

**National  
Theatre**

# **New Views**

## **Teacher Handbook**

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# Foreword

Dear Teachers,

Welcome to New Views and thank you for signing up to take part.

New Views is a unique springboard for self-expression: an opportunity for students to write about what matters most to them. Diversity of experience is key to the programme's success, empowering young people of all backgrounds to show us the world through their lens. Over the years, New Views has generated an extraordinary canon of powerful and unique stories that have captured the detail and zeitgeist of their time, while remaining wholly relevant with universal themes of family, prejudice, mental health and identity; all of them timeless insights into the evolution from childhood to adulthood.

The experience of rehearsing and performing in school and youth theatre was deeply significant for me, but the first time I actually contributed to writing something was life-changing. To create something where before there had been a blank page was revelatory, and while the shared endeavour and sense of achievement from performing gave me a confidence that I had previously lacked, the agency of creation was profound

in a way I could not have anticipated. Somehow it released a permission – to myself – to define my own creative life. For me the value of this work is not just in encouraging the theatre-makers of the future, but in nurturing the next generation of free-thinking, initiating, fear-conquering citizens, whatever life they go on to lead. This is possible for them – as it was for me – because of brilliant teachers like you.

We cannot thank you enough for your incredible work, both inside and outside the classroom. The importance of your dedication and efforts in overseeing the programme in your schools cannot be overstated.

Thank you in advance, and all power to you.



**Rufus Norris**

Artistic Director of the National Theatre

# Preliminary Notes

New Views is a year-long course that runs alongside the academic year.

For information on important dates for this year's cycle including; Teacher CPD dates, first draft deadlines and final submission deadlines, please see **Key Dates**.

## Tailor sessions for your group

Theatre is made in lots of different ways using many different approaches.

Your New Views participants might be the types who jump to perform, or they may shy away from it. They might love to work collaboratively or prefer to work solo with pen and paper. Each of these sessions contains a range of 'ways in' to theatre-making.

Many of them are active but the students do not need to be confident performers – that's always optional. Choose the approaches that work best for them.

## Resource Preparation

For each session, we've listed any resources that you might need.

Visual stimuli can be especially useful. It might help to gather a bank of interesting images before you begin the New Views project. Art or photography books that contain portraits or scenes of figures interacting with one another are great prompts. You can find similar things in magazines or by searching the internet. Choose images from different places and time periods depicting a diverse range of people. Images without words or captions work best to free up the imagination.

Paintings and illustrations in different styles are also good, in addition to photos.

If you invest time in gathering these at the start, then your participants can keep adding to the supply as the project goes on.

## Opening Ritual – something to do each time you meet

Whatever its length, whatever its frequency, the time you set aside for creativity with your New Views group should feel special and different to the rest of the academic day.

Before the first session, you might want to think about the following elements.

### ***Atmosphere***

- Rearranging the space or changing the lighting
- Seating arrangements on the floor, sofas or beanbag chairs
- Taking off shoes
- Playing music
- Offering hot drinks, juice or snacks.

### ***Mission***

You and your group members might want to create a Creativity Contract, laying out your working principles to help one another through the programme.

What are the qualities that will help everyone make their best work? At the National Theatre, we encourage our groups to be **Open, Generous and Brave.**

*A place of radiance and deep peace, as in a meadow mid-morning, the flush of the day begun and all its potential still vibrating within us...Us, together, people of myriad hues, bodies, languages, cultures, beliefs, faiths, ages, abilities – yet who trust and love because it is instinctive to do so, as in a child fully open-eyed, awestruck by its existence and its mother's smell, her face, her warmth...We enter that field each morning to work and play, with all of the animal and plant life, too...all of us, separately and together, creative and unafraid and joyous.*

**Sharan Strange, Black Imagination**  
(curated by Natasha Marin)

Using Sharan Strange's quotation, imagine the way that your group – with all its myriad experiences, abilities and identities – would like to work and play, separately and together, as you draft your contract. You can write it however you like, but these prompts might help:

- As a New Views group, our aims are to...
- Individually, we pledge to...
- We will support everyone's creativity by...
- Working together, we know we can...

Once you've decided on these, post the Contract and refer to it when needed.

## **Ritual**

Most importantly, we recommend establishing a ritual that is specific to your particular New Views group. It might take one, five or ten minutes but it should signal to everyone that you are all about to enter a space and time of creativity.

Whatever you choose, make the ritual something that:

- Is repeated each session
- Develops over time
- Can eventually be led by the group members themselves.

Using Sharan Strange's quotation, imagine the way that your group – with all its myriad experiences, abilities and identities – would like to work and play, separately and together, as you draft your contract. You can write it however you like, but these prompts might help:

- As a New Views group, our aims are to...
- Individually, we pledge to...
- We will support everyone's creativity by...
- Working together, we know we can...

Once you've decided on your contract, stick it to the wall and refer to it when needed.

Here are some ideas. Choose what works for you – or feel free to devise your own

## **Beginning**

Breathe in and out together; try to clap simultaneously

## **Check-ins**

Invite your participants to offer a word, phrase or gesture for how they feel at the start of the session; describe their week using only seven words; decide what they gift to their fellow members this session, e.g. courage, a laugh, a nap.

## **Verbal**

Word Circle: each member of the group offers up one random word, and the next person follows this with the word it makes them think of and so on.

Yes, And... Storytelling: Group tells a made-up story about anything (a holiday, a party), one line at a time, each person beginning their addition with the words 'Yes and...';

Fill In the Blanks: Give an unfinished prompt and have everyone complete it in their own way ('What the world needs most is \_\_\_\_\_',

'\_\_\_\_\_ is OK, but \_\_\_\_\_ is better')

## **Physical Games for Togetherness and Focus**

Clap, stamp or click a rhythm and encourage the group repeat it. Try playing Follow the Leader with slow, simultaneous movements and then fluidly change the leader without a pause. Finally, pass a clap or some balls (real or imaginary) around the group, increasing in speed or complexity.

## **Sensory**

Create a playlist of inspirational songs for your group or ask a new group member to be DJ each week. Seek out objects around the classroom then bring them to pass around, share or describe.

## **Instant Writing**

Pass a page around and have everyone write a collective scene or poem by writing one line each then read the result aloud. Ask the group write for two minutes each on topics such as: a favourite place, least favourite place, place that they would love to visit, a made-up place or cheese. Choose new topics all the time and encourage group members suggest them.

## **Daily Pages**

Students write a stream of consciousness for a short time (between two and five minutes) on whatever they would like to write about. As they get to know their play, they may want to write about the play from the point of view of one of their characters.

Whatever you choose, always start with your ritual(s) and find ways for the group members to take ownership of the process and develop them further each time.

You may also want to create a ritual for the end of each session.

## **Final note**

You are not expected to use all of the exercises provided within the eight sessions of this handbook.

Choose those which will work best for your students.

# Session 1

Invitation to create

# Session 1

## Invitation to create

### Students' aims

- Overcome inhibitions about 'writing' theatre – just dive in & create
- Be open to inspiration from prompts of various forms
- Explore the qualities that are particular to theatrical storytelling
- Begin to understand what makes a dramatic scenario and characters.

### Resources needed (depending on which exercises you choose)

- Selection of images
- Post it notes (or slips of paper) – ideally in three different colours
- Chairs or stage blocks
- Range of random items to be used as props.

**Please note, this session helps the students to explore what excites them, but they do not need to settle on a specific story or idea for their play yet.**

### Start with your Opening Ritual

#### Living Portraits      5 – 10 minutes

Working in groups, the students study images (sourced by you or them) and decide from the context clues who the people in the image are, what they are doing and where and when it is happening. Acting as if the photo has been brought to life, the group then creates a conversation between the people in the image, based on these clues.

#### **Or...**

One group creates a tableau, then another group decides the who/what/when/where of the tableau, sketching out a brief scene for the posing group to bring to life.

## **Introduce The Subject and The Key Principles**

In those opening inspiration exercises, the group just created small pieces of theatre. They are live bits of storytelling, created collectively for an audience. All it took was a small bit of inspiration, combined with openness and creativity.

Over the next eight sessions, we'll delve further into different tools that will help your group write a script for the New Views competition but remember that a script is not just words on a page: it is a blueprint for a live performance.

Referring to the previous activity, ask the group what they think is specific to writing for the theatre (as opposed to short stories, TV, films, etc.). Here are some elements we have identified so you can use them as prompts for discussion if needed.

### **Language**

How did you use verbal/ non-verbal dialogue, action and body language? Different from short stories or novels, language in theatre communicates the external, by showing how characters think and feel, not describing them.

### **Imagination**

How is imagination used in theatre? How did you help the audience choose what to focus on?

### **Space and Time**

How did your characters use their physical space?

Did you have to think about the physical and theatrical challenges of changing between locations and time? Since your audience cannot rewind or re-read, how did you make sure that everything was clear?

### **Senses**

Did you have a think about how things looked, smelled, tasted, sounded and felt? Theatre can potentially engage all of our senses, so how did this inform your choices?

### **Collaboration**

Did you think about how the writing and performing informed each other? Theatre is a collaborative process and the script is only the beginning. Bear in mind the impact of the other theatre artists and theatrical elements such as actors/ performers and their body language, director, design, setting/space, lighting, seating arrangements and sound/music.

### **Duty of care**

Because theatre is a communal experience, where performers and audiences are sharing their vulnerability, there is a duty of care to present challenging ideas and material without causing harm.



## Complaints Chorus

Up to 15 minutes

Get the group to think about things that annoy them (people chewing their food too loudly, politicians, younger siblings, Marmite, etc.) Some may have ideas right away, others may want to get suggestions from the group. They could also choose something they really loved or were passionate about – but often complaining is more fun.

Select a group of about three to six participants to come to the front, arranging them in a row like a chorus. You are going to conduct them to give a rant about their chosen subject. Like singers in a chorus, sometimes all voices will be heard at once, other times certain individuals will rise above. They can say whatever they like, they can even keep repeating the same complaints over and over – the only rule is to keep talking when they're called on to do so.

