

Sample Pages from
Student Monologues for Classroom Study:
Holidays, Celebrations, Days of Remembrance

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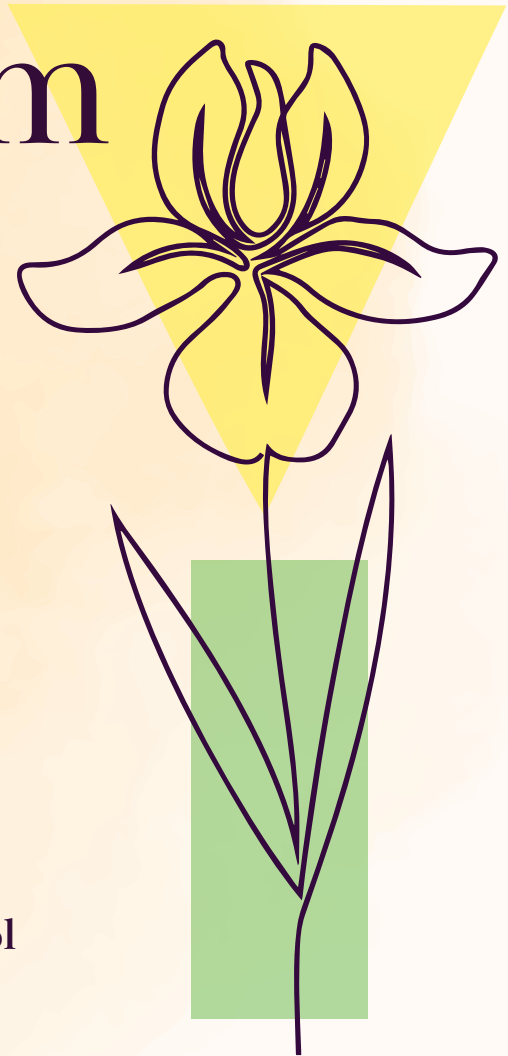
Student Monologues for Classroom Study:

Holidays,

Celebrations,

**Days of
Remembrance**

Monologues written by high school
and middle school students



Student Monologues for Classroom Study: Holidays, Celebrations, Days of Remembrance

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INTRODUCTION

Welcome to the *Student Monologues for Classroom Study: Holidays, Celebrations, Days of Remembrance* Resource!

The pieces were selected from an international call for student-written monologues. We asked students to share their perspective on a holiday or day of remembrance. Some used this opportunity to write about how a specific day connects to their identity; others wrote wonderful comedic pieces to highlight a holiday that doesn't get a lot of attention. Students wrote about National Coming Out Day, World Autism Awareness Day, Diwali, World Suicide Prevention Day, Groundhog Day, Valentine's Day, Christmas, Hanukkah, New Years, and more. It was stunning to receive such a diverse collection of middle school and high school pieces. These monologues are written for students, by students.

A COUPLE OF NOTES

- Each author has decided on a variety of Permissions that they will allow for their monologue. Review the Performance Permissions Grid on pg 91. Please respect the wishes of these authors.
- Some of these pieces contain intense subject matter and language. This is the author's choice; please do not censor them. If a monologue goes against administrative mandates, **choose another piece**.
- Some pieces contain subject matter that may be triggering for some students. Pay attention to how students react to a monologue. Give them the space they need to respond or reflect on certain subjects.

A **big thank you** to every student who took the time to write, and to every teacher who took the time to submit their students' work. This resource would not exist without you and we're extremely grateful.



USING THESE MONOLOGUES IN THE CLASSROOM

This resource is meant for the classroom. Use these monologues for classroom study and monologue performance work. Each monologue comes with:

- **Close Reading Questions:** Choose a monologue to analyze as a close reading exercise. Students will read a monologue three times and after each read answer the corresponding text-dependent questions that address:
 - **First reading:** the WHAT of the monologue (what is happening in the text)
 - **Second reading:** the HOW of the monologue (the technique and theatrical context of the monologue, how it is written)
 - **Third reading:** the WHY of the monologue (why the author made certain choices, and the reader's connection to those choices)
- **Staging Suggestions:** These notes will help students effectively stage the monologue. You could have students work on a monologue in pairs, with one actor and one director. Then have them switch roles.
- **Character Development:** A set of character-specific questions and suggestions for your student actors to build a three-dimensional character.

