Greetings from Delaware Theatre Company!

What an “other world” we are living in these days—which is, serendipitously, the title of the show from which this year’s DYPF theme has been generated! Yes, our world has changed significantly these past six months since we wrapped up last year’s DYPF and immediately joined in a worldwide quarantine. And while some of those changes that have occurred the past few months have brought sadness, anger, and frustration into our lives (or even opened our eyes to these feelings that have been present beneath the surface for a long time), these months have also brought us opportunities for reflection, listening, dialogue, examination, learning, hope, and the resilience to tackle challenges on our own and together with newfound energy.

Delaware Theatre Company has also been impacted by the changes in our community the past six months. Our intention was to close the 2020-2021 theatre season with a new musical, Other World, written by Hunter Bell, Jeff Bowen, and Ann McNamee. At this writing, our season’s offerings are up in the air, and so we look to establish new dates for the production of this show once more information about Delaware’s reopening is shared and conditions in the community are favorable to our gathering sold-out audiences together indoors for live theatre. But the story of Other World, and the personal struggles the main characters in that show face, are presciently relevant to our lives today, offering a timely theme with which our DYPF playwrights will surely connect.

To be certain that all interested students in Delaware are able to participate in DYPF this year, we are beginning the program with all-virtual exchanges. Our kickoff workshops will be offered online instead of in-person, and as has been the custom the past few years, plays will be submitted to us online via email, and our feedback for the first round returned similarly. We will save a few trees this year with no printing of these first-round or second-round scripts! And we have plans in place for the finalist workshops and the DYPF final performance and celebration to occur virtually over the winter and spring if necessary. So the Delaware Young Playwrights Festival survives, and DTC seeks the creative energy and can-do spirit of our student playwrights to bring their ideas to light through the medium of dramatic literature. Let’s open the door to the world of theatre!

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**TIMELINE AND REQUIREMENTS**

Timeline for 2020-2021 DYPF:

Thursday, October 1, 2020: Kickoff Workshop on Zoom, 4:00-5:30 p.m. *(Email registration required by September 30 so Zoom information can be shared.)*

Friday, October 23, 2020: First Round Plays Due by Email to DTC

Friday, November 13, 2020: DTC Returns First Round Feedback by Email to Playwrights

Friday, December 12, 2020: Second Round “Competition Round” Plays Due by Email to DTC

Friday, January 8, 2021: DYPF Finalists Announced

Saturdays, January 30, February 6, February 13, 2021: Finalists Take Part in Artistic Team Collaborative Workshops

February 13, 2021: Late February — Early March, 2021: Final Revisions Due; Actor Rehearsals and Tech/Dress

Thursday, March 11, 2021: DYPF Culminating Performance at 7:30 p.m. *(in-person vs. online TBD)*; All Playwrights Honored; Special Awards Announced

Requirements for Play Submissions:

- Students must be in grades 8-12 and enrolled in a Delaware school or DE home school.
- Plays must follow the theme.
- **Plays must be two-character plays.**
- Plays must be 5-10 pages of dialogue. *(Title and character/setting pages do not count.)*
- Use Times New Roman or similar font, 12-pt size.
- Use script format as demonstrated in DYPF study guide.
- All entries must be original. Screenplays or adaptations are not eligible.

First Round Submissions: Submit one digital copy (Word or PDF) of each play. There is no limit of submissions per school in Round One. There is a registration fee of $25 per school. For each submitted play, please submit a $10 participation fee. Plays are due to DTC by 4:00 p.m. on October 23, 2020. Teachers may email them as a group.

Second Round Submissions: Submit one digital Word or PDF copy of each play. No additional fees are due. Playwrights who agree to the submission of their work for this round must read, sign, and submit digitally a form stating their commitment to the process if selected as a finalist.

And a few more hints:

- Use the guiding questions and rubric to help you shape your writing.
- Most one-act plays work best if there is only one setting.
- One continuous scene often works better for one-act plays than breaking it up into lots of short scenes.
- Save your work electronically as a Word or PDF document so that you may email it.
- Be sure to title your play and include your name and your school/teacher’s contact information.
- Students submitting individually (as part of a home school or individual entry) should include parent’s/guardian’s name and email address.
Each year we challenge student playwrights with a theme drawn from one of our Delaware Theatre Company mainstage productions. This year’s theme is inspired by a quotation from DTC’s upcoming production of a new musical, Other World, by Hunter Bell, Jeff Bowen, and Ann McNamee. The musical follows the characters of several contemporary gamers and non-gamers alike who find connection with one another in both virtual and in-person interaction. Originally slated to be produced by DTC in the spring of 2021, DTC plans to set new dates for the production based on Delaware’s reopening plans with regard to the pandemic and the ability of theatres to present full-scale productions on stage for a live audience. In the meantime, work continues on this exciting new show, and our DYPF theme taken from this musical is especially meaningful for us today.

