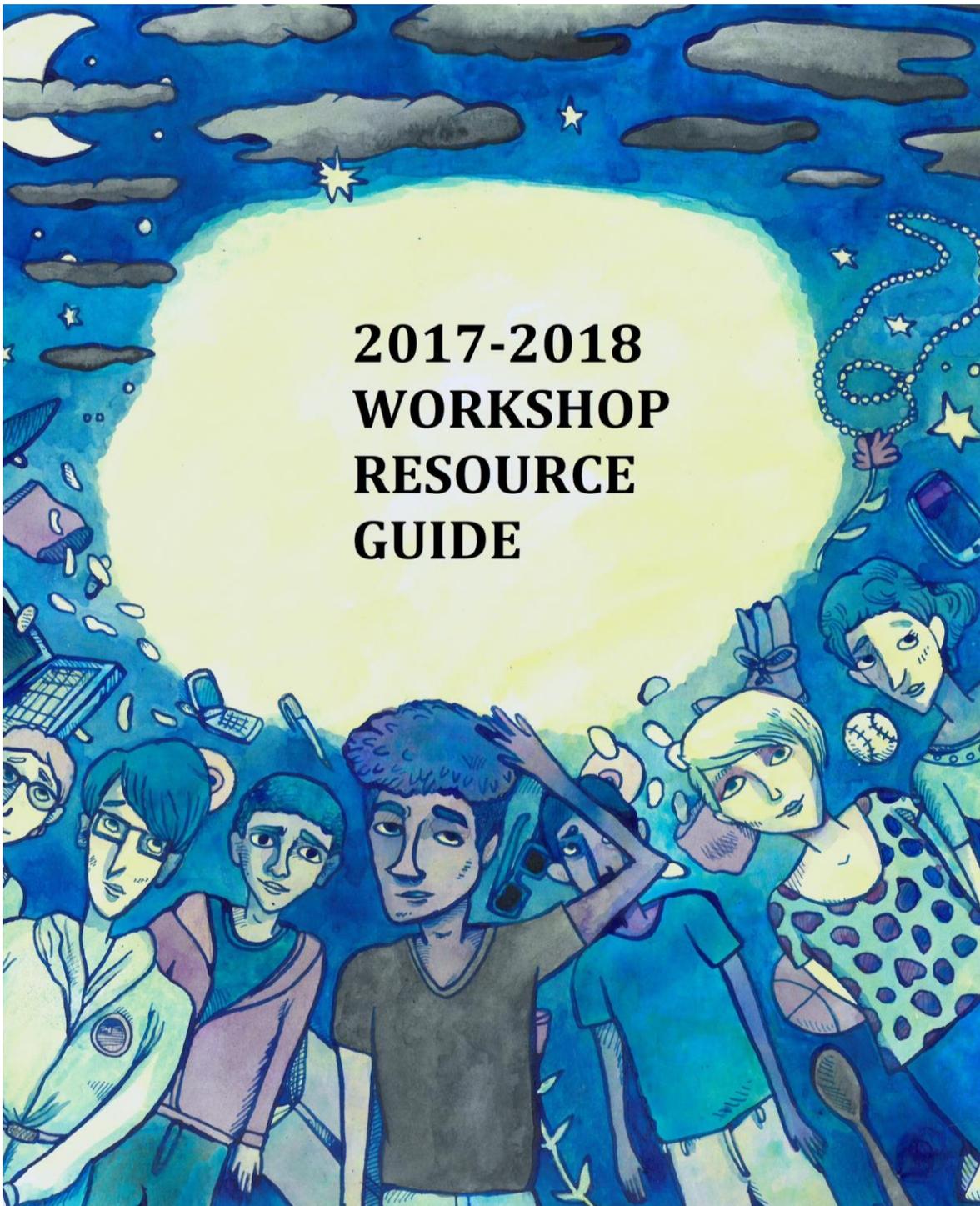


The Marilyn Bianchi Kids' Playwriting Festival



2017-2018 WORKSHOP RESOURCE GUIDE

CELEBRATING 40 YEARS!

Dear Reader,

Thank you for your interest in The Marilyn Bianchi Kids' Playwriting Festival (MBKPF)! Since 1979, the Festival has been an integral part of Dobama Theatre's mission to provide educational outreach programming. Our goal is to provide a platform for young people to express their thoughts, dreams, and creativity through the writing of original plays. This guide will provide an outline of the Festival and our Playwriting Workshops so that you have everything you need to get started! If you have any questions please contact me at youngplaywrights@dobama.org.

Sincerely,
Carrie Williams
Education Associate
Dobama Theatre



RESOURCE GUIDE OUTLINE

- 1.) What is the Festival?
- 2.) Residencies Offered by Dobama
- 3.) Lesson Outlines
- 4.) Dates, Deadlines, and Frequently Asked Questions
- 5.) Teacher Resources

SECTION 1:

THE MARILYN BIANCHI KIDS' PLAYWRITING FESTIVAL

WHAT IS IT?

