

College Guild
PO Box 6448 Brunswick, Maine 04011

Drama Club I

Unit 1 of 8

*"Education helps battle mental sloth in an edifying
and rehabilitative way."
~ David ~*

Welcome to Drama Club! A place for imagination and technique to combine in a wonderful "show" for the audience. During your writing, remember that you are constructing *plays*, not movies. Always imagine that your work will be performed by actors on a stage! As the most famous dramatist William Shakespeare said:

*All the world's a stage,
And all the men and women merely players;
They have their exits and their entrances,
And one man in his time plays many parts...
As You Like It*

Unlike much writing, when you write for the stage you have to keep in mind:

- 1) a director who can guide your vision
- 2) actors who can create the characters to carry out your vision
- 3) an audience to appreciate your vision

In Unit 1 we will be introducing the basics: who are your characters and what does the set they are performing on look like. We hope this will help you slowly build the foundation needed for good playwriting. Enjoy!

CAST

Below are two examples of a "cast" for two different plays. Take notice of how each cast has enough information for appropriate actors and actresses to be chosen.

The first cast is from the play Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf by Edward Albee.

The Players

Martha

*A large, boisterous woman, 52, looking somewhat
younger.
Ample, but not fleshly.*

George

Her husband, 46. Thin; hair going gray.

Honey

26, a petite blonde girl, rather plain.

Nick

30, her husband. Blond, well put-together, good looking.



This second cast is from The Zoo Story by Edward Albee.

Notice that this cast description is much more detailed than that of the first -- it suggests personalities as well as physical appearance.

The Players

Peter: A man in his early forties, neither fat nor gaunt, neither handsome nor homely. He wears tweeds, smokes a pipe, carries horn-rimmed glasses. Although he is moving into middle age, his dress and his manner suggest a man younger.

Jerry: A man in his late thirties, not poorly dressed, but carelessly. What was once a trim and lightly muscled body has begun to go to fat; and while he is no longer handsome, it is evident that he once was. His fall from physical grace should not suggest debauchery; he has, to come closest to it, a great weariness.



1. Come up with two completely different casts for two plays.
2. Pick one of them and tell us what happens to the characters.

SET

Next, we'll take a look at two different "sets", meaning the physical set on the stage. Here are two great examples of how simple a set can be.

This first set is taken from the play The Happy Journey To Trenton And Camden by Thornton Wilder.

No scenery is required for this play. Perhaps a few dusty flats may be seen leaning against the brick wall at the back of the stage.

The five members of the Kirby family and THE STAGE MANAGER compose the cast.

THE STAGE MANAGER not only moves forward and withdraws the few properties that are required, but he reads from a typescript the lines of all the minor characters. He reads them clearly, but with little attempt at characterization, scarcely troubling himself to alter his voice, even when he responds in the person of a child or a woman.

As the curtain rises THE STAGE MANAGER is leaning lazily against the proscenium pillar at the audience's left.

He is smoking.

ARTHUR is playing marbles in the center of the stage.

CAROLINE is at the remote back right talking to some girls who are invisible to us.

MA KIRBY is anxiously putting on her hat before an imaginary mirror.



This next set is from The Miracle Worker by William Gibson.

THE PLAYING SPACE is divided into two areas by a more or less diagonal line, which runs from downstage right to upstage left.

THE AREA behind this diagonal is on platforms and represents the Keller house; inside we see, down right, a family room, and up center, elevated, a bedroom. On stage level near center, outside a porch, there is a water pump.

THE OTHER AREA, in front of the diagonal, is neutral ground; it accommodates various places as designated at various times -- they yard before the Keller home, the Perkins Institution for the Blind, the garden house, and so forth.

THE CONVENTION OF THE STAGING is one of cutting through time and place, and its essential qualities are fluidity and spatial counterpoint. To this end, the less set there is, the better; in a literal set, the fluidity will seem merely episodic. The stage therefore should be free, airy, unencumbered by walls. Apart from certain practical items -- such as the pump, a window to climb out of, doors to be locked -- locales should be only skeletal suggestions, and the movement from one to another should be accomplished by little more than lights.



3. Come up with two different sets for two plays.

4. Pick one and explain what you had in mind for the plot when you created the set.

5. Imagine you are a critic for a popular newspaper and have just gone to see the play Question 2 or Question 4. Write a review for the play. (Remember to include what it's about, why it's so good, etc.)

Remember: First names only & please let us know if your address changes

**Appendix
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Citations

- http://lastheplace.com/images/article-images/2007_Writers/Tim/Virginia_Woolf/Woolf-Photo-8.jpg
- <http://www.koenigsbrunn-drama-society.de/ZooStory3.jpg>
- <http://sfappeal.com/wp-content/uploads/2012/11/review9.jpeg>
- https://www.google.com/search?q=the+miracle+worker+gibson&espv=2&biw=995&bih=605&source=lnms&tbn=isch&sa=X&ei=sVWZVY_eJoaz-wHdq6rQCA&ved=0CAcQ_AUoAg#imgrc=Yf57UpZqamXnoM%3A