It helps to warm the chorus up by having everyone rant together for a bit, then start calling on individual voices and shift back and forth.

You can use conductor's gestures to have individual complainers start and stop. You can even conduct them to change volume, from very quiet to loud, from loud to fortissimo. Direct the chorus to end with a nice big finish – maybe a last word or phrase from each.

Afterwards, ask the audience what words or phrases they remembered from the different voices. Repeat the exercise so that everyone gets to speak and to listen. The exercise will warm up the group to express themselves without thinking or planning too much.

## Time, Person, Location

10 – 15 minutes

Ask the group to think of three things:

- Any Location: a teenage girl's bedroom or the top of the Eiffel Tower or something very specific like the backroom of a fish and chip shop in Dundee
- Any Person: a magician, an eighteen-year-old skateboarder, Joan of Arc or a man who collects teddy bears from around the world
- Any Time: time of day (12 noon, 3.57pm) or time of year (early spring, 17 January) or an occasion like the May Bank Holiday

Everyone should write them on separate slips of paper and put them into three piles (if you have different coloured post-its, that might help).

Each person then fishes around and chooses one at random from each pile. You'll now have an intriguing combination of a person in a location at a time, e.g. 'An eighteen-year-old skateboarder at the top of the Eiffel Tower in early spring'.

Set up pairs or small groups to discuss the combinations they received, answering the question: do these elements have the potential for drama? If so, why?

There is no right answer, of course, but students might consider:

- What brought the person to that place at that time?
- What might happen next?

The groups can mix and match different combinations to come up with the one they think is the best before sharing it and explaining the potential story or stories they imagined happening.

## **Object, Smell, Photo**

**10 – 15 minutes**

For the following exercise, students can be given a choice of real objects/smells/photos or a list of objects/smells/photos or they can provide ones that they feel are more in keeping with the character that they are interested in exploring.

### **Object**

What might be found inside a person's pocket? What is the object? What kind of person would have it in their pocket? Why do they have it in their pocket? Who or where did they get it from? How long have they had it?

### **Smell**

The smell reminds this person of someone or something important. Is it a person? A pet? A place? An event? Why is it important?

### **Photo**

Reach into this person's other pocket and on their phone is a picture of someone important to them (it could also be a pet). Who is it? What is the connection? How long have they known each other? What does this relationship tell us about the character?

What kind of character have the students been able to build from these prompts? What do we know about them so far? Could they write a short scene where the character receives the object for the first time, or one that explores what happens when the smell reminds them of someone or something?

## **Start with Automatic Writing**

**10 minutes**

Pause and ask everyone to remember everything that has happened in the session so far. What are some words and phrases that have stuck in their heads?

Fill a whiteboard or flipchart with lots of words. Some will jump out as bold, powerful or interesting words... Have everyone choose one word or phrase that interests them (they should not think too much about it).

The chosen word or phrase is their prompt.

They should use it to write for five minutes uninterrupted, without worrying if it is any good or makes sense or is interesting, without caring about spelling or correcting themselves. If they do not know what to write, they should keep writing their prompt over and over until new words come.

After writing, give them the opportunity to read the texts silently to themselves and reflect on the experience:

- Was it hard to come up with ideas?
- Did surprising phrases or subjects come out?
- What is the benefit of writing so fast that you do not have time to think?

Once everyone has generated some text, you can use it as raw material in a number of different ways (choose from the options below).

## Exploring performance possibilities

Pick small groups (of about three to six) to read their automatic texts. You could group together everyone who chose the same prompt or mix and match them. A group leader or conductor can conduct them like a chorus, jumping back and forth between voices so that we hear a whole symphony of texts and no nobody feels too exposed.

Ask listeners for their impressions of the differences between the voices. Some will be very rational, others poetic. Some will be questioning; others will have very particular rhythms. Do not comment on whether things are good or bad, just observe their particular qualities. Ask listeners to provide feedback on words or phrases from the texts that stuck in their minds.

## Extension

Combine pairs or small groups to 'perform' their texts in conversation with one another. They do not need to rewrite anything, they just use the texts as 'scripts' – one speaker speaks as much of their text as they like (a line or two or three, even just one word) and once they

## 10 – 20 minutes, plus additional time to share with the group

stop the next person jumps in with their text. They just keep going back and forth, starting and stopping whenever they want.

As the group watches these conversations between texts, think about what associations are made. Who are these characters? What relationships might they have?

After some exploring, the pairs or groups could add in simple elements like, chairs to sit in, or stand on, or an object to be passed around. Encourage your students to settle on the version of the exchange they like the best, one that turns it into a mini-scene.

## Using Evocative Lines

**15 – 20 minutes**

Ask everyone to read through their automatic texts and select an interesting line (or more than one) that emerged from their writing. Jot these down on separate slips of paper and put them all into a pile. Have the group fish around and pull out new random lines to use as inspiration (not their own).

You can then assemble small groups of three or four and have them collaboratively write a scene which must incorporate all the random lines they've chosen.

These lines could be used as dialogue in the scenes or as stage directions collectively. The group should decide on a location and a time for the scene to fit with

the random lines. You could also set other creative limitations, for instance the scene might have to include a particular object, or it must be a certain length (e.g. 15 lines total, including the ones from the pile).

An easy way for them to write collectively is to have one writer compose the dialogue for Character A, one for Character B and so on, passing the paper around. Someone could also write stage directions.

If writers prefer to work individually, they could also write scenes or monologues on their own that include the random lines and phrases they've picked from the pile.

## Staging Montages

**20 minutes, plus additional time to share with the group**

In small groups of three to five, writers discuss evocative lines from their Automatic Writing and select a favourite. Then they write it down and pass it on to the next group.

Each group now has a line that's not their own. They should use this as inspiration to stage a very simple montage, using three tableaux. The given line could be thought of as a theme or title for the three-part composition they're going to make.

The tableaux should be frozen. They should make creative use of the space you are in and could also be given other specific elements to include like a chair or a particular object. The group collectively stages the Opening Image, then shifts position to craft the Middle and the Final Images. The three combined will tell a short sequence with a Beginning, Middle and End.

They should practise making the transitions between images sharply and precisely, being conscious of stage pictures, depth, proxemics and also where their audience will be watching them from.

When sharing with the group, the groups should announce the prompt line they received as their title, then say 'Lights down'. The audience should close their eyes.

When the group has taken their positions for Image 1, they announce 'Lights up' and everyone opens their eyes to see Image 1. Actors hold this for a few seconds before saying 'Lights down', moving to Image 2, saying 'Lights up' and so on.

After watching a sequence, it is good to ask the audience members what story seemed to be told, noticing specific details of staging, etc. and how they related to the prompt line.

## Extension

Do the same exercise but instead of silent Images, have the groups include one or two lines of spoken dialogue for each Image to add to their storytelling.

## Closing moments and recap

5 – 10 minutes

Over the course of this session, the group has made theatre in a number of different ways.

- Stories are told not just with words on the page but stage images presented live for an audience
- Anything can be used for inspiration (a word, a tableau, a picture, an object) and creativity often comes when we respond without too much thinking
- We can support one another as audience members by listening to and observing the specific details, words and stage pictures in each other's work.

## Taking things further for the next session

Students might want to set aside a special notebook that is used only for New Views.

They should spend time this week gathering their own inspirations in their book. These might be overheard conversations, images, news stories, objects, dreams – whatever interests them. They should be ready to share some of these with the group next time. One of them might offer a seed of inspiration that develops into their New Views play.

Before next time, challenge them to set a timer for five or ten minutes and do some more automatic writing inspired by something they have put in their book. They should see what emerges and keep doing this as many times as they like.

The writers might not come up with their favourite play idea on the first try. They can keep exploring inspirations each week until they settle on one that really excites them.

# Session 2

People – voices,  
characters  
and behaviour

# Session 2

## People – voices, characters and behaviour

### Students' aims

- Create distinctive expression and behaviour for a range of characters
- Build the external, social worlds that characters live in
- Understand the difference between inner and outer aspects of character
- Give characters three dimensions, layers and surprising contradictions.

### Resources needed (depending on which exercises you choose):

- Selection of books, magazines and videos
- Playlist with three distinct genres of music **OR** three different, random objects
- Blank sheets of A4 paper
- Four or five images from a magazine, newspaper or art book. They must have at least one person in them. You will need one image per group of at least three students.

### Start with your Opening Ritual

#### Inspiration Stealing

10 minutes

This session will be focused on characters. Images and observations are a great way in. You could bring in a selection of photography books, magazines or YouTube videos – any way to depict a wide range of people. Pass these around and think about not just faces but clothing, gestures, body language.

Get your group to think of characters who have really stuck with them from TV, radio or everyday life. Think about the following questions.

- Why are they drawn to this person?
- Is it behaviour, how they communicate?
- What intrigues them about this person?
- What secret do they think this person has that they've never told anyone?

## Introduce The Subject and The Key Principles

What makes a fictional character feel like a real person?

Rich, three-dimensional characters usually have **layers**, meaning there's a difference between their **outer** and **inner** selves.

They might show or express one thing externally but be feeling something quite different internally.

We sometimes think of people as fixed personality types (the shy person, the spoiled brat, the bully) but actually we've all got different aspects of ourselves that take control at different times (like in the movie *Inside Out*, trailer [here](#)).

It might not be a matter of which 'type of person' you are, but which side of you comes out in in a given situation.

Students might like to think about a time when they behaved really out **of character**... This would be something that friends or family would be really surprised by.

Our habits and personality are certainly shaped by lots of social or emotional factors (our background, our upbringing) but each of us contains **contradictions**. Someone who is totally outspoken in public might be more introverted in their family. A person who believes in truth-telling at all costs might find themselves having to tell a lie in order to protect someone they love. It can be these seemingly contradictory aspects that lead to the most interesting drama.