“In coming to your house is the first time I’ve left home in three years.”

--Sri, from Other World

In the new musical Other World, characters who formerly only knew one another through online interactions are thrust together to take on a common challenge. One of these characters, Sri, has spent three years working from his apartment, isolated from the outside world, and interacting with people he knows only through their online gaming experiences. When a troubling situation emerges, Sri is motivated to look outside of his home for answers. He meets Lorraine, a non-gamer, and as they share their stories, he admits, "Coming to your house is the first time I've left home in three years." With the new reality we currently live in due to the pandemic, this statement—which a year ago may have seemed improbable to many--has new resonance for all ages.

The 2020-2021 DYPF Theme: Write a play in which a character must overcome a challenge in connecting—or reconnecting—to a world of in-person encounters.

The play must be a two-character play that is 5-10 pages in length.
Getting started with the theme...

- Brainstorm a list of familiar movies or books in which a character or characters experience a challenge connecting or reconnecting to in-person encounters. For example, in the movie Castaway, Tom Hanks’ character Chuck lives alone on an island after a plane crash, and when he is finally rescued, the world he returns to—including his job, town, and fiancée—has changed. Similarly, the tale of “Rip Van Winkle” by Washington Irving features the title character’s awakening from a 20-year-sleep to find he no longer knows his family or his country. List as many movies/books as you can in three minutes. What are the circumstances of the character’s separation from society? What are the circumstances of their joining/reconnecting with society? What challenges do they face? How do they overcome these challenges? What lesson or discovery does the character make along their journey?

- List some of the experiences you, your family, and your friends have had in reentering (or trying to reenter) the “outside world” when coming from quarantine. How might any of these experiences be paralleled with a character who lives in a different place or time period?

- What gets you out of bed on a morning you want to sleep in? Improvise a scene with a partner that depicts one character’s persuading another character to get out of bed or out of the house (or a rut).
What makes a play something that people will want to see again and again? What makes a play something that gets audience members thinking and talking? Why are some plays so strong that they have meaning around the world or across the centuries? The following terms offer descriptions and guiding questions to help playwrights consider the elements that make a good play. Use these descriptions and guiding questions to help you shape and refine your work.

**SETTING**

The setting tells us where and when the play takes place. The setting should be vital to the plot and should add to the story on an emotional level. Settings should take into consideration the limitations of theatrical staging as well as the advantages of a live theatre space. Ask yourself these questions:

- Why is this place important to my characters?
- Why is this time period central to the action of the story?
- Could this story take place in any other locations? Could a more creative setting benefit my story, or is there a reason this is the best place for the events to occur?
- Could this story take place in any other time period? Will my audience know enough about the world of the play to understand why I chose to set it during this time period?
- What is interesting, important, and creative about my setting?
- Are there elements of the setting that can help forward the plot?
- Does my setting contain all of the elements needed to help tell the story?

In *Other World*, there are characters who are contemporary teens and adults who live in our world, and characters who are part of a video game. The settings within the play depict both real-world, familiar places such as a small apartment, a garage, and the tree in a back yard, as well as locations within the video game with fanciful names such as “Golden Canyon.” *Other World* is a full-length musical, and the multiple settings help tell the story. Often in shorter works such as one-act plays, one setting works best. But in either case, playwrights must consider that the settings they detail must be able to be conveyed onstage regardless of a theatre’s budget and technical resources. What setting makes your characters confront their situation? How are the time and place specified in your work? What significant detail or image about this setting might be mentioned in a character’s dialogue or action that allows the production team to imagine and creatively realize this imagined world for a live audience as they look at the stage?

**Getting started with setting…**

- Play “Trading Places” (see activities pages). Afterwards, discuss the effect that setting can have on the characters’ behavior.

