

## Sample Pages from Research & Write Toolkit

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# RESEARCH & WRITE

TOOLKIT



Theatrefolk®

Lindsay Price

Research and Write Toolkit  
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e-mail: [help@theatrefolk.com](mailto:help@theatrefolk.com)  
website: [www.theatrefolk.com](http://www.theatrefolk.com)

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# RESEARCH AND WRITE TOOLKIT

Researching a topic and applying that research in a theatrical way, like writing a play, is a fantastic drama classroom project. It's cross-curricular and applies multiple skill sets. Students can work in groups or independently. Research and write projects are a great way to demonstrate comprehension by taking information in one form and applying it to another.

Having said that, the most common issue with research and write projects is turning research into a theatrical final product. It can be hard for students to find character-driven action within a fact-based framework. Dialogue can become stilted as statistics-based information does not always translate into theatre. It's not dramatic for characters to recite facts and statistics. *"Oh dear brother, this is 1941. There's a stocking shortage, don't you know. Japan has cut off the supply and the government has taken all the raw silk for parachutes."* It comes across as inorganic.

A play is not a textbook or an informational brochure. The theatricality must come first. But it takes practice to turn information into theatre.

Use this toolkit to give students the opportunity to practice turning information into theatrical action.



# TABLE OF CONTENTS

|  |    |
|--|----|
| From Research to Theatre .....               | 3  |
| Show, Don't Tell .....                       | 6  |
| The Emotional Opposite .....                 | 8  |
| Character Profile .....                      | 10 |
| Issue Personification .....                  | 13 |
| A Picture Tells a Thousand Words .....       | 18 |
| Make it Fictional .....                      | 24 |
| How to Create Monologue Prompts .....        | 26 |
| Research and Write Unit: The Graveyard ..... | 27 |



# FROM RESEARCH TO THEATRE: HANDOUT

How do you make research theatrical?

## Focus on Characters and their Emotions

Find the characters at the heart of your topic. Determine how they feel. Audiences don't connect with facts or statistics, but a natural connection emerges when a character has an emotional reaction. The audience doesn't have to live through or experience the topic personally to connect to a character's emotions.

## Don't Get Overwhelmed by Research

It is easy to become overwhelmed by the amount of information surrounding a topic. You want to include as much detail as possible because you think you're doing the topic a disservice otherwise.

Sometimes it's better to put research aside and let the facts surface as they may, particularly during the first draft. Don't worry if you get things wrong initially; that's what rewrites are for. Read the information, digest it, and then put it aside while you write. This way you keep the focus on the play rather than the research.

## Show, Don't Tell Your Story

This is the number one rule of playwriting. Show, don't tell. Don't tell the facts about the great fire of 1939; find a way to show the fire. Don't have a narrator tell the story; show a character reacting to a situation. Create images with your information. Again, audiences do not connect with facts and events, but the characters within those facts and events.



# FROM RESEARCH TO THEATRE: EXERCISE

## OBJECTIVE

Students will be able to demonstrate theatricality in a fact-based framework.

## MATERIALS NEEDED

- Omaha Beach Information Sheet (included)
- Pen/Paper or other devices for writing

## INSTRUCTIONS

- Hand out the info sheet on the WWII D-Day Invasion at Omaha Beach.
- Tell students they have one minute to study the information on the sheet.
- At the one minute mark, take the sheets away. Students may not refer to the sheet while they write.
- Have students write a monologue inspired by the information on Omaha Beach, without referring to the info sheet.
- This may confuse students. They may be worried that their monologues will be inaccurate or that they won't remember the details. Remind students that theatrical writing is about characters and their emotional states. They must focus on the character.
- At the top of a blank page tell students to write down the following:
  - The character in the monologue
  - Who the character is talking to
  - The character's emotional state
  - The location
- Give students time to write their monologues. Make sure they apply the information from the sheet to a character and their emotional state.
- Have students share in small groups. Don't let them get hung up on "This isn't good," "I didn't have enough time," or "There aren't enough details." Remind students that rewrites are the time to get the facts right. The first draft should establish an emotional connection. Without that, the facts don't matter to an audience. The connection between character and audience must always come first.



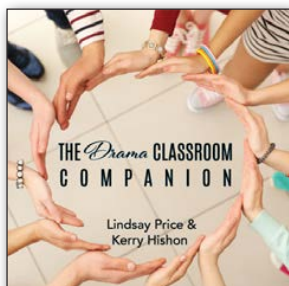
# WWII – D-DAY - OMAHA BEACH INFORMATION SHEET

- June 6, 1944
- U.S. 29th and 1st infantry divisions
- Each soldier carried: weapon, life preserver, gas mask, five grenades, half pound block of TNT, six rations, canteen, entrenching tool, first aid kit, knife
- One of the longest beaches, stretched six miles
- Huge cliffs provided vantage point for Germans
- German guns had range of 15 miles
- Landed at 6:30 am
- Met with heavy fire
- Within ten minutes the 1st infantry division suffered huge losses; every officer or sergeant killed or wounded
- Almost all the tanks sank; they were supposed to provide cover for the soldiers
- When the tanks sank, the crews went with them
- Strong winds, waves up to 6 feet, breakers were 34 feet
- Wind, waves and current scattered units – many landed in the wrong place
- Smaller craft took on so much water the pumps could not work properly; troops had to bail with helmets
- In most of the boats soldiers were drenched from the spray
- A lot of sea sickness
- Over 2,000 lost



