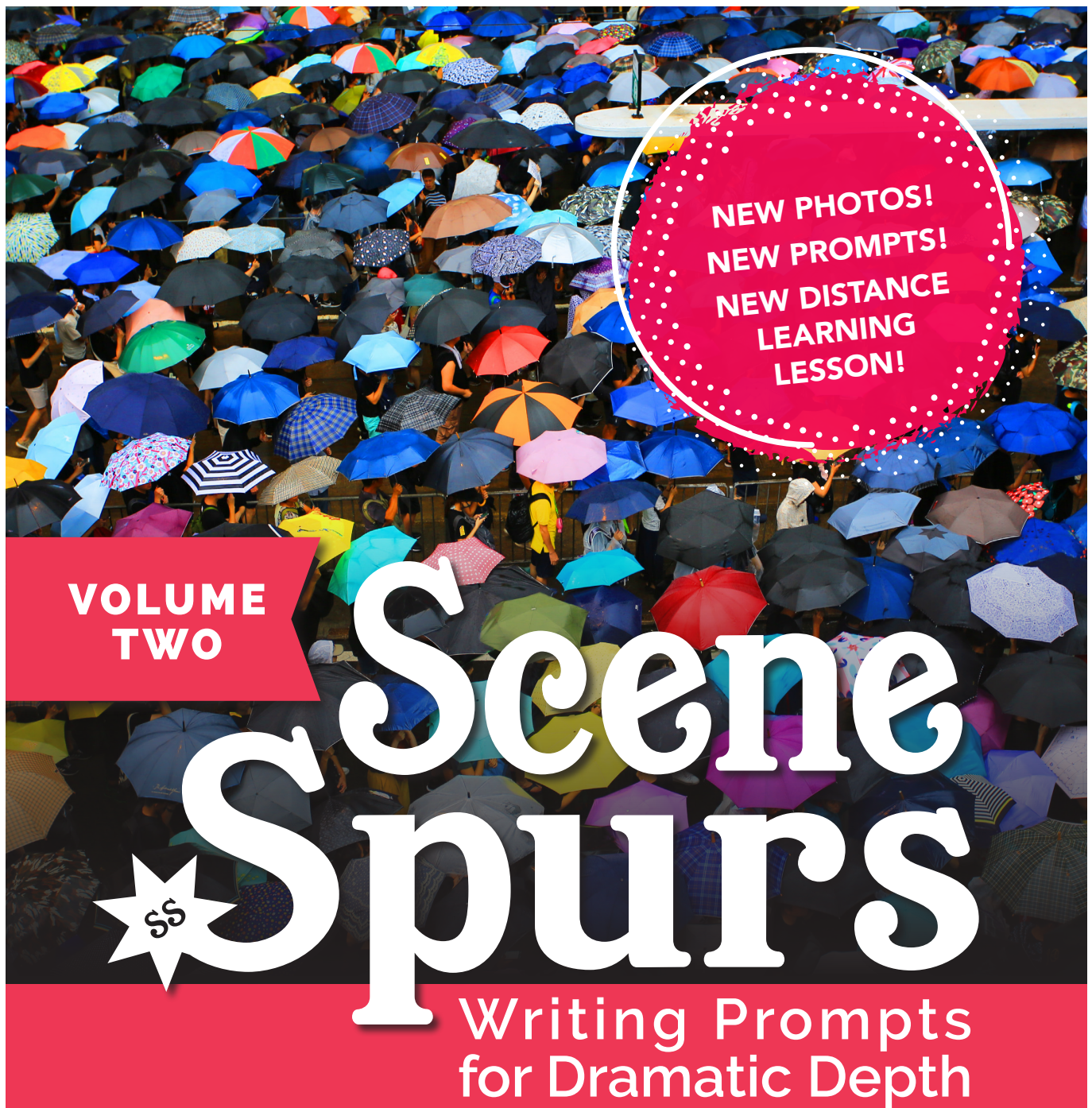


**Sample Pages from**  
**Scene Spurs: Writing Prompts for Dramatic**  
**Depth Volume Two**

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NEW PHOTOS!  
NEW PROMPTS!  
NEW DISTANCE  
LEARNING  
LESSON!

