



**EDUCATIONAL OUTREACH**

Kate Laissle (315) 442 - 7755

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**The 2024  
YOUNG PLAYWRIGHTS FESTIVAL**

**OFFICIAL  
ENTRY PACKET**

**Includes:**

- General Information
- Frequently Asked Questions
- Guide to Style
- Suggested Reading List



## YOUNG PLAYWRIGHTS FESTIVAL 2024

# GENERAL INFORMATION

### ABOUT THE YOUNG PLAYWRIGHTS FESTIVAL

The Young Playwrights Festival (YPF) is an annual writing competition for Central New York high school students. YPF is made possible through the joint efforts of Syracuse Stage and The Syracuse University Dept. of Drama.

### SUBMISSION CATEGORIES

Students may enter within one of the following categories:

#### *Traditional 10-Minute Play*

Characters speaking in dialogue within some set of given circumstances. **Ten minute plays should be around ten pages long with a maximum of four characters.**

#### *Non-traditional Performance Writing*

Possibilities include: monologues, performance-based storytelling, documentary drama based on interviews, performative texts, or slam poetry.

### REQUIREMENTS

**All submissions must be 10 pages or less (no smaller than 10 point font).**

**Submissions longer than 10 pages or with more than four characters will be disqualified.**

### JUDGING AND AWARDS

Plays are read and evaluated by a panel of theatrical and literary professionals. All students will receive a free t-shirt and an invitation to attend the evening Festival at Syracuse Stage.

Semi-finalists are invited to a professional writing workshop where they will hear their plays read by actors and critiqued by members of our panel. Semi-finalists will then have the chance to revise their play before the next round of judging.

Finalists see their plays performed at Syracuse Stage at the evening Festival and will be recognized.

### HOW TO ENTER

To enter the festival, **submit you plays via the link below** to submit forms online.

<https://tinyurl.com/StageYPF24>

**ENTRY DEADLINE: Submitted online by February 13, 2024**



## YOUNG PLAYWRIGHTS FESTIVAL

# FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

### **What do the judges look for?**

There are no universal standards for what makes a good play, but prizewinners tend to have some characteristics in common. These are considered the core principles of drama:

1. An interesting protagonist who wants something;
  2. The protagonist stands to lose something if they fails, or to gain something if they succeed;
  3. The protagonist faces obstacles as they works to get what they want;
  4. The dialogue reflects unique characters while revealing the playwright's 'voice.'
- In line with these characteristics, judges look for pieces that avoid the use of a narrator, instead focusing on pieces that are character driven.

For non-traditional "Performance Writing," the judges will expect the submission to be more than just a poem or a short story – it must be "performance-based." However you interpret this, it is important that your submission be able to capture the imagination of a live audience.

### **Can I submit more than one play?**

Yes, so long as submit a separate online entry for each play.

### **Can two or more people write as a team?**

You are welcome to write as a team, so long as:

1. Each member of the team is a current high school student;
2. Separate entry forms are submitted for *each* member of the team;

### **My play is more than 10 pages, but not much... will it be disqualified?**

Any piece over 10 pages long (font size no smaller than 10 point) will be disqualified. Unfortunately, due to the number of submissions and the length of the final performance, we must limit length.

### **My play has five characters, but only character only says one line...will it be disqualified?**

Any piece with over four characters, no matter the size of the fifth role, will be disqualified.

### **Can my teacher or parent(s) help me?**

You are certainly allowed to seek feedback from adults, but the play must be your own work. This means that the character development, plot/story, and dialogue must be yours alone.

### **How will I know the status of my play?**

You will be notified either by email or phone as to the status of your play. Please make sure you have entered your home address, email, and phone number on your online submission. In the early rounds of judging, depending on the number of applicants, we may contact you via your teacher.



## YOUNG PLAYWRIGHTS FESTIVAL 2024

# GUIDE TO STYLE

Writers want to convey their plays clearly and concisely to each reader (actor, director, literary manager, and in this case, judges). Standardizing our typing format will allow the reader's eye to flow from character to character easily. This format also helps the reader judge the time it will take to perform the play. Using this format, each page lasts approximately one to one and a half minutes.

One last reason to learn proper formatting: the world is full of scripts. Theatres, publishers and agents receive countless submissions every day – far too many to read. Improperly formatted scripts look amateurish, and often end up in the recycling bin. If you are considering a career in writing, get into the habit of formatting your plays in this style.

1. Use a size 12 font (No smaller than size 10). Times New Roman, Courier, and Helvetica are the most common.
2. Names of characters should be capitalized and centered above their lines.
3. Dialogue should be justified along the left margin (not centered).
4. Stage directions should be placed in parentheses on a separate line and indented at least one tab from the left margin. You may italicize stage directions if you like.
5. There should be a double space between each character's lines.

EXAMPLE:

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                                NANCY
Did I tell you that I saw John last night? Well I did,
and it was... Well...
    (NANCY pulls out a gun from her bag.)
I thought I'd better protect myself.

                                LUCY
Nancy, a gun is serious business!

                                NANCY
Don't you think I know it? And he had that Susan woman
with him.

    (LUCY turns her back on NANCY and stifles a smile.)

                                LUCY
You mean that redhead he brought with him to Joseph's?

                                NANCY
Yeah, that same one.
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This page adapted from the Kennedy Center American College Theatre Festival  
<<http://www.kcactf5.org/NPP/WritingFormat.htm>>



## YOUNG PLAYWRIGHTS FESTIVAL 2024 SUGGESTED READING

### ***Playwriting Brief & Brilliant- Julie Jensen***

An excellent primer on playwriting. The whole book is only 80 pages long, yet the end of each chapter has a ‘checklist’ that Jensen believes every playwright should consider. For example, Jensen’s checklist on dialogue states:

- Dialogue is action
- Exposition should be disguised
- Characters should sound different from one another
- Characters should want something
- Dialogue should be lean
- Sometimes dialogue is not spoken

### ***A More Perfect 10 – Gary Garrison***

Designed for aspiring playwrights, *A More Perfect 10* gives advice on the specific challenges of and tricks to writing a ten-minute play. Garrison focuses on the practical aspects of ten-minute plays, such as production requirements and getting your play produced at a professional company. Also included are examples of 10-minute plays.

### ***Take Ten: New 10-Minute Plays –Edited by Eric Lane and Nina Shengold***

An anthology of thirty-two 10-minute plays by multiple award-winning authors, including Tony Kushner, Christopher Durang, and David Mamet.