## Introductory exercises

### Past, Present and Future

20 minutes

#### Developing a character from an image or from music.

When starting to think about characters it is good to think about their backstory, where they've been, what their drive in life is and what their journey to achieve this might look like.

We are going to create a character and take them on a journey.

In groups of three or four, give each group an image. The image must have at least one person in it. If any of your students are visually impaired, you might want to reimagine this exercise by using different music.

#### 1. The Present Time

10 minutes

Each group decides what's going on in the image and then select one character in that image to focus on. This is their protagonist.

- Where are they?
- What's the situation?
- Who are they with?
- How are they feeling about the situation they are in?
- What is it that they want?

The image represents the present for that character.



## 2. The Past

2 minutes

Have each group think about what has happened before this picture was taken. This can be immediately before the picture was taken, a week before, a year before or five years before, etc. This becomes the protagonist's backstory.

- How were they feeling?
- Who was there?
- What did they want?

## 3. The Future

2 minutes

Think about what happens to the protagonist after this picture. Again, this could be immediately after or a few weeks, months or years after. This becomes their future.

## 4. Write or rehearse

10 minutes

- Do they achieve what they want?
- Are they happy?
- Where are they?
- Who is with them?

They have ten minutes to write and rehearse these three scenes of the character's life before sharing with the group. Do not show the actual images until each group has shared their story.

**Outcome:** From an image we can create a simple story arc and a protagonist. We are starting to think about how situations and other people can affect characters.

You can perform this exercise again by switching to a different character in the image.

## Head/Heart/Guts

15 minutes

Different types of people respond to the same situation differently. It has been said that there are three basic types of characters.

**Head Characters** observe and analyse the world; they are comfortable with logic, reasoning and detailed future plans.

**Heart Characters** feel and reach out to others; they are prone to acting based on emotions, memories, visions and dreams.

**Guts Characters** are directly and actively engaged in the world; they tend to make decisions based on instinct in an unselfconscious, immediate and practical way.

Of course, in real life everyone has a bit of Head, Heart and Guts in them but maybe one of these types is the dominant one.

This can be done solo or in small groups – it is perfect for trios where each student focuses on one character type. Ask them to think about the different ways that Head, Heart or Guts characters would express themselves. Think about what words they would use, how they would behave and how they would approach a given situation.

Now have them write a scene where three characters (Head, Heart and Guts) face a complicated situation like:

- Building IKEA furniture
- Training a dog
- Going to family therapy
- Shopping for outfits for a party.

When they write, they should make sure the characters' voices and choices reflect their dominant personality types. The group can collaborate on lines and stage directions that convey the different personality types.

### Extension (10 minutes)

Ask them to think about situations where the character cannot rely on their usual instincts or skills. A Head character is called on to do something that they do not find easy (like acting instinctively or expressing emotions). Or a scene where Heart or Guts need to analyse something logically or be rational and unemotional.

Then have them write that scene in such a way that we can see the discomfort and struggle of that character trying to break out of their habits or resist the situation. Maybe they fail at it? Or maybe they slowly find a new way to behave.

## In-depth Explorations

### Music/object – build a character

20 minutes

Everyone needs three pieces of paper to create three different characters that they may use in their plays.

You will need to prep the following.

Three different pieces of music or, if not music, then three different objects. If using music, have various styles available, preferably without lyrics. If using objects, they can be anything with different textures such as a wooden spoon, a candle, a clock, etc. Place the object where they can all see it. If they are visually impaired they are allowed to touch it.

As they look at the object or listen to the piece of music, ask them to answer the following questions.

- What colour does the music or object inspire them to think of?
- What fragrance or smell might the music or object have?

- What does it feel like?
- What would it taste of?
- How would it move? Smoothly, at speed or like a ballerina?
- What type of weather would it be?
- What type of conversation would it have? Stilted, chatty, rhymed?
- Thinking of all the words inspired by the above questions, what emotion encompasses all of them?

Using the word from question number 8, what type of person springs to mind? Give them a name.

Share with the group in the following way. I am (insert character name) and I am... (start with number 1 – 8) blue, cotton, fresh, newly washed clothes, etc.

## Outcome

Students have started to create an in-depth character, understanding them emotionally and have an idea of who they are, how they move, etc. They can use them for the next exercise or have

them in their back pocket for your play. Participants have explored how music or everyday objects inspire us to create different types of characters.

## Circles of Connection and Interaction

15 minutes

This exercise could be done solo or in small groups, with students collaborating to make a person. Start by asking them to think of a character. It could be from the photo exercise earlier, it could be based on someone they know or just made up.

Give them a name.

They should write that name on a piece of paper and draw a circle around them. Inside this circle, the students can jot down:

- People the character lives with
- Objects or items they use every day
- Things they like to eat or cook
- Belongings that mean the most to them
- Items of clothing they regularly wear.

Then they should draw a larger circle and inside this one, put:

- Places they go on a daily basis
- Jobs and tasks they regularly do
- Close contacts they interact with (hanging out or calling/texting)
- Strangers they interact with
- What they do in their free time.

Around that they draw another, larger circle and put in it:

- Who they work for
- Who they work with
- People they owe something to (financially or emotionally?)
- People who owe them something (financially or emotionally?)

Finally, they draw one more circle on the outermost edge and put in it:

- Things they would like to buy
- Places they dream of going
- People they want to be closer to and see more of
- Things they dream of doing.

What have they learnt about this character? They should try writing contrasting mini-texts showing how the character behaves differently in different circles. For instance, a home interaction from Circle 1 compared to one with a stranger from Circle 2? An inner monologue at work from Circle 3 compared to one from Circle 4 where they're dreaming? How do the characters present differently in expression, reactions, body language based on who they are with and where they are?

## Identity Cupboard

20 minutes

Everyone takes a piece of A4 paper horizontally and folds it so the two sides meet in the middle. This is their cupboard with two doors that open up.

Now they should think of a real person (this could be themselves or someone they know well). You can make clear that no one will be asked to share any of this out loud.

The outside doors of the cupboard represent what a complete stranger might assume about you when they see you enter a room. These are your external qualities, the way you tend to present to the world – and those impressions might not be totally accurate. On the outside doors, they should write down all of the aspects that people might assume (rightly or wrongly) from external appearance: gender and age? Ethnic background? Something about personality or style? The way you present yourself?

The inside doors of the cupboard represent things that someone might learn when they talk to someone, get to know them better or work with them on something.

On the inside doors, students write down aspects that people learn when they get to know this person:

Living situation? Family background? Likes and dislikes?

Goals and dreams? Opinions? A more accurate personality that comes out when interacting with people?

Finally, in the interior of the cupboard are things that most people do not know about this person at all. They might be things the person does not often talk about, or that even people who know them might not guess. In the interior, write down these most inner aspects of identity – they'll be very specific to the person's life circumstances, there may not be as many of these but they're likely to be very meaningful.

After completing the whole cupboard, reflect with the group (whilst not asking anyone to share specifics). What did this exercise reveal to you about the different parts of a person's identity? What could you learn from this exercise in creating a character in your play?

Now's the important part. Repeat the whole exercise for a fictional character, maybe a type of person who might be in their play. They should fill in each layer of the cupboard, deciding how the fictional person presents at first, what an audience might discover about them as we watch them interact and finally some things about them that most other people do not know (and might never know).

### Extension (10 – 15 minutes more)

Use these discoveries as inspiration for scenes or monologues featuring that character.

## Get to know them: lists

30 minutes

Ask students to think of a character. It might be one of the ones they have used from a previous exercise, or a new one they have created.

You are going to lead them on super-quick brainstorming using lists – the idea is to get a lot of information about their character without taking too much time to think or second guess.

Use a timer for 45 seconds per prompt. Challenge them to try and come up with at least eight to ten items on each list before time runs out, then move on. Ready, set.... Go!

### Group one (social factors)

Places where they HAVE LIVED... People they LOOK UP TO...

People they NEVER SEE anymore...

Who or what have they LEARNT the most from...

Places where they FEEL MOST COMFORTABLE...

Activities that make them FEEL AWKWARD...

Finally, and most importantly, have them list as many things as they can that your character would NEVER DO...

Take a breather. Ask them to look over their lists. They probably learnt some things about their character from groups one and two. They should circle any really interesting ones that jump out.

Can they now mix and match elements from these lists to create a scene or a monologue? Maybe we see the characters living through one of their wants, needs, insecurities, etc from the group two lists in a setting or with a person from the group one lists?

### Group two (feelings)

Things the character BELIEVES IN...

OPINIONS that they have about the world...

Things they WANT...

Things they actually NEED...

Things they're most PROUD of...

Things they feel INSECURE about...

Ask them to try their hands at writing that. Or, if they want the biggest challenge, write a scene using the final list. Can they imagine a situation that would lead their character to do something that no one (including they themselves) would ever expect? When and why would they do something totally out of character?

## **Between now and next time, if you have time...**

Students should take one of the characters they have created today or are thinking about for their play and imagine this character is in a lift when someone they look up to or someone they have not seen for ages gets in. They should feel free to use characters from the social factors list in the previous exercise.

Write the interaction between these characters for this two-minute lift journey. What is said and what is not said? Focus on stage directions, as well as dialogue.

They should free write for ten minutes and see where it takes them.

### **Further reading**

Characters have rich inner and outer identities. Students should examine how these writers present their characters' complex lives.

*Shedding a Skin* by **Amanda Wilkin**

*The Diary of a Hounslow Girl* by **Ambreen Razia**

*Rockaby* by **Samuel Beckett**

*Wolfie* by **Ross Willis**

# Session 3

## Communication and the language of the stage

# Session 3

## Communication and the language of the stage

### Students aims:

- Understand how characters interact and communicate with each other on stage (this might be different from how people interact in reality)
- Become familiar with the different languages of theatre – verbal, body, BSL, symbols, costume, design
- Learn about text versus subtext.

### Chosen texts

To access the extracts below, please click on the title of each play.

