# PLAYWRITING

## WHAT TO PREPARE

In a Playwriting adjudication, the Thespian must write and submit an original short play. The plays must be the original work of a single Thespian writer. Collaborative works or adaptations are not permitted, nor are plays that include music, lyrics, or dialogue written by anyone other than the submitting writer. Only one (1) play may be submitted per student. The Thespian must prepare the following:

**1** A short play (typeset using 12-point font) on any subject with a running/reading time of 30 minutes or less. Authors are encouraged to write authentic stories as examined through their own unique lens and explore themes to which they deeply relate through various aspects of their characters. Authors should tell the story they want to tell in their own individual manner. The play should follow this format.

- The cover page should include the title of the play, the student's name and email address, school name, troupe number, and the troupe director's name and email address.

- On a separate page, a synopsis of the play and character list (including the name and a brief description of each character that speaks or appears onstage) should be featured. Characters that are spoken about but who do not appear onstage should not be included in the character list.

**2** For Playwriting adjudication, the Thespian **does not** need to make a presentation – the work should stand alone. Adjudicators will supply feedback on the online adjudication form.



## SKILLS MEASURED

The skills measured by the adjudicators are:

- An understanding of how the elements of the play create an intentional structure;
- Ability to create well developed characters;
- Ability to create authentic dialogue that supports and amplifies the action;
- Ability to communicate a clear, intentional vision and meaning through an original voice.

# PLAYWRITING RUBRIC

## Playwriting

For internal use only

**THESPY AWARDS**
THE INTERNATIONAL THESPIAN
EXCELLENCE AWARDS

Student(s): ....................................................................  School: ....................................................................

Selection: ....................................................................  Troupe: ....................................................................

| SKILLS | 4 \| Superior<br>Above standard | 3 \| Excellent<br>At standard | 2 \| Good<br>Near standard | 1 \| Fair<br>Aspiring to standard | SCORE |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Plot** | All elements of the plot work together seamlessly to build the world of the play.<br><br>The plot is presented through compelling believable action for the world of the play, supported by clear conflict and transitions between events.<br><br>Chosen plot structure is intentional and consistently drives the dramatic action pulling the story to its conclusion. | Elements of plot are mostly cohesive, working together to build the world of the play.<br><br>The plot is presented through believable action for the world of the play, supported by clear conflict and transitions between events.<br><br>Chosen plot structure is intentional and maintained throughout the play. | Elements of the plot occasionally work together to build the world of the play.<br><br>The plot is presented through mostly believable action for the world of the play, conflict and transitions are not always clear.<br><br>Chosen plot structure is inconsistently maintained throughout the play. | Elements of the plot lack cohesion and/or fail to work together to build the world of the play.<br><br>The plot is muddied by inconsistent action for the world of the play; conflict and transitions are unclear or detract from the whole.<br><br>Chosen plot structure is unclear and/or inconsistent. | |
| Comment: | | | | | |
| **Characterization** | Well-developed multi-dimensional characters motivated by a strong and urgent through line, conflict, and obstacles.<br><br>Characters seem authentic and indispensable to the world of the play.<br><br>The playwright makes it easy to imagine character inner life and empathize with their dilemmas | Well-developed characters with actions motivated by a clear through line, conflict, and obstacles.<br><br>Characters are believable.<br><br>It is possible to empathize with the character dilemmas. | Partially developed characters with somewhat motivated actions connected to the conflict.<br><br>Characters are mostly believable.<br><br>There are moments when it is possible to empathize with the character dilemmas. Partially developed characters with somewhat motivated actions connected to the conflict. | Underdeveloped characters with occasionally motivated actions connected to the conflict.<br><br>Characters seem contrived or unrealistic.<br><br>There are few moments when it is possible to empathize with the character dilemmas. | |
| Comment: | | | | | |
| **Dialogue** | Dialogue consistently reveals subtle character traits and deepens character personalities.<br><br>Dialogue is authentic and is cohesive throughout the play for each character.<br><br>Dialogue supports and amplifies the action via word choice and subtext. | Dialogue helps establish character traits and suggest character personalities.<br><br>Dialogue is believable and consistent throughout the play.<br><br>Dialogue supports the action and implies subtext. | Dialogue suggests character traits.<br><br>Dialogue is mostly believable and somewhat consistent throughout the play.<br><br>Dialogue aligns with the action. | Dialogue occasionally suggests character traits.<br><br>Dialogue is occasionally believable, however there is little or no consistency.<br><br>Dialogue does little to support the action. | |
| Comment: | | | | | |

| Structure | All elements of the play (e.g., action, transitions, setting, characters, conflict) work together seamlessly and concisely to tell the story. | Most elements of the play (e.g., action, transitions, setting, characters, conflict) work together to tell the story. | Some elements of the play (e.g., action, transitions, setting, characters, conflict) work together to tell the story. | There is little cohesion; elements of the play (e.g., action, transitions, setting, characters, conflict) fail to work together or may even detract from each other. | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Chosen structure is intentional, cohesively used to carry and extend the dramatic action. | Chosen structure is intentional and maintained throughout the play. | Chosen structure is intentional and maintained through most of the play | Chosen structure is unclear. | |

**Comment:**

| Originality | Playwright's vision is clear, intentional, and cohesive to carry and present an innovative original work. | Playwright's vision is clear, intentional, and maintained to carry and present an original work. | Playwright's vision is somewhat clear and intentional, and mostly sustained to carry and present an original work. | Playwright's vision is unclear and there is little cohesion to carry and present an original work. | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Playwright constructs meaning by combining ideas in unique ways with a clear personal aesthetic and compelling voice.. | Playwright constructs meaning by combining original ideas in with a personal voice. | Playwright constructs meaning by combining some original ideas with the familiar for an emerging voice. | Playwright constructs little meaning and/or ideas lack originality and personal voice. | |

**Comment:**

| RATING (Please circle) | 4 \| **Superior** (Score of 12-11) | 3 \| **Excellent** (Score of 10-8) | 2 \| **Good** (Score of 7-5) | 1 \| **Fair** (Score of 4-3) | TOTAL SCORE |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|

_____
Judge's name (please print)

_____
Judge's signature

ATTENTION TABULATION ROOM: Please note the following:

❑ Timing Issue: (_____mm_____ss)
❑ Rule Violation: _____; _____; _____
❑ Other Comments:

This rubric should not be considered an assessment of student learning. However, it can serve as a model for designing curriculum-based performance assessments and for this reason, alignment to the National Core Standards has been indicated on this form.

For examples of standards aligned to the Thespys rubrics, see the alignment chart on EdTA's online Learning Center: http://learn.schooltheatre.org/thespy-standards-alignment

To access the full descriptions of the above and all the Core Theatre Standards go to: www.nationalartsstandards.org

Optional aligned state standards: _____

State standards website: _____