- Brainstorm a list of places for scenes and plays to take place. Choosing two or three places from the list, create a web of words or phrases that describe the emotional context of such a location. For example, “school” could make a character feel “excited about the future,” “pressured to achieve,” or even “trapped for years.”
CHARACTERS

Great characters lie at the heart of a great play. Unlike a novelist, a playwright cannot use description to evoke character or tell us what they are thinking. How do you create a walking, talking, feeling human being using only the words he speaks? The more a playwright knows and cares about a character, the stronger that character will be. Think about a character’s past, her daily life, his likes and dislikes, her dreams for the future. One of the most important things you can give a character is a strong objective; that is, you should know what the character wants or needs, and eventually, so should your character! Reveal this information about the character through action and dialogue. A character’s behavior should be believable within the world of the play. Characters should be unique individuals with clear objectives and a clear point of view. As you write, ask yourself these questions:

- Are my characters flat and stereotypical, or round with a sense of past, present, and future?
- Do any of my characters change over the course of the play?
- Which character is the protagonist? The antagonist? Is it clear? Should it be clear?
- Do my characters exhibit humanity?
- Do my characters have or develop a clear understanding of their objectives? How are my characters’ objectives observable to the audience? (Remember, the audience cannot be expected to have read the script when they see your play.)
- Do the personality and other traits I’ve given my characters help or hurt the play?

The characters of Other World represent real-world human beings with recognizable traits—having jobs, talking on the phone, playing games, disagreeing with one another, seeking reconciliation with one another—and cyber beings that have other-worldly powers and fantastic experiences. To help audiences understand characters who are part of this unknown video game, the writers used names such as “Antagon” for the villain, bringing to mind the word “antagonist,” and “Forces of Light” to underscore which characters are protagonists. Many of the video game characters were written to be one-dimensional to signify that they are part of a fantasy world. Yet the bigger story is the journey of real humans Sri and Lorraine as they learn what they really want for themselves—a connection with those they love and a sense of peace to take the place of discord. The show follows them as they build a true friendship with one another and other humans beyond the world of the video game, navigating complex feelings, sharing relevant past experiences, and forging a new strength individually and collectively as people who need one another.

Getting started with character...

- Create your own “I Want” list of ten or twenty things you want. What tactics in word or action might you employ to try to obtain something on your “I Want” list?
- Go to a public place like the food court at a mall or a sports event. Observe some of the people in this location. Choose one or two strangers, and write an “I Want” list imagining what this person would want.
- Write a character history to help you flesh out the people you create in your imagination. See the example in the activities pages. Then as you develop your story, make an “I Want” list for your characters to help you identify their objectives. Then think about what would or would not be an action believable for that character to take to go for her or his objective.
ACTION OF THE PLAY

The “action of the play” can be thought of as the movement of events in the play from beginning to middle to end. In this sense, “action” refers not to a character’s physical behaviors, but to the development of the story structure; that is, the plot. The events that occur in the play must be realistic within the world of the play. (If your play is going to involve talking animals, you must either begin the play with setting up a world of talking animals, or you must clue us in when the animals begin to talk as to why this seeming departure from reality is possible in the world of this play.) The plot should follow logical cause-and-effect and should captivate the audience, making them want to see where the story goes and how it ends.

The action of Other World begins as Sri learns his favorite online video game, one his late mother helped create, will be discontinued. This discovery propels him to seek Will, one of the other creators of the game. Rather than finding Will, he finds Will’s daughter Lorraine, a non-gamer who has rejected the cyberworld in which her father was so invested. The action rises as Sri and Lorraine realize their families’ connection to one another and the game, and they are suddenly sucked into the world of the video game, having to seek a way out while also fighting their way through pitfalls and confrontations with powerful beings in this cyberworld. The climactic moment occurs as Sri, Lorraine, and other friends from inside and outside the “other world” discover the truth behind their losses and the path the game is now taking. The essential question leading to the resolution seems to be whether Sri and Lorraine can shed their closed-off ways to be open to moving on, trusting, and experiencing the fullness of humanity.

The plot may be broken down into segments that flow in a dynamic path from start to finish.

You can see in the above diagram, which we call a “plot pyramid,” the action of the play has motion that includes rising and falling patterns. The exposition shares with the audience information about the characters’ starting points—the necessary information about the characters’ past and present ways of life. Although exposition is marked in the plot pyramid as occurring at the beginning of the story, a skillful playwright weaves some of that information through the opening moments of the play, revealing background gradually rather than dumping it in one fell swoop on page one.

Rising action concerns the way conflict—the central problem of the story—is introduced and built through the course of the play. Note that “rising action,” where the conflict occurs, makes up the bulk of the plot pyramid: conflict is the driving force of the action of the play. It occurs when a character or characters meet an obstacle to their objectives. The higher the stakes are for the characters, the more intense the conflict will be.
The climax is the “breaking point” when the action comes to a head. The conflict is directly confronted during the climactic moment, and the climax ultimately brings about the resolution.

The falling action and resolution, sometimes known as the “denouement,” tie up the loose ends of the story and leave the audience with a snapshot of the “new normal” for our characters. The status quo in which we met the characters has changed because of the action of the play.

As you write your play, consider the following questions.