Now entering its 40th year, the MBKPF is the oldest children's playwriting festival in the United States and the only event of its kind in Northeast Ohio. Hundreds of plays are submitted by students of all ages every year. Here's how it works...

- Any Northeast Ohio student in grades 1-12 is eligible to write and submit a play, whether home-schooled or attending a public, private or charter school
- Every play is read and scored by at least three judges, all of whom have experience in some form of theatre, education, and/or writing
- Between 10-12 high scoring plays are selected for production on Dobama's stage for the Festival performances in June

MORE ABOUT MARILYN...

Marilyn Bianchi was an actress, teacher, director, and co-founder of Dobama Theatre. She died of cancer in 1977, but infused all of her work with a vibrant statement of life. During her last five years she did the work she loved most: helping Cleveland children discover their own voice, self-worth, and creativity through the theater. In 1979, Marilyn's family and friends established this Festival in her name to continue introducing kids to the joys and rewards of live theater and to celebrate the creativity of young writers.



SECTION 2:

PLAYWRITING WORKSHOPS

Dobama Theatre is currently offering 3 types of playwriting workshops. All of our residencies are lead by local theatre professionals with experience in playwriting. Our goal is to provide a new form of creative expression to as many Northeast Ohio students as possible while supporting your school's language arts curriculum in a unique way. Each of the residencies are available to any school or community center in Northeast Ohio. We will bring the workshop to you!

→ For more detailed lesson plan outlines, see Section 3 (page 6)

→ For core curriculum application and teacher resources, see Section 5 (page 11)

RESIDENCY 1 - INTRODUCTION TO PLAYWRITING

- A one-day, 60-90 minute in-class introduction to writing for the stage, fully adapted for different grade levels.
- Cost: \$200
- BEST FIT: This residency is appropriate for students who have limited experience with theater or playmaking. We will explore the difference between writing a play and writing a narrative story, how to turn a story into a performance, and provide a basic understanding of the creative writing process as well as a jumping-off point for new writers.

RESIDENCY 2 - 3 DAY PLAYWRITING INTENSIVE

- For 3 days, 60 minutes a day, we will provide in-class perspective on the mechanics of new play development, starting with the basics of plot, conflict, character development, resolution, etc, with the goal of students creating and sharing a first draft of a short play at the session's conclusion.
- Cost: \$600
- BEST FIT: This residency is ideal for those looking for a more detailed approach to play creation and seeking hands-on practice and coaching from our teaching artists.

RESIDENCY 3 - 4 WEEK PLAYWRITING EXPLORATION

- One day per week, 60-90 minutes, for 4 weeks, we will delve deeper into the mechanics and details of playwriting listed above, but spread out over weeks to allow students more time to expand their writing between sessions.
- Cost: \$800
- BEST FIT: This residency is most appropriate to support and expand upon your classroom/group's established creative writing curriculum with a playwriting focus. Students will be expected to work outside of the sessions and bring updates, respond to and provide constructive feedback, and each create a short play by the final week.

Further details on these lesson plans can be found in the next section. All of our residencies are fully adaptable to your students' grade level, class size, and your school/program schedule. We are happy to work with you to customize a residency to suit your unique needs! For more details, questions, or to schedule workshops, email us at youngplaywrights@dobama.org.



SECTION 3:

OUTLINES FOR LESSON PLANS

INTRODUCTION TO PLAYWRITING (1 workshop)

Objectives: Participants will understand the difference between a play and a narrative, recognize the elements of play, and be ready to begin the writing process.

1. Introduction of teaching artist(s) and objectives
2. Group Game - Time allowing, teaching artist(s) will choose a brief ice-breaker activity to get participants on their feet and their imaginations engaged. Examples: Pass the Prop, Hey/Whoa, What Are You Doing?, etc.
3. Narrative v. Play
 - a. Artists will tell a simple story; students are encouraged to listen carefully and gather as much information as possible (Who are the characters? What happens first/next/last? How does the conflict resolve?)
 - b. A volunteer retells the story, perhaps with a few others silently acting out the major plot points or help from the class
 - c. More volunteers act out the whole story using voice (dialogue) and movement (action) rather than narration to communicate all important points from the story
 - d. Discussion: How did the story feel different each time it was presented? What makes a performance interesting to watch? What is the difference between narration, dialogue, and action?
4. Elements of a Play - Students explore the important components of a play (Characters, Setting, Beginning, Middle, Climax, Resolution, Climax, Action - elements can be expanded or simplified based on grade level)
5. Group Inspiration - Teaching artist(s) take group suggestions for a place (setting), a character, and a problem that the character has to solve (conflict), and together with the class creates an outline of possible ways these could work in a play. Students then each write down their own setting, character, and conflict to start writing their own plays with.