**Boy** by Leo Butler, **Love and Information** by Caryl Churchill, **Blood Wedding** adapted by David Ireland and **Seven Methods of Killing Kylie Jenner** by Jasmine Lee-Jones.

### Start with your Opening Ritual

#### Inspiration Stealing

15 minutes

1. In pairs, students should discuss the different ways we communicate with each other. Make a list of all the ways you can think of. For example, TikTok, public social media and private messaging, spoken word, BSL.
2. Individually, ask your students to choose one of the styles they have listed and think how they would introduce themselves. Encourage them to think about the amount of information, the number of actual words used and the amount of detail.

A tweet is different in length to a TikTok, etc. Share these thoughts with the group.

3. Follow up questions:
  - What plays, films or TV series have you seen or read that use these styles of communication?
  - What plays, films or TV series have you seen or read that use different styles to what we have explored today?
  - How did that interest you?
  - What styles do you think could work on stage that you have never seen?



In this session we will focus on how, why and what we communicate through conversations and interactions. When we talk about language for the stage, we are including verbal and non-verbal dialogue, body language, silence, pauses and subtext as ways in which we communicate.

## **What we are communicating?**

**15 minutes**

Share extracts of the play texts, or other extracts you might have, with small groups of your students. Can they list everything that is communicated in this extract?

Examples of the kind of things communicated might be:

- Characters' wants and needs
- Context – relationships between characters, hierarchy, time, location
- Story – conflict, history
- Character – shorthand about and between characters
- Tone – emotional and stylistic choices of the playwright
- Identifies community or culture portrayed in the play
- Play's relationship to audience or experience
- Subtext – the things that are meant, but remain unsaid or can't be said.

What impact can this have on your writing, the story and the characters they are creating?

## **Social Media and messaging**

**15 minutes**

Ask the group if they have ever read the comments section on a social media post. Now suggest working in a pair to write a short scene between two characters.

The scenario is that two characters are arguing about making the voting age 15. One is for it and one is against.

Let them know that they can use emojis, @s, acronyms, hashtags, etc as a way to communicate or create dialogue, especially as these may be a part of their everyday language.

Ask the group to consider how the ages and backgrounds of these characters might influence how they communicate. What if they were to write this scene using their phones? Set the time limit at five minutes.

Encourage them to explore the language of their scenes:

- How do the characters communicate?
- How do the characters' backgrounds influence how they communicate?
- How do the lengths of the lines differ?
- Is there repetition?
- How does it differ from what they expected?
- Who do you think this is for?

## Extract

Now ask your students read this extract  
(**Extract: p.8 – 13: Twitterlude number 1**)  
from ***Seven Methods of Killing Kylie Jenner*** by Jasmine Lee-Jones, and discuss.

As they begin to think of the world of their play, get them to consider how their characters will communicate with one another.

## NOTE

There are many diverse voices in our world that are missing from our stages. Embrace the different ways to write.

4. Give each group a piece of the chosen texts.  
(see extracts included as PDF)

***Boy*** by Leo Butler

***Blood Wedding*** adapted  
by David Ireland (BSL Syntax)

Invite your students to discuss their chosen text with the group, sharing what interests them and what they think each audience's experience will be from listening to or watching the pieces.

As before, with their own scene, ask them to explore the language of their piece of text:

- How do the characters communicate?
- How do the characters' backgrounds influence how they communicate?
- How do the lengths of the lines differ?
- Is there repetition?
- How does it differ from what they expected?
- Who do you think this is for?

# Writing prompts

## Interviews and body language

15 minutes

1. As a group, watch an interview without the captions or sound and make a list of what we can infer from the body language, e.g. Prime Minister's Questions, a TV drama, an interview with a pop star.

Please see below the interview example we have chosen before proceeding with the activity.

[ntathome.com/life-in-stages](http://ntathome.com/life-in-stages)

- Each person writes down what they think is being discussed or said
- Ask for some students to read or perform theirs to the rest of the group

- Ask them what impact this has on their speech and the way it can be delivered.
2. Referring again to the extract from ***Seven Methods of Killing Kylie Jenner***, now have the group create a scene using only gifs, where two people realise that they both know a third person. Get them to think about how they can craft this into a script.

# In-depth explorations

## Character and communication

30 minutes

Divide the class into groups and give each group a different image. This can be an image from a magazine, a newspaper, a postcard, etc. In the groups, discuss what's going on in the image. Where is it? Give the image a title.

The students should write down a name for each character or person in the image.

Then ask your students to draw a thought bubble from each of the character's heads and write a sentence for each of the following:

- How are they feeling?
- What do they want?

Using these statements, they can begin to write dialogue:

- What would the characters say or do next to get what they want?
- How do they say or do it?
- Who speaks first?
- How does the next character respond?

- How does each character affect what the other characters are feeling and what they want?

Now, ask the groups to use eight to ten lines of dialogue between the characters to make a short scene where one of the characters gets closer to what they wanted at the start of the scene.

- What is being said?
- How are they communicating/interacting?
- Do they all speak in prose?
- Has the image influenced the style or way in which they communicate?
- Share the different conversations with the group
- For those observing – which character interests them the most and why?

## Locations and communication

45 minutes

In small groups, ask your students to choose one of the following locations:

1. Cinema
2. Top deck of bus
3. Doctor's surgery
4. Classroom
5. Public toilets
6. School cafeteria
7. Market stall
8. Football stadium
9. Place of worship
10. Local park

## Part one

10 – 15 minutes

In pairs or groups of four, students must write a short scene (10–16 lines) between two characters, A and B, in the location.

The scenarios can be one of the following:

1. **A** wants something from **B**, but **B** doesn't want to give it to them and is too scared or doesn't know how to say no.
2. **B** knows something about **A**, that **A** doesn't think anyone knows about and doesn't want anyone to know about. **B** plays along, pretending they don't know but keeps dropping hints about this thing.
3. **A** and **B** both behave in a way that hides their true feelings about each other. They both behave in the polar opposite way to how they truly think and feel.

## Part two

10 minutes

For each line of dialogue, they now write another line displaying the inner thoughts and feelings of each character.

## Part three

10 minutes

The students can now cast their play with two people for each character – one person to read the lines that are said out loud and another to read out the inner thoughts and feelings.

Students then present these scenes to the rest of the group – with the out loud dialogue first and then adding in the subtext.

## Part four

10 minutes

Finally, discuss subtext – what the students do and do not like about it.

## Closing moments

5 – 10 minutes

- How does the way we communicate affect what information characters give or what the audience receives?
- How do characters interact with friends compared to family members or those in authority?
- Consider the portrayal of internal and external communication. Do we always say what we mean? Often the best dramatic moments are when we watch a character saying something we know they didn't mean because they are too frightened, embarrassed or unable to tell the truth.

## Between now and next time, if you have time...

Invite your students to write three short scenes where:

1. **A** has just started stealing from **B**, but **B** does not know.
2. **B** now knows, but **A** doesn't know that they do.
3. They both know that the other knows, but the stealing is never mentioned.

As an exercise – have the students think about how they communicate with friends, family, teachers and people in authority. What do they notice about their body language or their choice of words? Note these down. What are the potential ways we interact and communicate with people we know compared to those who are mere acquaintances?

### Further reading

Communication is so much more than words. Encourage your students to explore how this works. They can use words, rhythms, fragments and silences.

*Blue Kettle* by **Caryl Churchill**

*Ear for Eye* by **Debbie Tucker Green**

*The Dumb Waiter* by **Harold Pinter**

*Wasted* by **Kae Tempest**

### Extracts

*Boy* by Leo Butler

*Blood Wedding* by David Ireland

*Love and Information* by Caryl Churchill

*Seven Methods of Killing Kylie Jenner*  
by Jasmine Lee-Jones

# Session 4

## Scene/event/change

# Session 4

## Scene/event/change

### Students' aims

- Analyse what makes up a scene
- Explore concepts of change and conflict within their own writing
- Write a scene from their play.

### Resources (depending on which exercises you choose)

- Index cards/note cards/post-it notes

### Chosen texts

To access the extracts below, please click on the title of each play.

**Rockets and Blue Lights** by Winsome Pinnock and **The Welkin** by Lucy Kirkwood

### Start with your Opening Ritual

## Introductory exercises

### Inspiration Stealing

15 minutes

1. Ask the group to think about their lives in recent days. Have there been any moments where they had to make a decision? It could be as small and insignificant or big and life-changing as they like. For example, deciding what to have for lunch or deciding to stop being friends with someone.

#### Prompting questions:

What did you do?  
How did that feel in the moment of making the decision? And then after?  
Were there any consequences to your decision?

The students should share with a partner and make notes.

2. Ask the group to think about a time recently when they were really excited to do something or imagine something that would be really exiting.

Create a tableau in groups that captures how they felt before the event.

Now, create a tableau showing how they felt after the event

### Prompting questions:

How have your thoughts, feelings and actions changed from the before to the after?

The students should share with the rest of the class.

## What is a Scene?

10 minutes

Here is a definition from playwright Arthur Miller:

*A scene is a unit of change. A character should not leave a scene unchanged.*

A scene is a step forward for a character towards their 'want', until they reach an obstacle. The writer to decide whether the obstacle is overcome or not.

### What is the function of a scene?

As a group, the students should take a minute to write down everything they think a scene should include.

### For example:

- A beginning, middle and end
- At least one character taking action. If there's more than one character, there should be some interaction between them. This interaction should reveal something, or drive the play forward
- Conflict
- Obstacles for the character(s)
- A strong ending that makes us want to keep watching or reading.

## Key Scenes

15 minutes

Read some examples of great scenes:

Opening of ***Rockets and Blue Lights*** by Winsome Pinnock

Scene 3 of ***The Welkin*** by Lucy Kirkwood

The students can now compare and contrast the list of what a scene should have which they made earlier with one of the examples of a great scene. Have they missed anything out? Is there anything else they would now add to their list of what 'makes' a scene? They can discuss and share this with a partner or the rest of the group.