**Action/Plot**
- Does the action of the play stem directly from the desires of the characters?
- Does the action make sense within the world I have created?
- Is the action of the play as clear as possible? Is there a simpler or more direct way for my plot to play out?
- Is there any excess or unnecessary action in my play? In other words, does every action contribute to the plot?

**Conflict/Rising Action**
- What are the characters’ objectives and the obstacles that prevent them from achieving their objectives? Is the objective-obstacle set-up the main conflict of the piece?
- What will happen if the conflict is not resolved?
- Is the resolution of the conflict of great importance to the characters?

**Climax**
- Does the climax deal directly with the play’s main conflict?
- Does the climax address one or both of the characters’ primary objectives?
- Does the level of intensity in the climactic moment make sense when I look at what words, behaviors, and events led up to it?
- Will the audience find this moment as important to the characters as I find it to be?
- Are there other ways this conflict could come to a head?

**Resolution**
- Have I provided enough clues to the audience for them to fully understand the story and its ending?
- Did the climax lead to a natural resolution in which the new status quo is evident?
- How important to the characters are the changes that have been made in their lives?

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**Getting started with creating the action of the play...**

- Write 10-line scenes (see activities pages) to help you show conflict through characters’ dialogue.

- Play “Beads on a String” (see activities pages) to practice logical flow of a story from beginning to end. If there are holes in the story, find a way to plug them or to rework the story so that it makes sense.

- Consider types of conflict: character vs. character, character vs. circumstances, character vs. self, etc. Give examples from familiar books, movies, or plays of different types of conflict and discuss the flow of the action as this conflict builds to a climax. As you develop your play, think about what the central conflict is or could be for your main character(s). If your story gets stuck, try offering your main character a different type of conflict and see if that sparks rising action.
Dialogue

Dialogue accomplishes several things in a play: it allows the characters to push the story forward as they communicate with each other, and it reveals information about the characters themselves by what they say and the way they say it. In Other World, we find a forwarding of action and important revelations about the characters in the dialogue. Here is an example:

Lorraine: Who’s that?

Sri: It’s Temula.

Lorraine: Tem-a-who?

Sri: Temula. She’s the leader of the Forces of Light. It’s really her!

Lorraine: Girlfriend knows how to make an entrance.

Temula: Congratulations Forces of Light on your victory. You have obtained the Strength Ikon.

Lorraine: What’s an Ikon?

Sri: When you win certain missions, you get an Ikon as a reward. When you get three Ikons, you can open Antagon’s Fortress.

Lorraine: Temula, hi. We got sucked into your world and we need to get home. Can you get us outta here?

Sri: She can’t answer you. She’s an NPC.

Lorraine: Why is every other thing you say words that no one knows?

Sri: Not no one, and an NPC is a non-player character that’s only programmed to say specific stuff. She’s not gonna be able to talk to us.

Lorraine: (exasperated) Why can’t anyone help us?!

In the dialogue sample above, Sri’s knowledge of characters and rules of play demonstrate his experience with the video game, showing us more about who he is and how he has spent much of his time. Lorraine’s questions, plus her casual way of speaking, indicate a less-than-reverent attitude compared with Sri’s passion about the game. And Temula’s impersonal, almost robotic manner is in contrast with Lorraine’s strong emotions. Though the characters speak in a way that befits them, they also move the story along by talking about what is happening and what their objectives are in the moment. In addition, the jargon of the video game, so easily rolling off the tongue of Sri, is unfamiliar to Lorraine just as it would be for the real audience during performance. Sri’s explanations of his jargon help the real audience understand what is happening just as these explanations do for Lorraine.

(continued)
ELEMENTS OF A GOOD PLAY  (continued)

DIALOGUE  (continued)

Dialogue should be creative, realistic, meaningful to the action of the play, and appropriate to the characters. It should reveal history, circumstances, and personality in a subtle way. Conversations often hold the audience’s interest better than long, chunky monologues. Ask yourself these questions as you write:

- Does the dialogue advance the story?
- Does the dialogue help the audience know more about my characters?
- Is the phrasing rich and captivating?
- Is it realistic to the world of the characters?

Getting started with dialogue…

- Clip out or find free online comic strips with empty speech bubbles. Practice writing dialogue between characters in the comic strip that illuminates something about who each character is or what each wants.

- In an open location where privacy is not assumed, listen to conversations that are held in public not for the subject matter, but for the purpose of hearing the speech patterns. How does the conversation go back and forth? Do the parties speak in complete sentences? Do they take turns? Afterwards, make notes for yourself on how natural speech between people unfolds. (Of course, be respectful of the other parties as you do this. If someone is attempting to have a private conversation not involving you, allow them their space. Do not record their words; only notice the rhythms of conversation.)

