

## HOW TO CHOOSE A SEARS PLAY

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Playwright Lindsay Price specializes in writing one acts for high schools and student performers.

She averages 15 plays in the Sears Festival each year.

Here's her list for finding the perfect Sears play.

**Know the Rules:** Don't get caught after the fact! Know the rules in terms of number of characters, play length, available lighting and sound, set requirements.

**Fit the Students to the Play:** Find the play for your students, instead of choosing a play and trying to shoe-horn your students into it. Even the best, most amazing play will fail if students aren't interested. Sears is for the students.

**Age-Appropriate Material:** Look for plays with characters in the same age range of your students. This is not to say that the material should be simple! There are many other ways to challenge student actors.

**Focus on the Experience, not on Hardware:** Choose the play that is going to give your students an experience - something in which they will learn and grow through the process. If the focus is on awards, then what happens if the show receives none? If the focus is on the process, then anything that happens at festival is gravy.

**Length:** Don't give anyone the opportunity to disqualify your play because of length! Aim for a 40 minute running time. You'll never have to worry about being disqualified for time. You'll never have to forego an artistic decision for the sake of time. Lastly, remember that there are almost always three plays on a night. No one has ever got to the end of that third 50 minute play and wished it was longer...

**Choose a Complete Play:** Choose a play that is already under 50 minutes rather than a cutting of a longer piece. The more you cut, the further you get away from the playwright's intentions. The more you cut, the further you get from the rhythm of the story and the pace of the dialogue. A cut work will never be as impactful as an existing one act. If you do choose to cut a play, get the cut approved by the author or publisher before you start rehearsals.

**Encourage Student-Written Material:** If you can get your students to write, encourage it! There is nothing like the process of seeing your work performed.