

DISTANCE LEARNING: PLAYWRITING

PICTURE PROMPT

1. Answer the following questions
 - a. Where is this?
 - b. Whose car is it?
 - c. What was in the trunk?
 - d. What happened five minutes ago?
2. Write a half page monologue from the owner of the car.
3. Write a half page monologue from someone who found the car in this condition.



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PICTURE PROMPT

1. Answer the following questions
 - a. Where is this?
 - b. Whose car is it?
 - c. Why are there tires here? Who put them here?
 - d. What happened five minutes ago?
2. Write a half page monologue from the person who put the tires down.
3. Write a half page monologue from the owner of the car.



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FIRST LINE PROMPTS

1. You're dropping out of college?
2. We need to talk.
3. Your shoelace is untied.
4. You're buying cauliflower?
5. What do you mean he wants you to get a nose job?
6. She tore up the flowers.
7. Hello... Tom...
8. Did you eat dinner?
9. You're not thinking straight.
10. Do you have to eat so slowly?
11. I am not walking another step.
12. Oh yeah, I golf every day.
13. These Twinkies are expired.
14. I don't do red.
15. What are you doing here?
16. Do you want sprinkles on that, everyone loves sprinkles.
17. Can I talk to you about something?
18. If you don't cheat you're going to fail.
19. There's no nachos, he specifically said nachos.
20. It's not my fault.
21. Your shoes match your car.
22. I have no service here.
23. Don't you ever get tired of sand?
24. I'm telling you zombies are scientifically possible.
25. She's cut out dairy.
26. No, no, no you are not quitting.
27. Well this is awkward.
28. I don't get it.



29. Please come back, everyone's waiting.
30. Where's your hand sanitizer?
31. How much did you pay for it?
32. Keep your hands where I can see them and no sudden moves, please.
33. Ok, what if we tell him he's adopted?
34. Your forehead is really large.
35. So, you're not talking to me now?
36. My therapist is making me do this.
37. I can't go out there.
38. Hi, remember me?
39. Well I see you haven't been practicing.

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DIALOGUE PROMPTS

Characters/Location: A mother and son in the kitchen

Want: I want to go/I want to stay

Characters/Location: A boyfriend and girlfriend at a restaurant

Want: I want to propose/I want to break up

Characters/Location: Two best friends in the library

Want: I want to win/I want to be liked

Characters/Location: Two best friends at the gym

Want: I want to impress/I want to convince

Characters/Location: Two grandmothers at the front window

Want: I want revenge/I want to get back to my knitting

Characters/Location: A father and son at the park

Want: I want to impress/I want to watch TV

Characters/Location: A teenager and her sister at the bus station

Want: I want to change her mind/I secretly want to stay

Characters/Location: A husband and wife at the dinner table

Want: I want her to change/I want him to change

Characters/Location: A girlfriend and her boyfriend at the mall

Want: I want that dress/I want to talk about something meaningful

Characters/Location: A ghost and a scientist in his basement

Want: I want peace/I want war

Characters/Location: A coach and an athlete on the track

Want: I want to win/I want to quit

Characters/Location: A wedding dress designer and a bride in the bridal store

Want: I want to make money off this rich woman/I want to cancel my wedding

Characters/Location: Two best friends playing video games in the basement.