- Play “Six Ways to Say Something” (see activities page). Afterwards, examine how character affects speech.
SPELLING, GRAMMAR, USAGE, AND MECHANICS

Except in cases in which the misuse of correct English grammar is intentional—such as in the case of dialogue that demonstrates a character’s personality, background, or education level—use standard English conventions in spelling, grammar, punctuation, and usage. Why? Because writing is communicating, and good writers help people understand what they are saying by writing clear thoughts.

For instance, take a look at the phrases below. Each pair contains sentences with words that sound the same to the ear, yet they convey completely different thoughts based on the writer’s spelling and punctuation.

Look! Ahead in the road!

Look! A head in the road!

You’re wearing that.

You’re wearing that?

As a writer, be certain you know what you want to say. Then be certain that you communicate that in a way that your readers—potentially, actors, directors, and designers—will understand. Otherwise, instead of designing and building an orange construction cone in the middle of the road, your scenic designer might be wasting her time making a paper maché noggin.

USING A RUBRIC OR SCORING GUIDE

The rubric/scoring guide in this packet is the one that DTC’s DYPF readers will use when examining your work. The descriptors for each criterion reflect many of the guiding questions contained in this study guide. These are not exhaustive descriptions, and the criteria used herein are likewise not the only things that are considered when evaluating a play. However, they provide some consistency for readers when they look at your plays, and they also help you evaluate your own play as you write and rewrite throughout the DYPF process. Do not confuse the achievement benchmarks for letter grades. A play that meets all of the “good” descriptors under each criterion is most likely a high-quality play. A rating of “excellent” may be very hard to achieve—even experienced, professional playwrights’ works may not match up with everything under the “excellent” heading. We encourage teachers to think broadly about the level of creativity and critical thinking that goes into writing for the theatre. The process is at times just as important as the product. Our DTC readers’ responses are not suggestions for classroom grades/points earned, but are instead a teaching tool to guide students in writing in the unique form of dramatic literature.
### THE MILKY WAY

by

Jane Doe

© 2011 Jane Doe
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### Title Page
- Include title and by-line (your name).
- Include teacher’s name, school, school address, and teacher’s email address.
- Your copyright expresses that this is your original work.
- Use Times New Roman or similar font at 12 pt size.

### CAST OF CHARACTERS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Character</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>LUCRETIA</td>
<td>80-year-old former debutante</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SAM</td>
<td>Lucretia’s neighbor, 30-35 years old</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

TIME: An autumn night, 2010

SETTING: Front yard and porch steps of a duplex on the outskirts of a city. A tidy neighborhood, where although the residents are not wealthy, they take pride in the homes on the block. A few mums brighten the small gardens. A “Beware of Dog” sign is visible on the chain link fence that leads to the SL back yard.
ACT ONE
Scene 1

(AT RISE we hear the sounds of early evening in the neighborhood: crickets, a hum of a passing car, a dog barking in the distance. SAM is sitting on the SR side of the duplex, relaxing on his porch steps, eating out of a large bag of chips. The bag rattles each time he reaches in. We hear him crunching as he eats. After a moment, LUCRETIA’s porch light SL snaps on. SAM notices it.)

SAM
Oh, here we go again.

LUCRETIA
(Opening her front door and speaking through the screen door)
Keep it down! Keep that noise down! You want to awaken the good people of this neighborhood with that ruckus?

SAM (to himself)
Good people. She better not be counting herself in there.
(Loudly, to LUCRETIA)
It wasn’t me, Lucretia. I don’t know what you heard, but all I’m doing is eating some potato chips. That all right with you?

(LUCRETIA steps out on her porch. She is carrying a fireplace poker.)

LUCRETIA
Don’t you sass me. This is a nice neighborhood. And I will defend it from any and all who threaten our peace and quiet!

First Page of Dialogue

• Note the location and style of stage directions.
• Characters’ names are written in all caps (unless the name is part of a spoken line of dialogue) and deeply indented (3.5”) or centered.
• Double space between characters’ lines.
• Single space within characters’ lines and any stage directions that flow within a line. Double space for stand-alone stage directions.
• Do not mark pagination here.