## What is Change?

15 minutes

Change for a character can be internal or external. Meaning it can happen inside them, or it can be a change of circumstance. Examples include:

**Internal:** Change of mood, change of heart, change of mind etc.

**External:** Change of allegiance, change of fortune, change of role etc.

Ask your students to come up with lots of ideas of how characters are changed through a story. They are welcome to choose from any story. Highlight the source of change: conflict.



# In-depth explorations

## Listing your world

10 – 30 minutes

Lists are a great way of freeing the mind, while generating ideas. Here we will create lists to start thinking about the world of the play the students might want to write.

### Ask the students to list five things happening:

- In their world
- In the wider world
- In their characters' world
- In the wider world of your play

This exercise will help them think about decisions and consequences for their characters. Working in pairs, the students should complete the following sentences.

**I want...** What does the character from their play want?

**But...** Their character can't get what they want so write what is stopping them. (This will become the obstacle)

**So...** What do they do to overcome the obstacle?

For example, *I want to go to university but my mum won't let me so I have to run away.*

You might want to extend this exercise by using this information to create a scene. This might include the scene where the character realises what the obstacle is or realises what their 'want' is.

## Off the path

30 minutes

Off the path is a way of understanding how events and conflict can create scenes and change.

On five different index cards or post-it notes, ask students to list four real things they did before arriving at the New Views session that day (the arrival being number five).

Between events two and three, they then invent four events which could have taken them off their path (label them A, B, C and D).

The list should look like  
1, 2, A, B, C, D, 3, 4, 5.

A is the **inciting incident**. Ask them to examine or imagine how A, B, C and D took them off their path and how they could resolve this disruption – and get back to their New Views session. This can be very useful to break down (or invent) the **inciting incident**, obstacles and cause and effect for plays.

Now invite your students to do this again with a particular character they're creating in mind. If your students have an idea for their play, they can do the same again using a day in the life of their character.

### Example

1. Character goes to school
2. Is bored in the first lesson
3. Has lunch with friends
4. Does a maths test
5. Fantasises about leaving school.

What happens if you derail their normal day with an **inciting incident**?

For example, a bus crashes into the school, the character's mum calls and tells them to come home straight away, a nationwide lockdown is announced.

Each event is now potentially a scene in a play.

### Prompting questions:

Does each scene have enough change, drama, tension and conflict? If not, which scenes can be consolidated or removed?

Has your scene achieved what it needs to achieve?

Experiment with time and location.

Would a shift in days, years or location help to create a dynamic story?

For example, Shakespeare decided that it was more interesting to begin *Hamlet* almost two months after the death of the King, as opposed to the next day. This length of time raises the situation's stakes, is still recent enough for Hamlet to be deeply grieving, but also allows for the action of his mother marrying his uncle to be one of the play's biggest sources of conflict.

Write a scene based on this new inciting incident.

## 24-Hour Clock: a script

15 minutes

Think about how time and location can impact how characters behave.

Choose a special day, or a day of significance in the world of one of your characters. For each hour of this day, make notes as to how they feel, think and act as the day goes on. You can present this as a clockface where each number is accompanied by what happens during that hour.

### Prompting questions

What has happened? How much time has passed? What different spaces has the character inhabited?

What does this world look, sound, smell, feel and taste like? We will go further into this in the Brick by Brick exercise below.

How do you make this world tangible and specific to theatre? Remember that tangible does not have to be about being realistic.

Have your students write a short scene from the beginning of the character's day and then another from several hours later.

Next, invite your students to create an image or tableau to portray each of these two hours. Consider how what is happening socially or politically impacts the way this world is experienced by the characters. How they engage with this world is how we as an audience will understand those rules of engagement.

## Friend/foe

30 minutes

Invite your students to revisit the Circles of Connection and Interaction exercise from Session 2. Thinking about the people who populate the world of the play, consider their relationship to the protagonist and whether they all feel the same way as the protagonist.

Perhaps one person thinks that they are closer to the protagonist than the protagonist thinks. Perhaps someone else moves from one circle to another over the course of the play.

What impact do these relationships have on the conflict the protagonist faces? Which of these potential characters is most similar to the protagonist and which is most different? With whom would there be the most conflict? Who is capable of standing in the way or helping to achieve goals?

Using what they have learnt from the previous activity, write a scene where a secret is revealed, or someone wants something from the other person. Who would it be most dynamic to reveal the secret to?

**Note** Remind your students a scene can be as short as eight lines of dialogue between two characters so not to let it overwhelm them. If they are feeling brave they can add in more characters.

How might a character reveal the secret or ask for what they want?

Are they embarrassed? Do they shout and demand? Are they confident?

Or if they already have a play idea, they could consider the most exciting moment of that play.

What happens? Is it a decision to be made? Or a secret to be shared? Is it a murder? If they are still working on an idea, consider what a really exciting moment for an audience might look like.

List three possible outcomes of that moment:

What would make the most exciting version of your play?

How might the audience feel about each of the outcomes?

How do you want your audience to feel about your characters and what is happening?

### Extension (10 minutes)

Turn each of the outcomes into scenes

## Brick by brick

30 minutes

When world-building, consider what the sensory experience provides as part of the storytelling. Think of the setting, the context, the narrative and the backstory that it can give without being expositional.

Expositional is telling, instead of showing.

For example,

**NISHA:** I feel sad.

Instead of

*Nisha sighs, then continues to stare out of the window.*

What are the other ways to show that Nisha is sad? How might she behave? What do you do when you are sad? Could you get rid of stage directions and include something like audio description instead? We want the world to feel real and tangible, no matter how fantastical the story might be. Real does not equal naturalistic.

It can mean authentic and heartfelt and still be theatrical.

Ask your students to draw three concentric circles. In the biggest circle, they make notes about what is happening in the wider world surrounding their play. Is there anything socially or politically that could have an impact on their narrative and characters?

In the middle circle they should concentrate on the world of their play. When and where is it set?

In the smallest circle, they make notes about where a scene is set. Think of all of your senses. What about the time of year and time of day? The weather?

How does each character feel about the location of this scene? Is it a place they know very well or not at all? How do they feel at this time of day? What is happening in the world surrounding the play or with other characters that could cause and show change?

Have the students rewrite the scene from earlier set in a private space, then a personal space and finally a public space.

- A private space is somewhere closed to the public. It could be a character's house, or an office etc
- A personal space where a character talks to themselves, or to the audience; it could be imaginary
- A public space is somewhere other people may be present, e.g. on public transport, in a park, etc.

How are the characters changed by the space they are in?

Do they change tactics in asking for what they want?

Do they speak more softly or confidently when sharing their secret?

What happens if they get what they want?

How does the other character react to the secret?

What happens if they do not get the reaction they want, or they do not get what they are asking for? How far might they go?

These are called stakes and reflect how important what happens in the play is to the character and to their life. While it is really important that the stakes are high, it does not mean students have to write the most dramatic play ever. They just need to make sure that it is clear to the audience how their character might be affected if they do or do not achieve their goals.

## Recap

- Change can be internal or external, but the characters must change between the start and end of the play. Even if they choose to do, think or feel the same things as before, it is now an active decision, which still means that they have changed
- Stakes are important. They tell the audience why we should care about a character and also create drama
- Consider how time and location can impact the change in characters.

## Further thinking – ideas for students to try out in their own time

There are some other things students could consider in their own time. If the students do not yet know what they are going to write about, prompt them to think about what their play could be. Do they have a thought or an idea? This is the point where a thought, a theme or a feeling can become an idea, with a solid narrative journey.

Here are some more terms to be considered.

**Inciting incident** This is an incident that happens during the play, that takes the characters off their usual path and starts them on their journey through the play. Remember Little Red Riding Hood?

We would not know her story if she had not gone off the path and into the wood. So, your inciting incident is something that changes the character's routine or way of thinking. It could make them decide to make changes. The inciting incident is the match that lights the dynamite fuse.

**Active question** This is the question posed by the inciting incident and is answered in the resolution of the play. Will Hamlet avenge his father's death? This is the question that acts as the motivation of the protagonist. It pushes the entire play and is answered in the resolution. Can you identify the inciting incident and active question of your play?

## Further reading

Characters in plays shift and change in subtle or profound ways. Ask students to compare how these different writers chart those changes, step by step.

*Adam & Jane* by **Ruth Kelner**  
(New Views Shortlist 2017)

*Foxfinder* by **Dawn King**

*Shook* by **Samuel Bailey**

*The Hoes* by **Ifeyinwa Frederick**

## Extracts

*Rockets and Blue Lights*  
by Winsome Pinnock

*The Welkin* by Lucy Kirkwood

# Session 5

## Journeys

# Session 5

## Journeys

### Students aims:

- Understand the difference between story and plot
- Learn how events in drama build from one to the next towards a conclusion
- Get started on understanding character journeys for their own plays.

### Resources needed:

- Access to YouTube.

### Start with your Opening Ritual

#### Inspiration Stealing

10 minutes

#### Storytelling is simple

Ask the group to divide into pairs and tell their partner about an experience they've really enjoyed. It could be a delicious meal, watching their favourite sports team win or dancing at a party.

Go into plenty of detail to make sure your partner gets a really good sense of what it was like to be there. You can use sounds, emojis, gestures, lots of expression.

What was the beginning, middle and end of that experience?

They can then reflect on their partner's story. What does it feel like to hear an exciting story?

Sometimes the words 'story' and 'plot' are used interchangeably, but for writers they're actually a bit different.

Ask the group to think of a book, movie or fairy tale they know well and imagine it as a comic strip. What would each panel show? Each one would probably have a key moment or turning point and together these tell the entire tale. That is the plot.

**Plot** is 'one thing after another'; it is the chain of events a writer chooses to show their audience. (This happened and then because of that this happened and then because of that this happened, etc.)