VOLUME  
TWO



# Scene Spurs

Writing Prompts  
for Dramatic Depth

By Lindsay Price



**VOLUME  
TWO**

# Scene Spurs

Writing Prompts  
for Dramatic Depth

Scene Spurs: Writing Prompts for Dramatic Depth Volume Two  
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# Instruction Guide



Student writers often find starting to be the most difficult part of the writing process. **Scene Spurs** offers a collection of photo-based writing prompts that provide guideposts:

## A PHOTO

An interesting photo chosen to spark creativity. The purpose of the photo is to give students something to look at, think about, and use as a basis to start writing. Even if they don't like the picture, don't discount it as a doorway to creative writing.

## WARM-UP QUESTIONS

Warm-up questions get the brain in gear. Questions are an excellent way to initiate the writing process; they allow students to create source material from which a monologue or scene can grow.

Note: Students will be asked to describe some pictures using the five senses. Make sure they use taste, even though there's no food in the picture. Taste doesn't have to be obvious. Dust has a taste. Mildew has a taste. Perfume has a taste, and so on.

## AUTOMATIC WRITING

Automatic writing is a technique that motivates students to get words on the page without self-criticism or judgement. Students are given a time period (2 minutes) and a topic (the photo).

Their job is to write for the entire time without stopping. If they get stuck, they can write about that. If they don't like the picture, they can write about that.

Getting words on the page can be difficult for students as they fear imperfection – they judge the final product before they've written a word. This is how writer's block starts and how insecure writers come to believe they can't write. If students can practice an exercise in which the act of writing is more important than the content, they will find that getting words on the page becomes easier over time.

## MONOLOGUE AND SCENE PROMPTS

A variety of prompts means students can choose something that speaks to them. Students certainly don't have to write on every prompt! If you're using **Scene Spurs** with a beginner class, use the warm-up questions and automatic writing, and then have students write one monologue. If your class is more advanced, have them complete multiple monologues and scenes.

## PHOTO ONLY PAGES

Perhaps you want to project the image instead of using handouts. Or you have students who respond better to verbal than written instruction. Or you want your advanced students to come up with their own prompts. Use the photo only pages in whichever way suits your students and your situation best. By using the photo only pages, you can select specific questions and prompts or even use your own.

## USE SCENE SPURS IN THE DRAMA CLASSROOM AS A(N)...

- warm-up exercise during a playwriting unit
- way to introduce new writers to the theatrical writing process
- emergency lesson plan for a substitute teacher
- creativity spur for a group or class devising their own play
- way to prompt character-based discussion



# Sample Lesson Plans



## WORKING WITH BEGINNING WRITERS

Beginning writers struggle because they have preconceived ideas about creativity. Use **Scene Spurs** to encourage beginning writers to find their voice.

### Lesson Plan: The Individuality of the Writer

1. Entry Prompt: How do you feel about your writing skills? Do you think you can write a play?
2. Hand out, or project where everyone can see, the same Spur to everyone in the class. Decide if you will show students just the picture, or use the Question/Prompt page.
3. Divide the class into groups.
4. Warm-up Questions: Each group will discuss, decide and record answers to the warm-up questions. Emphasize to the groups as they work that if they disagree on answers, they can write more than one down.
5. Come back as a class and have the groups present their findings. Point out when groups come up with similar answers, and when they come up with different answers.
6. Use this as a jumping off point to discuss how there is no right answer in creative writing. Every writer is an individual. Every writer thinks differently so every writer writes differently.
7. Take a poll: Who in the class feels that their writing isn't as good as someone else's?
8. Have students study the picture they are using. Point out how many different ideas can come from one picture and how everyone can see something different based on who they are, their background, and their point of view. This is why using a picture is a good starting point for inspiration.
9. Automatic Writing: All students will complete the 2-minute automatic writing section individually.
10. Monologue Prompts: Choose one monologue prompt. All students will use the same prompt to write a half-page monologue. Give students 10 minutes to write.
11. Have students get back in their groups and read their monologues aloud. Ask them to pay attention to the differences between each monologue. Observe groups and listen to students read.
12. Bring the group back as a class. Highlight what stood out to you as you listened to students read their monologues. Discuss how unique the monologues are even though everyone started from the same place. Don't push students yet to volunteer to read in front of the class, unless they are clearly interested in doing so.

