

# Arts Assessment For Learning

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THEATRE — 3<sup>RD</sup> GRADE

## HOW TO & TIPS: SCENE WRITING

- When doing timed/quick dialogue writing you are in charge of the timer, so if you think they are struggling to do it in just the time you set, add on another minute... they will never know!
- It is important to make sure the students understand that playwrights almost never perform their own work; it has to be interpreted by other actors. If their work is clear and specific the actors will be able to portray what the author intends.
- Don't be afraid to spend time on the sharing! As long as the time spent is meaningful to moving the work forward. Students have to hear each others ideas to make informed decisions on their scene writing partners.
- If students are struggling with coming up with ideas for their scenes based on the partners they chose, help them by giving them a few possible conflicts to choose from. Then they can decide on one and how to flesh it out in the plot and resolve it.
- Generating criteria is a successful way of getting students to take ownership of their own learning, you can guide them discussion to ensure they hit what your goals are for the assignment.

**UNIT:** Playwriting: Students will learn how to write dialogue and create characters starting from a "Who am I?" worksheet. Grouping: like characters will be grouped together to create the script writing groups. The final performance will be to present their group's published scripts to the other 3<sup>rd</sup> grade class.

**SEQUENCE OF LESSONS:** This class meets once a week on Tuesday for 50 mins. (Each day) The unit will take approximately 18 weeks to complete. Each section of the following lesson sequence took 2-3 sessions to complete. This is an approximation and will vary based on the ability and familiarity of the students.

### 1. Pre-Assessment:

- As a pre-assessment, students wrote a written response to the following question  
*How do playwrights develop interesting characters and situations that can speak to an audience?*

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- The pre-assessment showed that all of the students couldn't explain the process that a playwright would use to create a character, some of the students were able to suggest some idea of where a playwright might get ideas for situations. (*I.E.- from personal experience or from a story they read*)

## 2. Quick Dialogue:

- Student's participated in writing a one-minute scene with a partner of their choice. They were given a started sentence "Where are you going?" as a jumping off point to start writing the dialogue. They had one minute to pass the paper to one another and write. Then they were given one additional minute to edit or make changes. (*Please Note: I was in charge of the timer, so if you think they are struggling to do it in just the one minute time, add on another minute... they will never know!*)
- Upon completion students had to answer "Who, What, When, Where and Why" for the scene.
- They then paired up with another partnership and had to switch scripts and provide each other with feedback. Their conversations were focused on criteria we generated in class. We made a web answering the question "What does a well written scene contain?"
- Students were not allowed to perform their own scenes. Their revisions had to be performed by the group that provided them feedback.

## 3. Character Development:

- Students start by reading an example of a character description (*I used Marc Brown's description of DW from the Arthur Series*). Students analyzed the description for its essential elements; they used a planning page to come up with basic facts for the character and then had to write it out in paragraph form, like the example we read.
- Students worked with partners to discuss their choices and give each other verbal feedback using the "I like... I wish... protocol.
- Students made changes based on their partners' feedback, I encouraged students to dig deeper when creating the character.
- Students then shared their descriptions with the whole class.

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## 4. Play Writing

- Students were able to choose their play-writing partners based on like characters.
- Student's brainstormed ideas for plays that would include a conflict and resolution.
- Students wrote dialogue and stage direction and followed proper script format.
- Students followed dramatic structure with rising action, climax (conflict) and resolution.
- Students paired with another partnership and got written feedback on their short plays, based on class/teacher-generated criteria. "*What do all good plays contain?*"
- Students made changes to their plays based on their partner's suggestions. I kept track of this as well by conferencing with each group and notating the changes they had to make based on the feedback.
- Students published their scripts in Microsoft word and shared them with the class.