# Teaching Resources

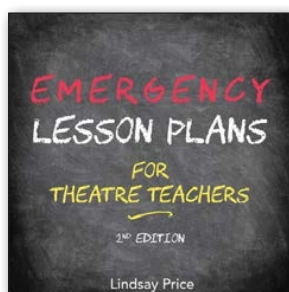
Quality resources to use in your drama classroom



## The Drama Classroom Companion

*The Drama Classroom Companion* is filled with articles and exercises to build the skills needed for theatrical performance as well as real world skills like creative thinking, critical thinking, collaboration, and communication.

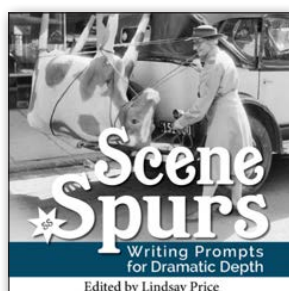
[theatrefolk.com/companion](http://theatrefolk.com/companion)



## Emergency Lesson Plans For Theatre Teachers

*Emergency Lesson Plans For Theatre Teachers, 2nd edition* gives you the tools and resources you need to confidently leave your class in the hands of a substitute teacher. Customize your lesson plans to suit the specific needs of your class when you can't be there.

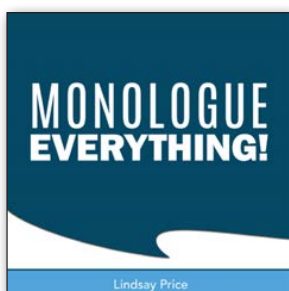
[theatrefolk.com/elp](http://theatrefolk.com/elp)



## Scene-Spurs: Writing Prompts for Dramatic Depth

*Scene Spurs* is a collection of photo-based writing prompts developed by playwright Lindsay Price. The set includes 35 different Spurs along with an instruction guide to integrate them into your drama classroom.

[theatrefolk.com/spurs](http://theatrefolk.com/spurs)



## The Monologue Everything Program

Want your students to write their own monologues? Have you tried to incorporate monologue units into the classroom with less-than-satisfactory results?

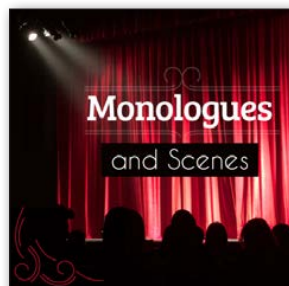
[theatrefolk.com/monologue-everything](http://theatrefolk.com/monologue-everything)



## Practical Technical Theater: The Complete Solution for Technical Theater Classrooms

This series of instructional DVDs is perfect for the teacher who feels more at home with a prompt book than a hammer, and would welcome a new, visually oriented teaching tool for their tech classes and production crews.

[theatrefolk.com/ptt](http://theatrefolk.com/ptt)

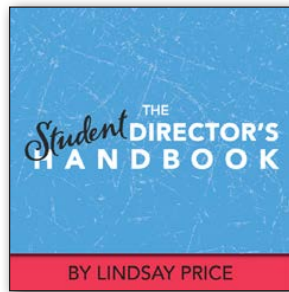


## Monologue and Scene Collections

Whether it's for classwork, competitions or auditions, these collections of student-appropriate monologues and scenes can help you find what you're looking for.

All monologues and scenes come from published plays and include running-times, descriptions, character notes and staging suggestions.

[theatrefolk.com/collections](http://theatrefolk.com/collections)



## The Student Director's Handbook

Help students take their show from first audition to opening night with *The Student Director's Handbook*. This easy-to-use ebook is full of guidelines, tips and templates designed to help students create a vision, circumvent problems and organize rehearsals on their way to a successful production.

[theatrefolk.com/student-director](http://theatrefolk.com/student-director)



## Write Your Own Vignette Play

Your students want to write and perform an original play. You want to include a playwriting unit in your program. But where to start? What if your students have never written a play before? What if you've never written before?

*Write Your Own Vignette Play* will answer all your questions and more

[theatrefolk.com/write\\_vignette](http://theatrefolk.com/write_vignette)



## Competition Material

Plays, monologues, and scenes for drama competitions including royalty information and exemptions.

[theatrefolk.com/competition](http://theatrefolk.com/competition)



[www.theatrefolk.com/resources](http://www.theatrefolk.com/resources)