13. Exit Prompt: Reflect on today's process. How did using a picture help you write your monologue? If it didn't, analyze why it didn't. Knowing how you write can help you find the right techniques and tools to improve your process.

### Lesson Plan: Accept All Ideas

1. Entry Prompt: Do you overthink when you write? Do you think it's better to have an imperfect idea than no idea at all? Why or why not?
2. Tell students they will work on getting as many ideas down on paper as they can for this writing session. The goal is to write, not to overthink or judge. Self-judgement of ideas is what often leads to writer's block.
3. Hand out, or project where everyone can see, the same Spur to everyone in the class. For this session students will need the warm-up questions and the automatic writing prompt to be easily accessible.
4. Warm-Up Questions: Give students 2 minutes to answer as many of the warm-up questions as possible. They will probably not complete them all, but the goal is to push them to get all their ideas on paper.
5. Encourage students not to overthink or judge an idea, but to write them all down. If a question stumps them, they should move on to the next one and just keep writing.
6. Ask students to share their experience. Was it frustrating? Did they get in a zone? Was it impossible to think with a time limit? Remind students that they are merely practicing a technique. Not every technique will work for every writer. Every writer is an individual.
7. Automatic Writing: For the automatic writing section, students will have 2 minutes to write about the picture. Encourage students to keep their thoughts focused on the picture the entire time, even if they get stuck.
8. Monologue Prompts: Choose one monologue prompt and have all students respond to it. Again, they have 2 minutes to write a monologue.
9. Divide students into groups and have them share their writing. Instruct students to avoid saying anything negative about their writing (e.g., "this sucks," or "I didn't have any time").
10. Discuss what it was like to write with a time constraint. Did it help or hinder the thought process?
11. Give students time to write a second draft of the monologue. Remind them of all the source material they have at their disposal: a picture, questions, the automatic writing, and the first draft of the monologue.



12. Exit Prompt: Reflect on today's process. How did having a time limit help you write your monologue? If it didn't, analyze why it didn't. Knowing how you write can help you find the right techniques and tools to improve your process.

## WORKING WITH ADVANCED WRITERS

You can use the same pictures and the same questions/prompts with advanced writers. Just broaden your expectations in terms of character development, a specific conflict, and theatrical exploration. Encourage students to write beyond their comfort zone.

### Lesson Plan: Writing Out of Your Comfort Zone

1. Entry Prompt: What's your writing comfort zone? What do you like to write about and why?
2. Tell students that their goal is to complete a scene within the class period in a style outside their comfort zone. Ask students to share their responses from the entry prompt.
3. Hand out, or project where everyone can see, the same Spur to everyone in the class. Choose a Spur that focuses on a theme or concept (e.g., Perception, Anxiety, Hiding, Windows to Where).
4. Warm-Up Questions: Give students 10 minutes to answer the warm-up questions. Encourage them to expand their creativity in these answers. If they always write comedies, focus on drama. If they always write realistic answers, strive for absurd answers. Encourage them to write in a way that isn't in their comfort zone.
5. Automatic Writing: Give students 2 minutes to complete the automatic writing section.
6. Monologue Prompts: Give students 15 minutes to choose a prompt and write a monologue (this includes the character profile below). Remind them to write outside their comfort zone. They should choose a monologue prompt that they wouldn't normally gravitate toward. Also remind them to focus on the character in their monologue.
7. Students will create a character profile to help them write the character in their monologue prompt:
  - a. basic details for the character: name, age, family environment, home environment, work/school
  - b. main personality traits of the character
  - c. favourite food, movie, style, music
8. Scene Prompts: Students will use the rest of the time in class to choose a scene prompt and complete a scene. Remind students to write outside their comfort zone. How do they respond to writing a scene that isn't easy for them?