When you zoom out from the specific **plot** events, though, you can see what the whole **story** is. It has more to do with the characters' journeys and emotions.

**Story** is the fundamental transformation that happens in your script; it is the big picture version of how your character(s) change by the end.

Some examples of **stories** might be:

- In order to solve a problem, a team of unlikely heroes discover strengths they didn't know they had
- An ambitious schemer betrays everyone around them and ultimately destroys their soul.

**Plot** is made up of all the events that happen, but **story** is why the audience *cares*.

## Writing prompts and introductory exercises

### 1. Songs: Journeys of feeling

**10 minutes**

Ask the students to choose a favourite song or piece of music and listen to it twice. The first time, they can do some free writing of the emotions and impressions that come up whilst they listen. Then they should listen to it again while reading their impressions and thinking about the different sections of the song.

You might ask:

- How does it begin?
- Where are the emotional changes or tonal variations?
- Where are the high points?
- As a listener, do you feel you end up in a different place to where you started?
- How can you describe that change?

They should jot down notes or share with a partner to break down the different sections of the song. Then have them try to explain how the different elements of the song (words, music, rhythm) influenced the listener to create those different impressions.

Could they use similar techniques in their play?

- What happens at the beginning, middle and end of their play? How do they want the audience to feel at those points?
- What can they do with characters' language and behaviour, stage pictures or the rhythm of scenes to create those shifts in emotion for the audience.



## A short film 'Ride'

10 minutes

Sometimes a short-form story is even clearer than a full-length one. Here are some examples of a short film or cartoon:

### Hair Love

### Pip

Select one of these, or a short film of your choice. Have the group watch the movie, a couple of times if you need to, and take stock of how the pace and emotions change. Can they represent the experience of watching it as a graph, with highs and lows?

On a piece of paper turned lengthwise, draw a line that represents the 'ride' that the film takes them on. The line can go up or down, smooth curves or sharp jumps, it can loop back or spin around. They can add colours or shapes if they want.

If others in the group all watch the same film, compare different versions and explain why they each represented it the way that they did.

## Live event anticipation

10 minutes

Ask them to imagine the most thrilling, sensational live event of all time. It could be the championship match of their favourite team or perhaps the most incredible, career-defining concert by their favourite musicians. This event should not be real, but the most amazing, dramatic version possible.

They have 90 seconds to describe this event to their partner, starting from the moment they arrive at the venue. Capture the atmosphere and all the different things they experience as a spectator – but they also need to reach the conclusion. Then the partner does the same.

Pairs should reflect on what elements made it so exciting and then give feedback to the whole group. In each pair, did they have:

- Anticipation, suspense
- People, players
- Conflict, setbacks
- Shocks, surprises

- Changes of pace
- Reversals
- Pauses, lulls, climaxes
- Satisfying conclusion.

Plays should be just as thrilling as this. How can they make theirs that way? Here's a checklist to consider:

- Clear 'wants' and goals for your characters
- Sense that the stakes are high, making us care about the outcome
- Shifts in emotion because we are invested in what they're doing
- Challenges, successes, surprising outcomes along their journeys
- Variations in tone, scene length and spectacle to keep our interest.

As needed, you can unpack these with the group and reflect on what they already have in their ideas and what might need more work.

# In-depth explorations

## Story spine

10 minutes

New Views encourages writers to think outside of the box when presenting their stories. Before we can think about what a story looks like on the page or on the stage, we have to know it well. The following exercises will help writers understand their characters and their journeys, creating a story spine that they can then play with. Pixar use the following format so ask the group to fill it in for their story.

Once upon a time there was \_\_\_\_.

Every day, \_\_\_\_.

Until one day \_\_\_\_.

Because of that, \_\_\_\_.

Because of that, \_\_\_\_.

Until finally \_\_\_\_.

## Story structure

15 minutes

Ask the group to complete the **Story structure worksheet**. It may be difficult when they do not know all the answers, but if they get stuck, they can just write the most outrageous thing that could happen. At this stage it is more important to get something on the page than make it 'right'. They can always change their mind later. Ask them to think about how it felt to hear about their partner's experience at the beginning of the session.

How can you recreate that feeling for your audience?

## Extension:

They can redo their Story Structure Worksheet with everything 'dialled up to ten'.

They can redo their Story Structure Worksheet for another character so that we see the story from their point of view.

## Scenes

10 minutes

Once writers have completed their Story Structure Worksheet, it is time to start generating scene ideas.

A scene is a moment of change. Using the Story Structure Worksheet, have them pick six to eight moments of change, or big events, and write each one on an index card. With a partner, they can arrange the scenes into a satisfying order. They can start anywhere so encourage them to be bold.

Where are the gaps? What is the chain of events? Do they link together?

## Extension

Use the index cards as inspiration to write scenes.

## Recap

10 minutes

1. Stories are about change, usually emotional ones. How are the characters going to change in their play?
2. Difference between story (characters' transformation) and plot (the events that happen to get them to that transformation).
3. Each scene or plot event should build on the previous one, to push the story forwards. Because of that, this happened and then because of that.

## Further thinking – ideas for students to try out in their own time

Ask the group to consider these prompts:

- If your story was a piece of music, what would it be?
- If your story was a colour, what would it be? Does that colour shift throughout the story?
- If your story was a feeling, what would it be? Does that emotion shift throughout the story?
- What is the temperature and weather of your story? Does that shift during the story?
- If your story was captured in one statement, what would it be?
- If your story was captured in one question, what would it be?

Each writer should complete the sentence:

*This is a story about...*

(keep it short – just one sentence)

When they've got an answer, they should stick it in their notebook, or on their desk. Every time they get stuck they can go back to it. Remind them that their understanding of the story's essence might change – they can keep revising it.

The story outlines will help writers to see the bigger picture of a play idea and understand the journey of a character. To put ideas to the test, they could try writing a scene from one of the index cards. If they have not got that far, they could write the first and last scene – but ask them to bring a fully formed idea to the next session.



### **Further reading**

Whatever their length, stories onstage take us from one state of being to another. Ask students to see how these characters and their worlds transform by the end of the story.

*King Charles III* by **Mike Bartlett**

*Nine Night* by **Natasha Gordon**

*Pass Over* by **Antoinette Nwandu**

*Reasons You Should(n't) Love Me* by **Amy Trigg**

# Session 6

How many ways are  
there to tell your story?

# Session 6

## How many ways are there to tell your story?

### Students' aims

- Discuss what is exciting about the way stories are told (structure)
- Begin to analyse how we tell stories (form)
- Consider who is usually allowed to tell a story
- Explore how form and structure can change the impact of storytelling.

### Resources needed (depending on which exercises you choose)

- Blank paper
- Pens
- **Seven Basic Plots Handout**
- Images featuring multiple people.

### Start with your Opening Ritual

#### Inspiration Stealing

10 minutes

In groups or pairs, encourage students to tell their partners or group about something they have seen or heard this week that surprised them or caught their interest.

Person A tells the story

Person B tells it back to them

- Did it change because of who was telling it?
- Did it change because the Person B found certain aspects of the story more interesting?
- Did Person B tell it as themselves, or did they tell it in the third person?

#### Questions to prompt:

- What were the differences in the two stories?

#### Outcome

The group begins to discuss stories and what excites them about the way they are told.

# Introduce The Subject and The Key Principles

We are going to start exploring how stories have been told, who tells them and why. This will help to ensure that the stories your students tell, are exciting and challenging for both the writer and the audience.

Here are some questions to ask the students about the story they are working on:

- Who is it about?
- Who is telling the story?
- Who is the protagonist? (the main character, or indeed main characters, in the play).

## Introductory exercises

### Untold story

**15 minutes**

Draw up a list of plays (or TV shows or films) that you all know. Pick three to five from the list and allocate one to each group.

In groups summarise what the story is and who is telling it. Collate the information from the groups. What are the common factors?

Lead a discussion asking:

1. Who is the protagonist?  
Are they an interesting choice?
2. Who else in the play could offer an alternative viewpoint?  
The nurse, the angry sister, the inanimate object?

Take one play. What would it look like if you:

- Explored changing the gender of the key characters
- Told the story from another character's perspective
- What would it look like as a musical? As a piece of interpretative dance? Poetry?
- How would the story change if you told it back to front, or jumping through time?

**NB** We recommend Roald Dahl's *Revolting Rhymes* as a good example of telling a well-known story from another perspective.

Please encourage students to be aware of aware when changing ethnicity, gender or (dis)ability of the wider political and social context of the identity of the character.

### Outcome

Start to pull together an understanding of which stories are regularly told. Whose stories are missing and why? Is it important who you choose to tell your story?

## Seven Story Archetypes – extra learning

Have your students list all the ways we can communicate in one minute. Allow them to be silly and think outside of the box. Examples include talking, BSL, mime, texts etc. Students share the most interesting thing on their list with the group.

### Genres of storytelling

In small groups, ask your students to list all of the genres of storytelling they can think of, e.g. opera, Greek tragedy, murder mystery, political drama, social drama, etc.

They can then share the most interesting genre on their list with the group.

### Your day

5 minutes

In pairs, students must tell their partner the story of their day. Then, tell the story of their day from the perspective of an object they own, e.g. their shoe or mobile phone.

How does this change the story?

What does it add or take away?

Using the character of their object, they must tell the story again but in the style of one of the genres mentioned previously.

Take one minute to reflect with students on whether these exercises have influenced how they might write their plays.



## Who makes news, newsworthy?

15 minutes

This exercise will help students to explore who the central character in a story could be.

You will need a recent news story on either an individual or a community. Examples include:

### **Princess Latifa**

### **Christchurch Earthquake**

Each student takes a news article and rewrites it from the perspective of someone else in the story. If it is a story about an event, or a community, help your group consider the following:

- Who do you think is too ordinary to tell this story?
  - What could they do or say to surprise us? What does changing who is telling the story do to our understanding of the event(s)?
- Working in groups, your students can discuss their ideas.