Additional Dialogue Pages

• Use title key word and page numbering in upper RH corner, ½ inch from top margin.
• Other margins continue at 1 inch.
Motivational Speaker
As a group, brainstorm a list of strong emotions such as excitement or guilt. Then choose an everyday task that is typically not a favorite chore, such as getting the oil changed on your car, or washing the dishes. Choose one person to stand up and offer an improvised motivational speech to the class that plays upon one of the listed emotions as an influence towards the listeners’ deciding to do or not do the action. If and when the speaker says something that would motivate you to do that task, stand up or raise your hand to indicate you would take action. After a few series of motivational speeches playing on emotions, create a list of intellectual, creative, moral, or other reasons and rationales that might influence people to take action. Improvise more scenarios and speeches, or simply discuss situations in which people are prompted to take action they might not otherwise take and consider what motivates them to move out of their habits or comfort zones.

Words, Words, Words
Examine the quotations on page 16. How do these pieces relate to the theme? With a partner or small group, use the words as a springboard for creating a two-person dramatic scenario that illustrates (either literally or metaphorically) the ideas expressed in those quotations. Write a short script or develop and rehearse the scene, and share your work with your class. Discuss afterward the connections among the scene, the quotation, and the theme.

Trading Places
Make a list of simple demands to be “first lines” for improvised scenes. Here are some examples: “Give me your sock.” “Call your mother.” “I want to leave.” Have two students improvise a short scene using the demand as the first line of the scene. Then ask for a creative or unexpected setting and have the students start a new scene, still using that same first line. For example, if “Give me your sock” was originally played as a parent talking to a child while loading a laundry basket at home, what would happen if you ask the actors to start a scene with “Give me your sock,” and instead have it take place between two people sitting at the top of a Ferris wheel? How does a new setting affect the direction the scene takes? Do the characters change? Does the action change? Do the same lines of dialogue make sense, or did everything change? Discuss the role that setting has on adding to or detracting from a scene.

New Kid on the Block
Choose one student to step out of the room for a moment while a small group creates a world with three unusual invented rules such as “everyone winks when another person’s name is mentioned,” “everyone breaks into a rhythmic clap when someone mentions food,” and “everyone stops talking and silently counts to ten when someone sits down.” The small group should start a commonly known activity, such as preparing dinner, working out at a gym, or doing yard work, all the while improvising conversation. Bring in the student from outside, tell him or her the activity at hand, and have them join in without telling them the unusual rules. The group should try to steer the conversation and activity towards a situation when the rules come into play, and see if the new student is able to assimilate easily, figure out the rules, or is stumped. After the exercise, discuss what made the new student acclimate or be included, and what were the obstacles and roadblocks to that assimilation or inclusion.
ACTIVITIES AND RESOURCES (continued)

Beads on a String
This is an exercise in creating a logical story. Have one student step to the front of the room and offer the first sentence of a story. Have another student step to the other side of the room and announce the last sentence of the same story. Other students then get up and get in line, offering another sentence that occurs somewhere in the middle of the story. The object of the exercise is to think in terms of linear flow of a plot, to eliminate unnecessary tangents that interfere with the telling of the story, and to plug holes in the story so that it moves logically from one event to the next. Remind students that audience members only know what is spoken and demonstrated on-stage; back story that is in the playwright’s mind or written as stage directions or character description may never make it into the audience’s consciousness unless someone says or does something in the play to communicate the information. If you have to overexplain to get to where you’re going, perhaps you need to simplify and streamline your story!

Ten-Line Play
This could actually be called Eight- to-Twelve-Line Play in order to provide a little latitude to playwrights. Students are asked to write a quick dialogue between Character A and Character B in which there is a negotiation over an object. In a Ten-Line Play, A and B alternate five times each, for a total of ten lines. If A is going to have the last word, the play may be nine or eleven lines. Simple objects around the room can be starters: a pencil sharpener; a cell phone, a chair, a set of keys. In the Ten (or so)-Line Play, be certain one character has a clear objective and is met with an obstacle. Ask the students to write quickly, with no worry about cleverness, back story, or other artistic concerns. The point is to show conflict quickly, and negotiations that must occur in the space of 8, 9, or 10 lines total will propel the conflict to the forefront immediately. Share the plays with each other.

Six Ways to Say Something
This activity allows you to get creative in dialogue. Begin with a simple statement such as “It’s hot outside.” Then have various actors take on a character saying a line with that same intent, but using the speech of that particular character. Here are some examples for “It’s hot outside.”

- “Woo-wee! You could fry an egg on the sidewalk out there!”
- “Ahhh… feels like good beach weather!”
- “My neck is sweating. My toes are sweating. My sweat is sweating.”
- “Dress in light-colored, loose-fitting clothing, and drink plenty of water.”
- “It’s 110 in the shade.”