9. Halfway through their scene writing time, divide students into groups and have them read what they have so far. Emphasize that you and everyone in the class know that the scenes aren't complete. Students will share what they have and receive some simple feedback from their groups: What stands out? What questions do listeners have?
10. Students will complete their scenes. If you have time, have them read them aloud in their groups.
11. Discuss the process afterward. What was it like to write in a way that doesn't come naturally? Was it frustrating? Enlightening? Remind students that if they want to improve as writers, they can't write the same way for every piece. Even if the final product isn't a "success," the process is valuable.
12. Exit Prompt: Reflect on the process of writing your scene. What did you learn about your writing process?

## THE EMERGENCY LESSON PLAN

Use **Scene Spurs** to keep students thinking creatively and theatrically when you can't be there. That way you don't need to worry about your class getting a sub without a theatre background. Students will work individually and hand in their writing at the end of class.

### Lesson Plan: Individual Scene Spur

1. Make enough copies of the same Spur for your class.
2. Note that these instructions cover a 75-minute class. If your class periods are shorter or longer, adjust accordingly.
3. Instruct your sub to:
  - a. Give the handout to every student.
  - b. Tell students that each section of the handout has a time limit.
  - c. Follow the instructions for each section below.
  - d. Collect students' writing at the end of class, making sure they put their name on their work.
4. Warm-up Questions: Students will have 15 minutes to complete the questions.
  - a. The sub will announce the start time, the midpoint, and the end time.
5. Automatic Writing: Students will have 2 minutes to write about the picture. The sub will...
  - a. Read aloud the Automatic Writing paragraph on the page.
  - b. Announce the start time and the end time.

6. Monologue Prompts: Students will choose one monologue prompt and tell the sub which one they chose. They will have 20 minutes to work on a monologue that is at least  $\frac{3}{4}$  of a page. If they finish their monologue before the time is up, they will start working on a second monologue. The sub will...
  - a. Read aloud each monologue prompt.
  - b. Check each student for their chosen prompt.
  - c. Announce the start time, the midpoint, and the end time.
7. Scene Prompts: Students will choose one scene prompt and tell the sub which one they chose. They will have 38 minutes to complete a scene of at least 2 pages. If they finish their scene before the time is up they will start work on a second scene. The sub will...
  - a. Read aloud each scene prompt.
  - b. Check each student for their chosen prompt.
  - c. Announce the start time, the midpoint, and the end time.
8. Students will make sure their name is on their work and pile it neatly on the teacher's desk. The sub will...
  - a. Make sure students turn in their writing neatly and that their name is on their work.
  - b. Secure the pile of papers and add a top sheet of paper with the class period written on it.

## DISTANCE LEARNING

You can use **Scene Spurs** in either a synchronous class session or as an asynchronous activity. For an asynchronous activity, send individual Spurs home and instruct students to complete all the warm-up questions, the automatic writing, one monologue and one scene.

### Lesson Plan: Synchronous Class Session

1. Entry Prompt: Describe your bedroom using the five senses: sight, sound, taste, touch, and smell. Find a way to identify the taste; be creative! Can you connect it to a certain smell?
  - a. Screenshare the entry prompt to give visual instruction and read the prompt aloud for verbal instruction.
  - b. Give students 3 minutes to write.
2. Ask 3 students to read aloud their description.
3. Let students know they will repeat this exercise for a character they are going to write for in today's session.