In addition, in the Lesson Plan Appendix there are five lesson plans that you can use:

- **Emergency Lesson Plan: Monologue Analysis**
 - This lesson plan gives students a monologue and its corresponding close reading questions to complete in a class period. The lesson also comes with a Substitute Teacher Instruction Sheet, a Substitute Teacher Feedback Sheet, and a My Class Info Sheet.
- **Lesson Plan 1: Read, Analyze, Write**
 - Students will read and analyze a monologue with a unique perspective. They will then write their own monologue.
- **Lesson Plan 2: Personified Character**
 - Students will read and analyze a monologue that uses a specific literary device. They will then write their own monologue using that device.
- **Lesson Plan 3: Identity Monologue**
 - Many of the monologues in this resource explore identity. Students will read one such monologue, write a response, and then write their own monologue.
- **Lesson Plan 4: Title Analysis and Response**
 - Students will analyze a list of titles, write a monologue that they think goes with a specific title, and then compare and contrast their monologue with the original text.

MONOLOGUES



GROUNDHOG DAY RITUAL

By Madelyn Davies

Groundhog Day is what we consider a very important tradition in my family. It's probably the most honored day of the year in our household! My Ma' tells me that we're lucky that we can celebrate it how we do. You see, Pa' told me about Groundhog Day when I was three. At the time, a day all about groundhogs sounded fabulous to me! Those small creatures deserve all the celebration in the world! But then Pa' told me why we celebrate Groundhog Day like we do. Every year, in Punxsutawney Pennsylvania, a groundhog named Phil leaves his burrow. If the little thing doesn't see his shadow, then Spring will arrive early. But if he sees his shadow, winter will last six weeks longer! It's so weird! How could a little mammal that sleeps half the year, control something so important? Does he have weather powers? Could he summon a hurricane upon us? Are groundhogs able to control fall and summer too? How could the groundhog possibly perform such a feat like determining the season?! What if the groundhog decides to make us live in an eternal winter!? That would be terrible! Pa' spooked me a bit with that, but I've learned to cope with this existential crisis of mine. It's only taken seven years for me not to cry every ten minutes, hoping that the groundhog doesn't send a tornado our way. That's why our family worships Phil on this day of celebration, February second. We have a whole feast, in honor of the groundhog, ya' know. And then we put some of the groundhog's favorite food, carrots, on his altar. We say a little prayer and hope that Punxsutawney Phil decides to spare us and end our winter early. The family farm couldn't survive in a winter that lasts all year round. Luckily, Phil has been merciful to us, and not trapped us in an endless winter yet. But there's always next year.

**For monologue performance permissions, please refer to Page 91.*

CLOSE READING QUESTIONS

Read the monologue through a number of times for deeper comprehension and analysis.

FIRST READING

1. What's your first impression of the monologue?
2. What day is this monologue about?
3. What facts do you know about the character?
4. What facts do you know about the character's family?
5. What is the tone of the monologue?
6. Finish this sentence: "It's only taken ____ years for me not to cry every ____ minutes."
7. Do you have any questions about the monologue?
8. What is the key detail of this monologue? What makes you choose this detail?
9. What is the key idea in the monologue? Describe the monologue in one sentence.

SECOND READING

1. Analyze the first sentence of the monologue. What does it tell you about the character?
2. Is this an absurd or realistic monologue? Cite the text to support your answer.
3. Based on the tone of the piece, how do you assume the character would deliver this text?
4. How does the author use word choice to paint a specific picture of the character and their family?
5. In your opinion, why does this family believe this story about the groundhog?
6. In your opinion, why does the author use traditional events for an untraditional holiday?
7. In your opinion, how does the character see themselves?
8. What is the significance of the line, "We say a little prayer and hope that Punxsutawney Phil decides to spare us and end our winter early"?
9. What is the significance of the line, "But there's always next year"?
10. Based on their language, how would you physicalize this character?
11. What action words would you use to describe this character?
12. How would you costume this character? What do they look like?

