

Creative Writing—How to create a play

Do you like writing? Do you like making things up on the spot? These amazing skills can help you write your own play. And then you might like to perform it/record it or even have a play reading.



You can write a play by writing a script for performance—either as a visual performance or radio play.

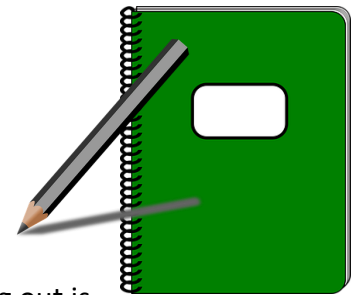
You can write a play by improvising/making up scenes and scenarios around a basic idea or theme. The good thing about improvising is that you make it up on the spot. You can keep replaying the improvisation until you are happy with it. Then you have an idea about what to say without writing out a script and learning lines.

You can write a play that is a sketch show—it can have short segments of comedy, music, dance or use puppets.

You can write a play just because you want to write and not perform it.

All of these are possible—just decide which one you would like to do.

Write a script



There are many ways to write a script. So the best idea when you are starting out is to keep it simple.

You can take a story you already know—a favourite fairy tale, movie or book and do what is called adapting. You use the existing story and characters and adapt it for performance.

Did you know the Storey Treehouse Books with Andy and Terry, have been adapted for the stage?

Or you can write/come up with your own idea.

Decide on a location—Where will your story be set. In Australia, in another country, in a fantasy land, in outer space, inside a mountain. There are lots of possibilities.



Decide on a time— Will the play be set in 2020, or sometime in the past, or sometime in the future? Will it be set in a made up time that has nothing to do with our reality?

Decide on a basic story— Your play needs a beginning, middle and ending. Something needs to happen which sends your character(s) on a journey with an event/problem that needs resolving/ mystery that needs solving before the story ends. How will it end, happily or unhappily?

Decide on your characters— if you are new to play writing keep the number of characters down to a few to help you as you learn the structure. It's harder to write for 50 characters—so maybe three might be easier.

Decide on how long it will take to tell your story—Segments of a play are divided into Acts. Act 1 could be the entire length of your story, or you might need two acts with an interval in between (time for the audience to get up, stretch and have refreshments). Or your play might go on for many hours. If you are a first time writer, keep it short until you feel more confident.



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So what does a script look like?

A written script can look like this:

Hero: Oh no, someone has stolen my horse. I must find who did this. [LOOKS AROUND FOR CLUES]

Villain: [EVIL LAUGH] Ha, ha, ha, your horse is now mine. You will be forever doomed [SHOUTING WHILE RIDING AWAY]

Hero: [CALLS] Fear not Dobbin, my trusty steed. I will rescue you! [POSES HEROICALLY]

Or:

Scene idea for improvising.

A hero goes on a quest to rescue its horse after it is stolen by a villain. How is the problem resolved?

Or:

Intro: Welcome to the show

Sketch 1: Song Cowboy on a horse

Sketch 2: Humorous scene involving hero/ villain and dancing horse

Sketch 3: Horse tap dance sequence

After you have written your script you can perform it with family, or with friends (Skype or Facetime) or perform as a radio play, perform all the parts yourself.

If you want more information in script writing:

Research “playwriting for kids” online.