Want: I want the zombie apocalypse/I want to share a secret

Characters/Location: A teacher and a student

Want: I want to find out the truth/I want to hide



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FORM PLAY

Name	Description
Monologue	One person speaking, should have a listener
Dialogue	A conversation between more than one person.
Multi Monologue	Characters speak to the audience, but don't look at or communicate with each other. Thus, it's like a number of small monologues woven together
Insta-scene	A moment that is too short to be a dialogue. 4 or fewer lines.
Absurd Scene	The makeup of the scene is not realistic.
Choral Speaking	Unison speaking using the whole group – can also use individual speakers within the piece.
Tug of War	Not a traditional scene but dialogue that pulls back and forth on a topic.
Foreign Language	A conversation in which two people do not understand each other. NOTE: this does not necessarily mean two people speaking different languages. Think of how a parent and a teen often do not understand each other...
Poem	Rhyming, or not.
Song	The scene is done in song.
Silent Struggle	An issue physicalized without words.
Alternative World	Something or someone that does not happen in reality. For example: a talking cat.
Inside Voice	Saying out loud what someone would never say out loud.
Music Interp	The piece uses music as a focus point. Dance can be used, but not necessarily.
Audience Participation	Involve the audience to express a scene.
Draw	Art must be included in the expression of the scene.
Opposite Day	Everything in the scene is opposite to reality
The Elephant in the Room	The scene is about something no one talks about
Deconstruction	Deconstruct a topic, a word, an issue.



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AUTOMATIC WRITING PROMPTS

Use these prompts as warm-ups before a writing exercise. The focus of automatic writing is to get words on the page. Start with one minute and work up to five minutes. Push students to write for the entire time. Get words on the page. If students say they are stuck, tell them to write about being stuck. Don't think, just write. Don't judge, just write.

What makes you angry?	What did you do last night?	Is TV good or bad? Why?
Friendship	Fast food	The best super power is...
I think cheating is...	My favourite day is...	My ideal vacation is...
In five years I'll be...	Peer pressure	Smoking
The thing that makes me happy is...	The thing that drives me crazy is...	Fear
Birthdays	If I could change one thing...	Therapy
My favourite song/movie is...	My least favourite song is...	Sports
Clothes	Home	Fantasy
Bullies	Truth	Lies
Drama	Strangers	Being lost
Self-confidence	It hurts me when...	Secrets
The environment	War/Peace	Failure
Spontaneity	Art	I wish my parents would...
If I ran the world I would...	The past	Clowns
Socks	My body	Animals
Death	My grandmother is...	I firmly believe that...
The holidays are...	Change	Frustration
Garbage	Strength	Fighting

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CHARACTER BIO

The Character: You

Why do actors do character bios? To help them get to know their characters better. You are going to do a character bio for the character you know inside and out - You. The purpose of this activity is to find out about yourself. What is the truth?

DIRECTIONS

- Use these questions to guide you in creating a character bio for the character that you probably know the best: **yourself**.
- You do not have to answer all of them but you must **know** the answer to every question.
- Write in the first person.
- Write your bio in paragraph form, more as a narrative and less as answers to questions.
- Be sure to paint a complete picture of your character.

EXTERNAL QUALITIES

1. Who am I?
2. Who am I named after? Do I like my name?
3. How old am I?
4. How does my posture express my age, health, inner feelings?
5. Do I have any mannerisms?
6. Do I have any physical obstacles?
7. How energetic or vital am I?
8. Do I suffer from any medical conditions, or did I in the past?
9. Are my gestures complete or incomplete, vigorous or weak, compulsive or controlled?
10. Do I like my walk?
11. How do I usually sit?
12. How do I usually stand?
13. Do I typically carry objects with me? Why? How do I handle them?
14. Are my basic rhythms smooth or jerky, even-tempered or volatile, impulsive or deliberate, ponderous or light, broken or continuous?
15. What do I like to wear? What do I have to wear?



INTERNAL QUALITIES

1. What choices do I face?
2. What choices do I make?
3. What makes me angry? What relaxes me?
4. What are my driving ambitions, my goals?
5. Who is standing in the way of me getting what I want?
6. Do I trust my instincts?
7. Do I do things impulsively?
8. What do I worry about?
9. What do I want? What do others think I want?
10. What do I like about myself? Dislike about myself?
11. What do I need?
12. What do I fear?
13. Why can't I get what I want?
14. Do other people like me? Why?