THIRD READING

1. How does the author want you to respond to this monologue?
2. What is the message of this monologue? Describe it in one sentence.
3. What is the author trying to convey about worship?
4. What is the author trying to convey about family?

5. Do you think this character is a reliable narrator? Are they trustworthy? Why or why not? Cite the text to support your answer.
6. Do you know anyone who believes in something that you don't?
7. Can you connect to this character and their unique view of Groundhog Day, even if you don't share their experience? Why or why not?
8. What are your own feelings about Groundhog Day?

STAGING SUGGESTIONS

Things to think about as you stage the monologue.

This character has a specific point of view and a specific way of talking. Both of these should be an element in your staging. Based on the text, create a physicalization for the character including a pose, walk, and gesture. How can you incorporate this physicalization into how you tell the story? The character also shares a series of traditions as part of their celebration. What do they look like? Do they look traditional? The monologue goes on quite the emotional journey, from celebration, to fear, to reverence. How can you physicalize these emotional states? What movements would visualize these emotions?

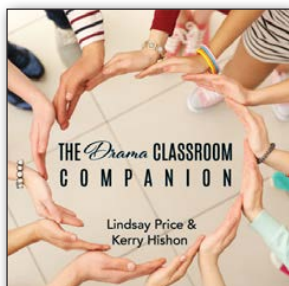
CHARACTER DEVELOPMENT

Important questions for three-dimensional characterization.

1. Why does the character choose this moment to speak? Who are they talking to?
2. How does this character see themselves? What is their identity?
3. Based on what you learn in the text, what is the character's relationship with their father?
4. Describe the feast that the character talks about in celebration of Groundhog day.
5. Write out the background of this character and their family's celebration of Groundhog day. How did it come to pass?
6. What happens during the prayer the family does each year?
7. Describe the bedroom space of the character. Given what you know about the character, how would they keep their personal space?
8. What does this character want? What obstacles are in their way? Do they get what they want by the end? Why or why not?
9. What is a typical day like for this character, regardless of the events of the monologue? Keep their language and personality in mind as you write.
10. Write out some personal details for this character that don't have to do with the monologue. What's their favourite and least favourite music, food, and pastime? What type of clothes do they like to wear? What do they want for the future? Flesh out the character beyond the world of the piece.

Teaching Resources

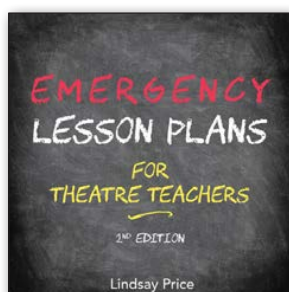
Quality resources to use in your drama classroom



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.

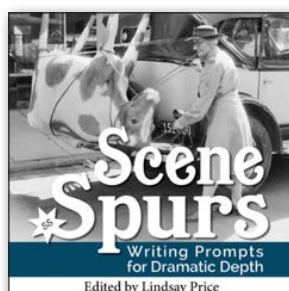
theatrefolk.com/companion



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.

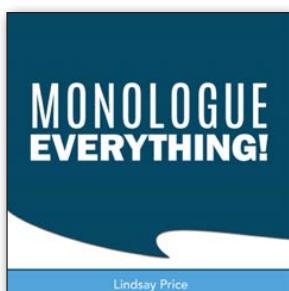
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Scene-Spurs: Writing Prompts for Dramatic Depth

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



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?

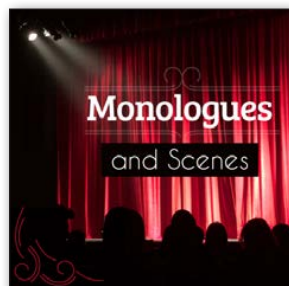
theatrefolk.com/monologue-everything



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.

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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.

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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.

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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

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Competition Material

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