PLAYWRITING INTENSIVE (3 days of workshops)

Objectives: Over the course of the week participants will understand the difference between a play and a narrative, recognize the elements of play, gain experience creating character and identifying conflicts, and will have begun the playwriting process.

DAY 1 - WHAT IS PLAYWRITING?

1. Introduction of teaching artist(s) and objectives
2. Group Game - Time allowing, teaching artist(s) will choose a brief ice-breaker activity to get participants on their feet and their imaginations engaged.

3. Narrative v. Play
 - a. Artists will tell a simple story; students are encouraged to listen carefully and gather as much information as possible (Who are the characters? What happens first/next/last? How does the conflict resolve?)
 - b. A volunteer retells the story, perhaps with a few others silently acting out the major plot points or help from the class
 - c. More volunteers act out the whole story using voice (dialogue) and movement (action) rather than narration to communicate all important points from the story
 - d. Discussion: How did the story feel different each time it was presented? What makes a performance interesting to watch? What is the difference between narration, dialogue, and action?
4. Elements of a Play - Students explore the important components of a play (Characters, Setting, Beginning, Middle, Climax, Resolution, Climax, Action - elements can be expanded or simplified based on grade level)
5. Closing - Brief group reflection upon the day's activities

DAY 2 - GET INSPIRED!

1. Teaching artist(s) lead the class in a Character Walk to awaken the imagination; students move around the room while the teaching artist introduces changes and adjustments to indicate different moods or physicalizations ("Now move as slowly as you can. Why might someone walk like this? Now try leading with your forehead. How does this change your mood, your awareness?") Discuss the group's observations afterwards.
2. Mystery Box - A volunteer will close their eyes and pull an object from the box, and will describe for the class (size, shape, texture, etc) while the adjectives used are listed. Another volunteer does the same with a different object. Teaching artist(s) then ask participants to describe potential characters using the words inspired by the objects.
3. Group Inspiration - Teaching artist(s) take group suggestions for a place (setting), a character, and a problem that the character has to solve (conflict), and together with the class creates an outline of possible ways these could work in a play. Students then each write down their own setting, character, and conflict, and write a 10 second play including these elements
4. Closing - We'll share and comment on as many of the 10 second plays as possible, students giving each other potential ways to expand the plays to include more story elements.

DAY 3 - WHAT'S NEXT?

1. Discussion - What is conflict? Why do obstacles make for compelling drama? What does your character need to solve their conflict/overcome the obstacle? Does the resolution have to be positive? Etc.
2. Free Write - Teaching artist(s) provide a prompt and participants must write for the allotted amount of time with no censoring, no edits, no judgement. Just keep the pencil moving and respond to the prompt.
3. Finished Product - Students will read 2 or 3 examples of MBKPF winning plays from past years, then discuss differences in tone, style, and format while identifying all the story elements.
4. Closing - Students will be tasked with expanding their 10 second plays into 5-10 minute plays, utilizing what conflicts, characterizations, or other elements inspired them from the workshop sessions.

4 WEEK PLAYWRITING EXPLORATION (4 workshops over 4 weeks)

Objectives: Over the course of the residency participants will understand the difference between a play and a narrative, recognize the elements of play, gain experience creating character and identifying conflicts, work one-on-one with the teaching artist(s), and will have completed a first or second draft of a short play for submission to the Festival.

WEEK 1

1. Introduction of teaching artist(s) and objectives
2. Group Game - Time allowing, teaching artist(s) will choose a brief ice-breaker activity to get participants on their feet and their imaginations engaged.
3. Elements of a Play - Students explore the important components of a play (Characters, Setting, Beginning, Middle, Climax, Resolution, Climax, Action - elements can be expanded or simplified based on grade level)
4. Teaching artist(s) take group suggestions for a place (setting), a character, and a problem that the character has to solve (conflict), and together with the class creates an outline of possible ways these could work in a play. Teaching artist(s) will lead student volunteers in a 10 second performance of the resulting scene.
5. Closing - Students each write down their own setting, character, and conflict, and are tasked with writing a 10 second play incorporating those elements for next time.

WEEK 2

1. Teaching artist(s) lead the class in a Character Walk to awaken the imagination; students move around the room while the teaching artist introduces changes and adjustments to indicate different moods or physicalizations (“Now move as slowly as you can. Why might someone walk like this? Now try leading with your forehead. How does this change your mood, your awareness?”) Discuss the group’s observations afterwards.