Outcomes could include:

- Free-writing a narration
- A scene with two or more characters
- Outlining the first and last scene of a play told from the new character's perspective
- A storyboard with the beginning, middle and end mapped out.

Ask the group to share back their story ideas and how these compare to the original news article.

### **Extension:**

- How could you apply this to your play idea?
- Is there a character whose perspective could transform the idea?

## Who are they?

15 minutes

Give groups an image with multiple people to focus on.

Direct the groups to decide what the image is about.

What's happening?

Who are these people?

Each group chooses one person to 'become'. Your students should consider what secrets their character has. What do they think about other people in the group and the world around them (in the image)?

They can then individually use the following statements as prompts.

I see... I feel...

I touch...

I have a feeling that...

I'd never say this out loud but...

Share amongst the group. Notice areas of conflicts and different points of view.

### **Extension**

These could then form the basis of improvisations of a scene. The scenes could then be scripted.

## Taking it apart

30 minutes

Ideally for this activity, students will work in small groups, and use their own plays as examples, exploring one play per group.

However, if they are not at the stage to do so, we recommend picking a fairytale that we all know eg *Red Riding Hood*, *Cinderella*, *Goldilocks* etc. Each group would need a different fairytale.

Your students should then establish the beginning, middle and end of their story/play.

Each section needs a title in the form of a sentence. Write that title/sentence clearly at the top of each sheet of paper.

e.g. Red Riding Hood sets off from home; Red Riding Hood walks to Grandma's house; The Wolf is killed.

Students then add in as much detail about the events of this part of the story, either with drawing pictures or writing notes. Give them only five minutes to complete all three sections.

When completed stick the sheets to the wall.

Each group should look at another group's story breakdown and can make changes to their fellow writers' work:

- On one of the pieces of paper, they have to write a suggestion of how that section should be delivered. For example, in mime, dance, spoken word, monologue etc.
- On another, they write whose perspective they want to hear that section from.
- On the final sheet, or a new sheet, they can write what they think happens next.

A three-minute time limit works well here.

Groups should then move back to their original work.

- They now have to begin to write or act out their story using the suggestions from the other group.

Share back to the whole group

- What was discovered?
- How did the style inform the story?
- What was it like hearing from another character?

## Closing moments 5 – 10 minutes

Summary of the key teaching:

- What does choosing another perspective do to the story?
- Can someone who feels too ordinary surprise us?
- Consider how you tell a story through the form you use, and show this might influence the audience's understanding of it.

## Further thinking – ideas for students to try out in their own time

Consider a TV programme, play or podcast that you have watched, read or listened to recently.

- What would happen if the protagonist was swapped?
- Who is the not so obvious choice?
- Where does this start to take you in your thinking about the style in which this story can be told?

Write a scene in the world of the TV programme, podcast or play from another character's perspective.

## Further reading

The same story can be told from many different angles. Ask students to compare these approaches to storytelling and the effect they create.

*Constellations* by **Nick Payne**

*Desdemona: A Play About A Handkerchief* by **Paula Vogel**

*Spooky Action At a Distance* by **Eve Leigh**

*You For Me For You* by **Mia Chung**

# Session 7

Focus: how to piece it  
back together

# Session 7

## Focus: how to piece it back together

### Students' aims

Find answers to the following questions

- How do you put all your material together?
- What are the best ways to explore stagecraft and how your play will exist in a real space?
- What's the best way to tell your story?
- How can you maintain creativity and theatricality?
- How can you remain truthful to the world that you have created?
- How will the audience experience the world and the story?
- What's the form of your play?

### Resources needed (depending on which exercises you choose)

- Paper
- Pens
- Post it notes.

### Chosen texts

To access the extracts below, please click on the title of each play.

**The Father** by Florian Zeller translated by Christopher Hampton.

**The Tempest** by William Shakespeare.

### Start with your Opening Ritual

# Introductory exercises

## Freewriting: to create a world while thinking of the audience

10 minutes

Ask students to think of a place with a certain smell, or food with a certain taste. Now ask them to free write how that place or food makes you feel.

Ask students the following questions:

How do you describe the smell or taste – how could you explain it?

How could you present it on stage?

Do you need the real food?

Should the audience smell it?

Consider this in the context of a scene.

Where does this scene take place?

Where are the audience in the scene

– are they in the toilet cubicle or sitting at a table with your actors? Or are they observing from afar?

## How do we share the world with the audience?

10 minutes

Revisit your discussion about What is Specific to Writing for the Stage from Session 1 and how theatre engages our senses.

Ask each student to think about their idea for their play. It is not a problem if they've got a few different ones, but they need to focus on just one single idea right now.

How does the story they're telling translate into their play's stagecraft or theatricality?

Think about lights, sound, music, costumes, set and seating arrangements.

How do they use stage directions, actions and dialogue to convey their ideas of theatricality?

Read the first two scenes from ***The Father*** by Florian Zeller. Think about how the playwright, through stage directions, action and dialogue, shapes how the audience will experience the play.

How are they used to spark our imaginations?

## From beginning to end

Stagecraft is about the imagination

### Using music

10 minutes

Have your students create a tracklist that could tell the story of their play from beginning to end. What pieces of music do they use and why? Could these be used as part of their theatricality tool kit?

### Using costumes

10 minutes

Prompt your students to think about how they can use costumes to describe your character's journey from beginning to end of the play. They could plan it like a fashion show – a beginning look, a middle look and a final look. How do they show what the characters have experienced through what and how they wear their clothes?

### Using senses

10 minutes

Returning to the world-building work they've done, choose one of their scenes and make a list of what can be seen, felt, tasted, heard and smelled. How can this be expressed in their play and shared with the audience?

Have your students imagine that a scene is taking place at midnight in December. How would they convey this to the audience? What would they need to show the time, place, weather etc of your play? What stage directions are important to set the scene and atmosphere?

## In-depth explorations

### Stagecraft

30 minutes

Divide the class into three groups. Thinking of stagecraft, read the opening scene from ***The Tempest***. If you were to rewrite the stage directions, what would the theatrical solutions be for each of these venues. Give one option to each group.

- The National Theatre – using all equipment/resources in the Olivier (the NT's biggest theatre)
- An outdoor version with limited lighting
- Small-scale version with only four actors and no special effects (think performed in a living room)

What can be used and what is theatrically vital for the storytelling? How do you show the boat, tossed in a storm-wept sea?

#### References:

*Designing Emil and the Detectives*

*Treasure Island*

If you have access to the NT Collection you can also look at *Jane Eyre* or *Peter Pan* directed by Sally Cookson, or the adaptation of *Antigone* directed by Polly Findlay to see how the set can reflect the story.

## Once upon a time

**30 minutes**

Invite your students to create a child memory for one of their characters from before the age of eight years old. It does not have to be anything big or dramatic, but it is a memory that has stayed with them. Now they should write a scene about the memory using the five senses. Remembering the Brick by brick exercise in Session 4, remind them to think about the weather, the time of day, how the characters feel about the place.

How do these elements guide their theatre-making, storytelling or stagecraft choices?

Now have them write the memory

a) from another character's perspective

**or**

b) as it happened in the moment.

Because it is now either someone else's perspective or the memory as it happened, does this change their choices of stagecraft or their audience's experience?

Have them work in pairs and read each other's scenes. They can then ask each other questions such as, where were they transported to? What did it make them feel? What could they see, hear, smell, taste and feel?

Have they achieved what they wanted theatrically? Have the words of their partner enabled them to think differently about how to stage their piece?

## Closing moments 5 – 10 minutes

- Remembering stagecraft in your play
- Thinking of who the audience are
- Does your story work in the order that you have it?



## Further thinking – ideas for students to try out in their own time

A haiku is made up of three lines that do NOT rhyme.

Line one has five syllables.

Line two has seven syllables.

Line three has five syllables.

- a. The students should write a haiku about their day

For example:

*Cold sunny day spent  
Indoors eating choc-o-late  
Feeling full and sick.*

- b. Write a haiku about a scene from their play
- c. Write a haiku about the essence of that scene
- d. Write a haiku encapsulating the whole of their play
- e. Write a haiku about the theme of their play
- f. Write a haiku about what they want their audience to experience.

### Outcome

The students should really start to understand what their play is about. Suggest they write a haiku for each scene to give them the essence of that scene. How does each scene add to the overall feel of their play?

### Extension

Refer to Off the path exercise from Session 4. Thinking about their play now, could your students reorder the scenes to make them dramatically plausible? Why have they chosen to put their scenes in this order? Is this the best structure? Give them the following exercise.

1. Write a title for each scene on a piece of paper
2. Mix up the order
3. What does moving the scenes around do to their story? Does it open new pathways?
4. Try taking out the first scene completely. What happens?

## Further reading

Decisions about time, place and stagecraft are infinite. Students should examine how these writers' choices structure the audience experience.

*Barber Shop Chronicles* by **Inua Ellams**

*If We Were Older* by **Alice Schofield**  
(New Views Winning Play 2018)

*Rules for Living* by **Sam Holcroft**

*The Chairs* by **Eugène Ionesco**

## Extracts

*The Father* by Florian Zeller

*The Tempest* by William Shakespeare

# Session 8

## Getting to your first draft

# Session 8

## Getting to your first draft

### Students' aims

- Prepare to write a complete first draft
- Explore techniques needed to break through 'writer's block'
- Learn how to give supportive and constructive feedback.

### Resources needed (depending on which exercises you choose)

- Pens
- Paper
- A timer.

### Start with your Opening Ritual

#### Inspiration Stealing

10 minutes

Sometimes the greatest inspiration comes from seeing our own successes. So let's take stock of everything. Ask the group: *How far have you come? What's left to do?* Let's set those goalposts by having them make an inventory using the following prompts.

1. Compile a list of everything you've learned since the beginning of these sessions
2. Compile a list of everything you still need to know, or research  
Students can write these lists, or discuss them with a partner.  
Now, share with the rest of the class.