4. Choose a Spur. Screenshare the photo only page of the Spur.
  - a. Choose a Spur for which it makes sense to have students respond orally to a couple of questions to start the process with individual engagement.
5. Ask 3 students to share the first word that comes to their mind when they look at the picture.
6. Ask 3 students to guess where in the world the picture was taken (for a landscape) or who the picture is of (for a picture with a person).
7. Warm-up Questions: Read aloud and screenshare 2 to 3 questions at a time and instruct students to write down their answers.
  - a. Check-In: Ask a student what their next task is (answer 3 questions).
  - b. Ideally, you want students to show their work. You're not grading this, just making sure students are on task. This could mean students are hand writing the answers and then holding their papers up to their camera, or you're in a shared doc that you can check, or they're sending you their answers in a way that you can quickly scan.
  - c. Keep reading aloud and sharing the questions 2 to 3 at a time until complete.
8. Automatic Writing: Screenshare the automatic writing section to give visual instruction and read the section aloud for verbal instruction.
  - a. Check-In: Ask a student what their next task is (to complete the automatic writing section in 2 minutes).
9. Monologue Prompts: Screenshare the monologue prompts to give visual instruction and read aloud the prompts for verbal instruction. Students will choose a prompt and write a half-page monologue.
  - a. Check-in: Ask a student what their next task is (to choose a prompt and write a half-page monologue).
  - b. Poll: Ask students to raise their hands as you read aloud each prompt to find out who has chosen which one.
  - c. Give students time to write their monologue.
  - d. If possible, and if you're on a platform that supports breakout groups, divide students into virtual groups where they will read aloud their monologues.
  - e. While students are in their groups, drop into each group to observe and listen.
  - f. Bring everyone back together as a class. Highlight what you heard in the breakout groups.
  - g. Choose 3 students to read aloud their monologues - ask those watching/listening to turn off their cameras, so the reader doesn't feel like they're being stared at. Having the "read out loud" section is important because monologues as part of theatrical form are meant to be performed rather than read silently.

10. Depending on how long your synchronous session is, this may be all you can accomplish in a single session. Online instruction is slower than traditional in-class instruction and activities take longer to accomplish. Don't let that frustrate you! If your students do work quickly, move on to completing a scene using the same process:

- a. Verbal and visual instruction.
- b. Have students check in by repeating their next task.
- c. If you do virtual group work, and your online platform supports it, drop in to observe the session. Then highlight what you observed. Show students that you see and hear what they are doing and give purpose to their work.
- d. Incorporate opportunities to have students read their work aloud.

# Curriculum Guide



## LITERACY THROUGH WRITING

Literacy through writing improves comprehension, creativity, and communication. The

ability to put thoughts into words and then communicate those words in a specific manner for a specific audience is a skill that extends beyond the classroom.

However, there is a misconception that writing requires innate skill. Students often believe they lack the necessary “creativity” to write.

**Scene Spurs** circumvents this misconception through a response-driven framework that provides students with a starting point: a picture, a question, or a prompt. The creativity is all their own, but the framework offers the necessary support. Student writers will find the confidence to start and then continue writing when they are supported along the way.

**Scene Spurs** provides writing strategies for students at a variety of ability levels and grades. Beginners improve their literacy by responding to the warm-up questions. Intermediate writers respond to the monologue and scene prompts. Advanced writers further their skills by responding to multiple photos and creating their own prompts.

## HOW SCENE SPURS ADDRESSES COMPREHENSION, CREATIVITY, AND COMMUNICATION

### Comprehension

- Each picture includes exercises (warm-up questions and automatic writing) that provide students a prewriting strategy to fully explore the subject matter before they form and develop an idea.
- As **Scene Spurs** focuses on playwriting (scene and monologue writing), it offers a unique genre and format for students to practice comprehension (understanding how to write in a specific form).

### Creativity

- By providing a response framework, **Scene Spurs** provides students with a base from which to form creative ideas. This improves writer confidence and self-expression skills.
- Each photo is unique and offers endless possibilities for creativity. Advanced writers can create their own questions, prompts, and scene ideas.

### Communication

- **Scene Spurs** prompts students to communicate an idea in a specific form for a specific audience.

## LANGUAGE ARTS STRANDS IDENTIFIED IN SCENE SPURS

Scene Spurs offers a practical strategy to implement Language Arts Strands through questions, journaling, and monologue/scene prompts.

Students will be able to...

- apply communication skills by using written knowledge to create a text.
- apply prewriting techniques that lead to writing fictional narratives.
- execute a specific technique to create ideas.
- communicate a scenario and characters through a scene.
- interpret photos to gather information and respond analytically.
- write in a meaningful manner using interesting source material.
- write for a specific purpose and a specific audience.

## SCENE SPURS IN THE ENGLISH CLASSROOM

Scene Spurs is an introduction to the craft of playwriting but the techniques can be applied to any literary genre.