2. Discussion - What is constructive feedback? How can criticism be helpful? Harmful? Teaching artist(s) share tools and tactics for giving and receiving feedback that is helpful for writers.
3. Students get into groups to share their 10 second plays. Time allowing, we'll share some with the whole class. Participants will provide each other with feedback, encouragement, and ideas on how to expand their ideas to 10 minute plays
4. Closing - Students are tasked with starting the first draft of their (up to)10 minute play

WEEK 3

1. Mystery Box - A volunteer will close their eyes and pull an object from the box, and will describe for the class (size, shape, texture, etc) while the adjectives used are listed. Another volunteer does the same with a different object. Teaching artist(s) then ask participants to describe potential characters using the words inspired by the objects.
2. Discussion - What challenges did you encounter while writing your first draft? What is your favorite part of the story you're telling? What can you try to make your play more compelling/honest/funny/serious/visually interesting?
3. Teaching Artists work with students in groups to facilitate addressing the questions above. The rest of the class is devoted to writing, edits, and providing assistance and feedback.
4. Closing - Students are tasked with finishing/updating a draft of their 10 minute play

WEEK 4

1. Time allowing, teaching artist(s) will choose a game or activity to get participants on their feet and their imaginations engaged.
2. Formatting a Play - Students will be given examples of correctly formatted plays and submission forms. Teaching artist(s) will discuss with the group how to fill out the form and submit a play to the Festival, making sure students and teachers all have the materials and instructions necessary to submit their plays when ready.
3. The remainder of the class will be spent sharing the completed drafts of the student's plays with the guidance and feedback of the teaching artist(s). Time allowing we may try to perform sections of their plays as a group.

SECTION 4:

FAQs and DATES

Workshops and Residencies are available from late October, 2017 until February 16, 2018.

Play submissions are due on March 2, 2018. Winners will be announced on April 2, 2018.

The 40th Annual Marilyn Bianchi Kids' Playwriting Festival performances will take place June 1-3, 2018.

- The MBKPF is open to students in grades 1-12, whether home-schooled or attending a public, private or charter school.
- Plays must be the original work of the student who is submitting it. No collaborations, adaptations, or copying situations or characters from movies, TV, books, video games or other plays.
- Submitted plays should be no longer than 10 minutes when read aloud.
- The play may be any category: comedy, drama, mystery, fantasy – wherever your imagination leads you.
- Reader judges award points on the basis of imagination and human values as much as playwriting skills. The age and grade of the playwright will be taken into consideration by the judges.
- Plays in Word Document form can be emailed to youngplaywrights@dobama.org. While we strongly encourage typed, electronic submissions, hard copies of plays may be mailed to The Marilyn Bianchi Kids Playwriting Festival, Dobama Theatre, 2340 Lee Rd, Cleveland Heights, OH 44118

SECTION 5: TEACHER RESOURCES

HOW CAN THESE WORKSHOPS SERVE MY CLASSROOM?

Playwriting is a fun and creative way to approach teaching elements of English that are already within the requirements for Ohio State Standards. As you know, learning in an interactive environment is often central to successful retention. Students will develop an ability to write expressively, learn about editing and revising, work on language structure, expand vocabulary, and use these new tools to express their thoughts and views about the world around them. Below are a few highlights of the ways in which Playwriting addresses the English Common Core:

- Students explore essential narrative elements - Setting, Plot, Character, Resolution, etc
- Students delve into the concepts of Central Idea and Theme
- Students analyze how and why characters, events, and ideas develop throughout the course of a story
- Students develop literacy skills
- Students gain an understanding of story structure
- Students explore point of view, as they are the creators of the world of their play and the characters within it
- Students refine critical thinking skills

TIPS FOR GETTING STARTED

There are endless ways to inspire creativity! Below are a few exercises to help get started.

- Free Writing Prompts: Allowing students to write following a stream of thought style is a great way to allow the imagination to thrive. It is important that the focus during a free write is on letting whatever comes to mind find the paper.
 - ◆ Spelling is not important here.
 - ◆ Helpful side coaching might include “Keep your pencil moving at all times.” “Try not to judge your writing.” “There are no wrong answers in a free write. Just keep writing.”
 - ◆ Give a time limit to each prompt.

→ Examples of Writing Prompts

- ◆ You come home and discover that one of your parents/guardians has a new job...on Mars.
- ◆ You wake up and discover you have a brand new superpower.
- ◆ You're walking through the forest and you find a hidden cave with something unexpected inside.
- ◆ Your best friend suddenly turns into a turtle. What do you do?
- ◆ What is the kindest thing that someone has ever done for you/you've done for someone else?
- ◆ What do you wish you could do to make the world a better place?

WHAT'S NEXT?

To book a workshop, email youngplaywrights@dobama.org, or call 216-932-3396 and ask for Carrie.

For further information on the Festival, or to download formatting examples, more Entry Forms, or our 2017-18 Teacher/Parent Guide, visit <http://www.dobama.org/marilyn-bianchi-kids-playwriting-festival/> .