Consider how various characters might have not only an accent, but unique vocabulary or phrasing that reflects that character’s background, outlook, or education. Try writing a simple scene as a class, then have various groups rewrite the dialogue with a specificity for various characters saying those words. Share all of the scenes and compare and contrast the language used.
Quotes and Lyrics for Reflecting on the Theme

"But alone
Is alone,
Not alive.
Somebody crowd me with love;
Somebody force me to care.
Somebody let me come through,
I'll always be there,
As frightened as you,
To help us survive,
Being alive."

—Lyrics by Stephen Sondheim

“We live in a world in which we need to share responsibility. It’s easy to say ‘It’s not my child, not my community, not my world, not my problem.’ Then there are those who see the need and respond. I consider those people my heroes.”

— Fred Rogers

“I’ve built walls
A fortress deep and mighty
That none may penetrate
I have no need of friendship,
Friendship causes pain
It’s laughter and it’s loving I disdain
I am a rock
I am an island…
And a rock feels no pain.
And an island never cries.”

—Lyrics by Paul Simon

“What would life be if we had no courage to attempt anything?”

—Vincent van Gogh

“Sometimes, it is true, a sense of isolation enfolds me like a cold mist as I sit alone and wait at life’s shut gate. Beyond there is light, and music, and sweet companionship; but I may not enter. Fate, silent, pitiless, bars the way.”

—Helen Keller

“When you do nothing, you feel overwhelmed and powerless. But when you get involved, you feel the sense of hope and accomplishment that comes from knowing you are working to make things better.”

—Maya Angelou

“You’ll always miss 100% of the shots you don’t take. “

— Wayne Gretzky
CHARACTER HISTORY
Developing characters is easier when you know more about them. Try answering these questions for each character in your play.

Character’s Name

Gender Age

Where was this character raised?

What are this character’s physical traits?

Describe this character’s intellectual capabilities.

What is this character’s social and/or economic status?

What is this character’s educational background?

What does he/she do on an everyday basis?

What is his/her family like? How do the family relationships affect the character?

What does this character want/wish for in the play?

What stands in the way of this character getting what he/she wants?

What does this character fear or worry about?
## Delaware Theatre Company
### 2020-2021 Delaware Young Playwrights Festival
#### Play Evaluation Rubric

