

Arts Assessment For Learning

THEATER — 7TH GRADE

HOW TO & TIPS: SCRIPTWRITING

How to set up Peer and Self-Assessment in Scriptwriting

1. I first begin by introducing a script to the students and discussing proper script structure. I ask them, “What is the difference between a story and a script?”
2. I ask students to be detectives discovering the 5Ws of the script that they read.
3. Next, I partner the students (in trios if necessary) and ask them to create the 5Ws of their own script.
4. I ask the students to create character biographies of their main characters.
5. I then introduce the scriptwriting rubric and checklist as the criteria by which we will be assessing our scripts and progress. Students use the checklist and rubric to track their progress, checking off the checklist as they write.
6. Each writing session, students make a goal that they wish to achieve with their partner and write how they will achieve that goal. At the end of each writing session, each pair self-assessed their progress toward their goal for that day by giving themselves a grade for that day.
7. Periodically, students share their scripts with the class and the class gives them feedback saying what they liked and noticed about the script and what they wish could have been better.
8. When the first draft of the script is complete, students join with another pair and, using the peer feedback sheet, read one another’s script and give feedback based on the scriptwriting rubric.
9. The pairs then exchange and explain their feedback and edit their script based on the comments.
10. Students edit their scripts making new goals for editing.
11. Students share their scripts and reflect on their process.

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Tips for Success!

- When co-creating a rubric with students, take half a class period to vote on categories and another half period to describe the performance indicators. Students can also create a 4, 3, 2 and 1 for one category in groups.
- Allow time for sharing and reflection at end of EVERY class. It may seem difficult and seem to slow down the writing – ***but the benefits outweigh deficits!***
- Don't introduce too much at once. Do not assume your students know what a rubric or checklist are until you have gone over it with them.
- Take risks and discuss with your students what worked and what didn't and how it can be done differently. Be transparent!

Session 1: In the first session of this unit, students were introduced to the concept of writing in proper script format as opposed to writing a story. Students then selected a partner (or a group of three in some cases) to work with and in pairs, they then wrote the story of what their script was going to be based on (for this unit, I asked them to write forum theater pieces based on oppressions that they had viewed in their community and in New York City in general).

Session 2: In the next session, I introduced the concept of the 5Ws of scriptwriting (Who are the characters? What is the conflict? Where is the scene taking place? When is the scene taking place? Why does the conflict exist?), which most students were already familiar with from the ELA version. I modeled how to extract the 5Ws out of an already written example script about bullying. Then, I asked the students to create the 5Ws of their script.

Session 3: In the next session, I asked the students to create character biographies of their three main characters. I asked that they have one character be the oppressor, one character be the oppressed and one character be the witness in the situation. I used the example scene to show that the "Bully" in the scene was the oppressor, the "Victim" was the oppressed, and the "Friend" was the witness.

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- Session 4: In the next session, students came up with an objective for each character they had created and continued to work on their biographies as well.
- Session 5: In the next session, students came up with the tactics that the characters would use in order to achieve their objectives utilizing an "Active Verb List" to aid in this process.
- Session 6: In the following session, I introduced the checklist, rubric and goal sheet. The students then brainstormed about how to begin their first scene.
- Session 7-10: In the next few sessions, students were introduced to a new element of the script structure based on the class' needs. As a "Do Now" for each session, students would write a goal for their writing based on their progress. The students would write in their pairs. At the end of each class, one pair would volunteer to share their progress by allowing other students to be the readers of their script and hearing a short whole class critique at the end. The critique consisted of "What did you like about their script? What do you wish could have been different to make the script better?"
- Session 11: In this session the students' first draft was due and they wrote that their goal for today was to receive feedback on their script. Then, each partnership exchanged scripts with another pair and filled out a feedback form for them. Then they shared their feedback with the pair whose script they had read and discussed any changes that they might make and wrote that they needed to work on that for next time.
- Session 12: In this session, the students went back to the pair who gave them feedback and began the editing process together. Each pair helped one another change what they thought needed to be changed and edit the script for improvement.
- Session 13-16: In the next few sessions, the students edited their own scripts and re-wrote the script in order to submit it as their final draft.
- Session 17: In the last session, the students wrote a paragraph explaining how they worked with their partner and then gave their partner a grade. Finally the students submitted their final script for me to grade and we discussed their feelings about their process. I eventually selected two scripts that would be performed for their Spring Show.