- Use the warm-up questions regardless of the genre of the final product. The questions provide a prewriting technique to acquaint students with the photo and help them brainstorm ideas for stories, poems, screenplays, and plays.
- Character development is useful in all genres. Use the monologue prompts as a character development exercise for the main character in a story.
- Use the automatic writing prompts in each spur as a journaling topic. These prompts offer a transition to self-expression and autobiographical writing as students respond to the photo.
- Use the title of each spur as a title for a poem inspired by the accompanying photo.
- Use the monologue prompts, replacing the word "monologue" with the word "poem."
- Use the title of each spur as a title for a short story inspired by the accompanying photo.
- Use the scene prompts, replacing the word "scene" with the word "story."

## A NOTE ON GENDER

This resource does not use binary gender identification. Students should be encouraged to create characters that speak to them and represent their voice.



# High Water



theatrefolk.com/spurs2

Scene Spurs Volume 2 by Lindsay Price 13

# High Water



## WARM-UP QUESTIONS

1. Who took this picture? Are they in danger?
2. Where in the world is this?
3. How often does this area get storms like this?
4. What does this area look like on a normal day?
5. Will this area return to normal?
6. Will this bench survive or float away?
7. What is the first emotion you think of when you look at this picture?
8. What would it be like to stand in this water?
9. What would it sound like to stand in this picture?
10. What's going to happen five minutes from now?



## AUTOMATIC WRITING

Automatic write on this picture for two minutes. What comes to your mind when you look at the picture? Look at it from top to bottom, left to right. Have you ever stood in high water before? Have you ever had to hold on in a difficult situation? Keep writing for the entire time.

## MONOLOGUE PROMPTS

Write a monologue from the perspective of the bench. Give the bench an emotional response to the water. Does the bench want to be swept away? Is the bench mad at the water? Is the bench a fighter?

Write a monologue in which the bench wants to show that they are better than the water.

Write a monologue from the perspective of a person who is in danger of being swept away by someone or something. Who does the person talk to in the monologue? Give them a listener.

## SCENE PROMPTS

Write a dialogue between the water and the bench. What's the conflict between them? Who will win?

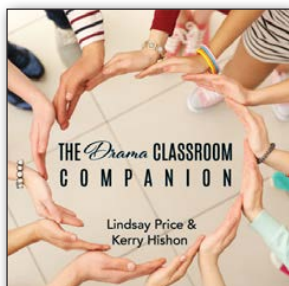
Write a dialogue between two characters, one who wants to embrace the danger of the situation, and one who wants to escape. How does each character try to convince the other to do things their way? What tactics do they use?

Write a dialogue between two characters who don't like each other but are thrown together because of the high water and must help each other.

Write a scene in which high water is a metaphor. What does it mean symbolically for each character?

# Teaching Resources

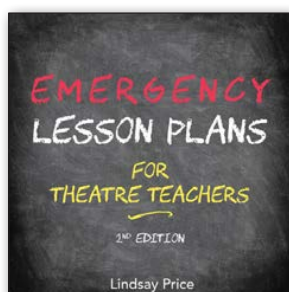
Quality resources to use in your drama classroom



## 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.

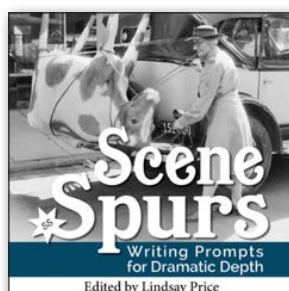
[theatrefolk.com/companion](http://theatrefolk.com/companion)



## 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.

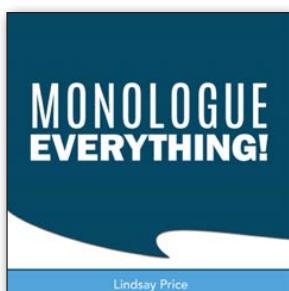
[theatrefolk.com/elp](http://theatrefolk.com/elp)



## 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?

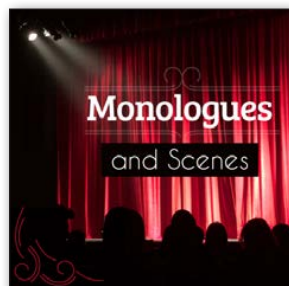
[theatrefolk.com/monologue-everything](http://theatrefolk.com/monologue-everything)



## 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)