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Comments pertaining to your play are highlighted</th>
<th>Excellent</th>
<th>Good</th>
<th>Shows Potential</th>
<th>Needs work</th>
<th>Comments</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Setting</strong></td>
<td>The setting is vital to the plot and adds to the story on an emotional level. Settings take into consideration the limitations of theatrical staging and/or the advantages of a live theatre space.</td>
<td>Setting interesting and somewhat necessary to plot. Could be created in a stage space.</td>
<td>Setting tangentially important, but could be made interesting or could be more focused to fewer locations/scene changes. May need adjustment for it to be staged.</td>
<td>Setting cannot be staged and/or not integral to the plot. Too many changes of locations (no unity of place).</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Action of the Play</strong></td>
<td>The events of the play are realistic <em>within the world of the play</em>. The action is creative and able to be staged. Action follows logical cause- and-effect. The action of the play will captivate the audience.</td>
<td>Events are plausible: cause-and-effect mostly credible; able to be staged. Action is fairly interesting.</td>
<td>Events somewhat unrealistic, lack specificity, or are difficult to stage in live theatre. Cause and effect hinted at but not as clear as it could be. At times action lags, become bogged down, starts &amp; stops abruptly, or seems to repeat with little forward motion of the plot.</td>
<td>Events unrealistic: unable to be staged. Cause and effect absent. Too little action, or action is scattered or unclear. Too many short scenes; does not build momentum.</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Conflict</strong></td>
<td>Conflict clearly introduced early in the play. Conflict propels the play forward, building in intensity and moving the play toward a climax. The stakes for characters are high as they navigate the conflict.</td>
<td>Conflict central to play. Challenges to characters are believable but could affect characters in a deeper, more profound way. Stakes could be higher.</td>
<td>Conflict is evident but could be made more central to the play or more specific in nature. Challenges to characters appear superficial at times or are not explored in depth. Obstacles are too few or too easily overcome.</td>
<td>Conflict weak or uninteresting. Stakes are low. Characters’ plight does not evoke empathy.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Climax</strong></td>
<td>Climax provides for direct and dramatic confrontation of conflicting characters and objectives. The climactic moment is riveting, perhaps explosive, but strong of its own accord rather than resorting to tricks such as gratuitous violence.</td>
<td>Conflict confronted in believable manner, but climax is not fully realized. Protagonist and antagonist could more fully explore the extent of the issue. Interesting to audience.</td>
<td>Climax is not entirely earned by the action that precedes it; confrontation is barely skirted. Climax could be made to be more believable or interesting.</td>
<td>Climax uninteresting; is not earned by the preceding action, or is avoided entirely.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Resolution</strong></td>
<td>The resolution flows directly out of the climax and develops a new status quo in the life of the character(s). The changes in status quo are meaningful to the characters.</td>
<td>Resolution results from action and climax is believable but perhaps too easy or predictable. Characters’ lives are clearly changed, but perhaps not in a fundamental way.</td>
<td>Resolution needs to flow more from the action, seems forced, or does not fill major gaps in storyline. Characters only mildly react or change after experiencing the events of the play.</td>
<td>Resolution too easy and/or the play just stops. Status quo from the beginning of the play remains unchanged.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Characters</td>
<td>The characters are clearly revealed through action and dialogue. Behaviors are believable within the world of the play and contribute directly to the action. Characters are unique individuals with clear objectives and a clear point of view.</td>
<td>Behavior believable in context of play. Individual characters are distinct from one another, but could be strengthened with more clear objectives or observable traits.</td>
<td>Characters are identifiable but need further development. Behaviors could be more believable or perhaps lack consistency to character. Objectives sometimes unclear or characters do not follow through on them.</td>
<td>Characters are stereotypical; unbelievable; flat. Characters lack clear objectives, desires and points of view.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Dialogue</td>
<td>Dialogue is creative, realistic, meaningful to the action of the play, and appropriate to the character. Reveals history, given circumstances and personality in a subtle way. Conversations capture and hold the audience's attention.</td>
<td>Dialogue is usually realistic, meaningful and suitable to characters. Somewhat interesting conversation, but language could be lightened to illuminate background or inner motivations. Vital information is disseminated through dialogue.</td>
<td>Dialogue could better reveal characters' inner lives. Some key information seems to be missing from what is spoken. Dialogue may be monologue-heavy, or characters do not have voices distinct from one another.</td>
<td>Dialogue is uninterestingly, flat, awkward, not suited to the characters. Does not sound like conversation.</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Theme</td>
<td>Uses theme of festival in unique and compelling way.</td>
<td>Clearly uses theme of festival.</td>
<td>Touches on theme of festival.</td>
<td>Theme of festival not evident.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mechanics</td>
<td>Spelling, grammar, punctuation enhance the telling of the story.</td>
<td>Spelling, grammar, punctuation are generally accurate; errors do not interfere with telling of the story.</td>
<td>Spelling, grammar, punctuation errors require the reader to reread and reinterpret to get the meaning.</td>
<td>Spelling, grammar, punctuation errors prevent understanding of story.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Check the following guidelines to make sure your play is ready for submission:

Two characters?

5-10 pages of dialogue? ________

Title page completed according to format guidelines? ________

Character/Setting page according to guidelines? ________

Remainder of script format according to guidelines? ________

Typed in Times/similar font, 12 pt? ________

Pages are stapled together? ________

One hard copy, one electronic copy submitted? ________

Thank you for being a part of the 2020-2021 Delaware Young Playwrights Festival!
Why Study the Theatre?
State and National Education Standards Addressed Through Engaging Your Students in the Theatre

When your students experience live theatre, they are taking part in a learning experience that engages their minds on many levels. From simple recall and comprehension of the plot of a play or musical to analysis and evaluation of the production elements of a show, students create, receive, and interpret messages communicated through words, movement, music, and other artistic devices. Students learn to communicate the content and respond to the performance of an artistic piece, reflecting their own and others’ emotional, aesthetic, and intellectual points-of-view. And the immediacy of live theatre—the shared moments between playwrights and artists in workshop, as well as those between actors and audience members in the here-and-now--raises students’ awareness of the power and scope of human connection.

The following educational standards are addressed through students’ participation in the Delaware Young Playwrights Festival at Delaware Theatre Company.

Common Core English Language Arts Standards:
- Writing: 9-10 and 11-12, strands 3, 4, 5, and 6
- Language: 9-10 and 11-12, strands 2 and 3

National Core Arts Standards—Theatre:
- Creating: Anchor Standards 1, 2, and 3
- Responding: Anchor Standards 7, 8, and 9
- Connecting: Anchor Standards 10 and 11

DYPF Mission:

Delaware Theatre Company’s Delaware Young Playwrights Festival provides students with an authentic audience for their creative writing and teachers with an innovative literacy program. Guided by passion and professionalism, DYPF uses educational resources, interactive workshops, personal feedback to every playwright, and public performances to engage students in the art of theatre through the act of writing a play. Both competitive and cooperative, DYPF fosters, respects, and celebrates the voices of young writers.