## Introduce The Subject and The Key Principles – including relevant definitions and terms

10 minutes

Each writer has made it through the previous sessions, they've experimented with playwriting skills and done short exercises. Maybe they've even started writing what will become the first draft of their play.

Whatever stage they're at, the most important thing is to *keep going*.

The biggest obstacle to completing a first draft is usually that doubting voice in our own head, questioning whether it is good enough or whether it makes sense. Remember that the first draft is just that, a draft. Your students do not need to get it right, they just need to get it written.

Deadlines can be really useful as they force a writer to just unload everything in their mind and onto a page.

Once a writer has got at least something on paper, then they'll be able to get reactions and encouragement from other people, in the form of feedback.

Each New Views participant will get feedback from their visiting writer, but your writing group should also support each other by offering:

- Compliments
- Questions
- Ways to go further.

## Writing Prompts and Introductory Exercises

### 1. Write the opening night you want to receive 10 minutes

Ask your students to close their eyes and imagine it is the opening night of their play in an actual theatre. The audience is buzzing. The actors are beyond excited. As the play begins, a silence falls. The audience and critics are fully engaged. What are they thinking? How do you want them to feel?

Ask your students to open their eyes and write a review of their play. Make it the review that they would love to receive – now is not the time to be humble. They should make sure to rave about all the things they're proud of.

### 2. What are the favourite moments in your play? 5 minutes

Using their review as a guide, students should think of one to three moments in the play that will be the most exciting or simply their favourite. They can use these later to create moments of dialogue, or whole scenes.

### 3. Your journey as a writer 5 minutes

Every writer goes on a journey. We start in one place and end up somewhere else. Sometimes we might feel shy, nervous or generally not very confident. Other times we feel like the best writer in the world.

*What's your journey been so far?*

Ask students to write about it like an adventure story. If they're stuck they can use their inventory to help.

Pictures, a series of Tweets, even get up and perform an interpretive dance if they want.

#### **4. Tell the story of your play in one minute in whichever form you like** **5 minutes**

They should turn the focus back to the play idea. What is the story you are telling? Can you tell it one minute writers should use whichever form they'd like.

## **In-depth explorations**

**30 minutes per individual exercise, or two combined.  
Please provide your students with three options,  
with extensions for one or two exercises**

### **Write the worst version**

**20 minutes**

We are often held back by thinking that our ideas are not good enough, that they are all clichés or would never work on stage. Writers should not let those thoughts be blocks, just go with them. What's the worst that could happen?

Start off by guiding the group with a few quick-thought shower lists (45 seconds each – students should aim to come up with at least eight to ten things for each list):

- Things I would never include in my play
- Things I could never get away with
- Terrible ways to end my script.

Writers can share these brainstorm with a partner. Are these ideas so bad? Might some of them actually work? If these do not work, have they actually thought of something else that might fit?

After discussion, set a timer for 10–15 minutes and have everyone write out the worst version of their play. They should let it all out, turn the dial up to ten, indulge themselves and make it really bad.

Discuss afterwards. Maybe they will actually use some of it. Or at least they'll know what not to include.

## Visualise and unload

20 minutes

Sometimes the best thing a writer can do to finish a draft is just sit down, set a timer and write some scenes without stopping. If anyone in your group has a vague outline of scenes but hasn't written all of them, try a technique like this. (Maybe they can choose some of their favourite unwritten moments from the introductory exercises above.)

They should pick one scene or section that they want to work on. Decide a few key things up front:

- Who's in the scene?
- Where are they? When are they?
- What do they want?
- What's getting in the way?
- What might change by the end?

If you want, put on some appropriate music to get them into the mood.

Before writing, they should close their eyes and visualise the scene happening on stage.

What will the audience see?

How are the characters moving and interacting? What are the dynamic shifts and changes? What's the final image?

Now set a timer for five or ten minutes. Students must grab a pen or keyboard and just WRITE IT. Do not stop, do not think and do not go back to correct things. They can use the visualisation as inspiration but should feel free to go in whatever direction feels natural. If they run out of dialogue, move to stage directions. Just get all the way through the scene.

Writers can try this again for all the missing scenes in their outline. They can also share these unloaded drafts with the group for feedback and see what others think.

## Group feedback

30 minutes

Your writing group has been on this journey together. You can all make a pledge to share work and offer encouraging, constructive feedback with one another.

You could do it together or in small groups, but best practice is as follows.

- Read the script out loud (so the writer can hear it)
- Writers should not offer too much explanation or justification – just try to listen.

The writer did the heavy lifting when they wrote the scene, now it is up to the group to listen carefully and offer reactions that are specific, helpful and actionable.

Try following this format and these prompts:

- Compliments: 'I really liked the moment where...'; 'I really liked the way that...'
- Questions: 'I wanted to know more about...'; 'I wasn't sure why...'
- Ways to Go Further: 'I wonder what would happen if...'
- 'Have you thought about trying...'

Remember the goal of feedback is not to rewrite someone else's work but to help them make the best possible version of what the play is trying to be. The group should ask themselves what the writer is trying to do. What's working well so far? How can we encourage them to make it even better?

And remind the writers that when receiving feedback, they do not need to make any immediate decisions. Make note of the feedback and sit with it. If they need to, they can always use this line in response:

*'That's interesting, I'll have to think about that.'*

## Recap

10 minutes

### 1. There is no right or wrong way to make a play

*You can please some of the people all of the time, you can please all of the people some of the time, but you can't please all of the people all of the time.*

#### John Lydgate

Remind students to stop worrying if they are writing it *right* and just write. If they are stuck, encourage them to do some free-writing or a creative activity. The important thing is to keep writing.

### 2. How to give useful feedback

- Always start with what you liked about the piece. What got you excited? Intrigued? What made you laugh or feel emotional?
- Ask questions that will help the writer think about their piece in a different way, keep them open-ended, let them choose
- Challenge the writer by suggesting ways they could take an idea further, or develop a character further, etc. Remember these are options.

## Further thinking – ideas for students to try out in their own time

Collaboration is key. Some people work best when they're able to talk about their ideas with others. Some people like to sit and write with other people at the same time, just so they feel like they're not alone.

- Could students support each other by creating a schedule of writing to make sure that they commit to finishing their play?
- What might a creative check-in look like for them, or their peers?

To really commit to working together, why not make a writing manifesto to outline how the group will help each other get to the end of their plays?

Ask your class the following:

- Will you check in regularly? In person or online?
- Will you start a weekly writers' group?
- Consider your journey as a group of writers. What do you need most?

As with the Creativity Contract from the start of the course, lay out your principles for encouraging each other, holding each other to account and giving feedback.

*I don't sit around waiting for passion to strike me. I keep working steadily, because I believe it is our privilege as humans to keep making things. Most of all, I keep working because I trust that creativity is always trying to find me, even when I have lost sight of it.*

– Elizabeth Gilbert

Using the quotation above, ask your students to imagine ways they will keep their passion alive as a group. How will they support each other?

## Final task – between now and next time

Your students should write at least one page demonstrating the principles highlighted in this session (do not use the word homework). Then write their play.

## Maximum word count

Please note that plays submitted to the New Views Team must not exceed the **maximum word count of 5000 words**. This rule applies for both first draft and final draft submissions.

## Further reading

These inventive plays share a passion to tell stories through any available approach. Let their freedom inspire your students.

*An Oak Tree* by **Tim Crouch**

*Misty* by **Arinzé Kene**

*Muhammad Ali and Me* by **Mojisola Adebayo**

*Top Girls* by **Caryl Churchill**



# Additional Resources

As you and your students explore playwriting through New Views, you may want to encourage them to explore playwriting in lots of different ways. We've included a list of other resources available which we hope will be useful to you and your students.

## Digital Resources

### National Theatre: Playwriting

A range of videos exploring playwriting, including interviews with Simon Stephens, Katori Hall and In-Sook Chappell.

### Playwrights in Lockdown: Dennis Kelly

Dan Rebellato, playwright and academic, spent the 2020 lockdown interviewing playwrights about their practice. Interviewees include Roy Williams, Dennis Kelly and Lucy Prebble. Each episode runs for about 1 hour 20 minutes.

### Simon Stephen's Royal Court Playwright's podcast

A range of podcasts featuring playwrights such as Tanika Gupta and Nick Payne, in which they discuss their work, their lives and their relationship with the Royal Court.

## Competitions and Events

### The Bruntwood Prize

The Bruntwood Prize for Playwriting is the UK's biggest national competition for playwriting. It is the search for great new plays and great writers. We look for scripts that are original and unperformed, by writers of any experience. Their webpage includes a calendar of events and competitions coming up.

## Theatres and Companies

### Playwright's Studio Scotland

Playwright's Studio Scotland offers resources and workshops.

### The Mono Box

The Mono Box offers a range of workshops and events.

### National Theatre Archive

The NT Archive is full of recordings, scripts, programmes, costume designs and more for every production in the NT's history. The NT Archive is free to visit in groups or individually.

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# Thank You

Thank you for choosing to run New Views in your school. We value your dedication to the programme and the way in which you have guided and supported your students on their creative journey. We hope you have enjoyed delivering the weekly sessions and have felt supported by the resources and CPD provided. Perhaps you might return to the resources, adapting approaches to fit your own classroom. Regardless, the skills you learnt and have now mastered are invaluable, just like you.

We hope your students have enjoyed the New Views experience – from teacher-led sessions to meeting and working alongside their professional playwright. We understand the importance of providing students with a safe space to explore, create and write. With your hard work and commitment to the programme, you have provided this within your school. Congratulations.

We would love to hear your thoughts and ideas about the New Views programme and the resources we provide. If you would like to share your feedback with us, please email: **[newviews@nationaltheatre.org.uk](mailto:newviews@nationaltheatre.org.uk)**.

We wish your students the best of luck and we are sure they will produce fantastic work. We look forward to welcoming you and your students to the New Views Festival, a celebration of young people's writing.

Best wishes,

The New Views Team