**How to Write a 10 Minute Play Tips**

**1)** **There is no need for a detailed exposition.** Jump right into your story since time is of the essence.

**2) Every detail must relate to the action of the play.** You only have ten minutes, so there's no time for anything irrelevant. Nothing can be random or unrelated to the action of the play. Only necessary details must appear in the play.

**3) Know the expected message of the play and write your play based on the intended theme.** Your play will only be meaningful if there is an obvious message.

**4) Create vivid characters in compelling situations.** Characters need to be realistic and experience a major change in characterization. The protagonist(s) must undergo a significant experience, make a significant choice, and experience a change in identity as a result. Every protagonist must experience life-altering events in their journey. If the protagonist ends up exactly where they started, then they have not changed.

**5) There must be an emotional reaction to the play.** Decide what emotions you want the audience to feel. Do you want your audience to laugh, cry or reflect? Art must have an emotional impact on the audience.

**6) Dialogue must be meaningful.** There is no narrator in a play to describe the character’s thoughts or fill in background information. Character’s thoughts and discoveries must be translated into meaningful speech.

**7) Don’t waste time talking about anything you can show.** Images are more powerful than words. If an image or action is obvious, dialogue is not needed to explain. Show don’t tell!

**8) Use minimal setting or props in your play.** Ten minute plays should only call for a handful of props and simple costumes. Set up and take down should be handled quickly. Only one scene is needed for the entire play.

**9) Every great play has a point of no return.** There should be a point in the play where the audience and the characters realize that they have crossed the line, and now nothing will ever be the same, for better or for worse.

**10) The ten minute play should create a sense of urgency, pressure or drive.** The conflict must be resolved within the assigned ten minute time limit. You may build the “internal clock” into the story of your play. An effective internal clock will give your play the momentum it needs to hook an audience.

**11) Guide your play toward an exciting climax and resolution of conflict.** Discuss the outcome or impact the conflict has had on the character. Has the problem been solved in a positive or negative way? Are there any future repercussions?

**Creating Vivid Characters Tips:**

Plays are character driven pieces of writing that focus on interactions between individuals.

* Characters need to be as believable as possible to create realistic situations.
* Your characters will reveal themselves with their speech and actions. The way they choose to say things or act could be even more important than what they're actually saying.
* Don't worry about the name or the physical description of your character. It doesn't tell you anything about a character named Joe to know that he is 6'4 and has washboard abs and wears t-shirts some of the time. Stick to one notable and telling physical trait.
* Ex. Janet is a woman that never wears dresses. This could reveal that Janet is self-conscious or insecure.
* Brainstorming questions to consider:
* What does your character want?
* What is keeping your character from getting what they want?
* What stands in their way?
* What character changes are evident after the climax?
* How do the character changes reveal theme?

**Playwriting and Performing Assignment:**

* The assignment is to write and perform an original 10-minute play that reveals a meaningful message regarding one of the following themes:

1) Influence of Others

2) Deception as a Means to and End

3) Appearance vs Reality

4) Impact of a Significant Experience

* Students will be divided into groups of 4 or 5 based on student choice.
* Students will demonstrate the elements of drama (action, character, conflict, dialogue) and dramatic structure (exposition, inciting incident, rising action, climax, falling action, resolution).
* Plays can be performed live or digitally recorded (no editing permitted).

Assignment Checklist:

\_\_\_1) **Maximum 10 minutes in length.** Please come to class prepared and rehearsed on the due date.

\_\_\_2) **Typed Script.** The general rule is 1 page=1 minute which will translate to approximately 10 typed pages for your script. However, if your dialogue is short, you may need more pages, and if it is dense, you may need fewer. You are being graded on time, not page length.

\_\_\_3) **The play is school appropriate** (Would you want the principal and superintendent to watch your play? What about your parents and grandparents? If the answer is no to any of those, don’t write that play.)

\_\_\_4) **Everyone in your group has a role and has participated equally when creating the script.**

\_\_\_5) **Rubric is submitted with script.** Please indicate which two additional categories will need to be scored.

**Performance of plays are due April 29,2015.**