SOCIAL QUALITIES

1. What do I do when I wake up each morning?
2. What is my relationship with my environment?
3. What is my educational background? How much discipline was I subjected to? How intelligent am I?
4. What was my childhood like? What are my strongest memories?
5. How much money do I have?
6. Who would I choose to be if I could be anyone else?
7. Who are my parents? What do I like and/or dislike about them?
8. Do I like my family? What do I like about them? What do I dislike?
9. How has my mother influenced me? How has my father influenced me?
10. Do I have brothers and sisters? What do I think about them?
11. Who are my friends? Who are my enemies? How can I tell if someone is a friend or an enemy? (Spend more time with this one.)
12. What hobbies or interests do I have?



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POINT OF VIEW SENTENCE STARTERS

Choose a prompt and instruct students to complete the thought. Instruct them to aim for half a page.

My point of view on cafeteria food is...	If I ran the school I would...
If you ask me education is...	The best teachers are...
I like school because...	I hate school because...
I think drama is...	I believe this class will...
Inspiration is something that...	I am/am not creative because...
I firmly believe that...	I wonder about...
I always try to...	What angers me the most is...
I never want to...	What I fear most is...
My best quality is... because...	The thing I'd like to change about myself is...
The mistake most make about me is...	My biggest dream is to...
In five years I see myself...	In ten years I see myself...
To be a teenager today means...	My parents don't understand me because...
If I was a parent I would...	When my parents were young they...
My point of view on peer pressure is...	My point of view on bullying is...
My point of view on politics is...	My point of view on religion is...
My point of view on marriage is...	My point of view on dating is...
My point of view on failure is...	My point of view on the environment is...
People over 30 are...	The future is going to be...
The past is relevant/irrelevant because...	Depression is...
It's useless to...	It's important to remember...



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CHARACTER PROFILE

Full name:

Who's in their immediate family?

Who is their most important relationship?

What is their living environment?

What did they choose to wear today and why?

What did they choose to eat today and why?

What type of music did they choose to listen to today and why?

What clothing, food, music do they hate and why?



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CONFLICT PROFILE

Complete the following steps to practice creating a conflict profile. Then use the template for your own characters.

STEP ONE: CHARACTER

- Write down the first three words that come to mind when you think of a grandmother.

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STEP TWO: WANT

- The want for this character is "I want revenge."

STEP THREE: IMPORTANCE AND URGENCY

Complete these two sentence starters for the grandmother and her want.

- I care because...
- It must happen today or else...

STEP FOUR: OBSTACLE

Complete this sentence starter for the grandmother and her want.

- The thing in my way is...

STEP FIVE: TACTICS

- Come up with three tactics for the grandmother to deal with the obstacle.

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PLAY ORGANIZATION SHEET

Write your thoughts for your play here. Frequently return to this sheet during the writing process. If you ever get stuck, this sheet will be your lifeline!

WHAT: What is your play going to be about?

WHO: Who are you writing for?

WHEN: When does your play take place?

WHERE: Where does your play take place?

WHY: Why this story?



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REWRITE QUESTION SHEET

Review your first draft and answer the following questions.

OVERALL

1. Why is the first page a great introduction to the play?
2. Why is the last page a vivid ending to the play?
3. If you could describe the play in one sentence what would it be?

FOR EVERY SCENE

1. Why does the audience need to see this scene? What's its purpose?
2. How does this scene move the story forward? Why does it have to be here?
3. Why are you leaving each scene?
4. Could your play be shared with less scenes? Why not?

DIALOGUE

1. Would you say this line in real life, in normal conversation?
2. Are you sharing your story through dialogue or through informational speeches?
3. What dialogue could be cut without taking away from the story?
4. Does each character have a unique voice in their dialogue?

CHARACTER

1. What do you know about your characters?
2. Do your characters change at all?
3. Does each character want something? How do they go after what they want? What stands in the way?
4. Are all your characters really necessary to the story? Why?

CONFLICT

1. What is the main conflict of the play? What are the obstacles?
2. What makes the main conflict interesting?
3. Is there conflict in EVERY scene?

