:

- **Antagonist:** The antagonist is a character or a group of characters whose objectives directly oppose the objectives of the protagonist. The antagonist has a major change at the climax of the story.
- **Archetype:** An archetype is a universally understood representation or idealization of a profession or group, and a perfect, synthesized example of that profession or group.
- **Character:** Characters are fully-formed personalities actively participating in telling a story. Characters should have a strong point of view
- **Conflict:** Conflict is tension and competing objectives between the protagonist and other forces in a story. Conflict can come from other characters, from external sources such as nature or machinery, or internal struggles. Conflict is necessary to drive the story forward.
- **Dramatic Action:** The dramatic action is a series of events and motivations propelled by characters in conflict. While most plays utilize this structure, some plays, such as absurdist plays, are written to oppose this structure:
 - **Introduction:** The beginning of the play starts with **Exposition**, in which background information about the story or characters is discussed, presented or disseminated.
 - **Inciting Incident:** The inciting incident occurs when the protagonist and an opposing force come into conflict, setting the main encounter of the story into action.
 - **Rising Action:** In the rising action, complications, crises, or discoveries create tension and suspense, and increase **Conflict**, propelling the protagonist and the antagonist toward a transformation.
 - **Climax:** The climax of a story is the moment in the story that contains the greatest tension, and a major change in the fate of both the protagonist and antagonist. At this turning point, there is no going back.
 - **Falling Action:** The falling action holds moments in the story that may contain conflict and tension yet to be resolved.
 - **Resolution:** The resolution of the story occurs when the main conflicts of the dramatic action are resolved, and the questions in the play are answered.
- **Narrator:** A narrator delivers expositional commentary outside of the dramatic action, usually directly to the audience.
- **Objectives:** An objective is a goal or intention that characters are strategically trying to achieve. Characters usually have multiple objectives to pursue.
- **Obstacle:** An obstacle is a barrier that hinders characters from easily achieving their objectives.
- **Protagonist:** The protagonist is the main character in a story, and drives the dramatic action with their objectives. They have a major change at the climax. The protagonist, whether a hero or a villain, should always be empathetic to the audience.