

Sample Pages from The Drama Classroom Companion Volume 2

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THE DRAMA CLASSROOM COMPANION

VOLUME 2



Theatrefolk®

Kerry Hishon

The Drama Classroom Companion: Volume 2
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THE DRAMA CLASSROOM COMPANION: VOLUME 2

We said it in *The Drama Classroom Companion* and we'll say it again: the drama classroom helps students build the skills they need for theatrical performance as well as the skills they'll need in the real world through creative thinking, critical thinking, communication, and collaboration.

We believe it so much that we have put together **Volume Two**, which contains pages and pages of articles, exercises, reflections and rubrics that focus on teaching the 21st century teen.

How do you approach common assumptions about drama class? How do you rehearse backwards? How do you deal with students who can't handle feedback? How do you communicate with parents? How do you encourage ensemble thinking? This volume contains everything you need to further explore creative thinking, critical thinking, communication and collaboration in the drama classroom. **All new!**

The skills of the 21st century are not about technology, even though every teenager is fully wired. It's about teaching students to think in a new way. It's about analysis and feedback. It's about working together, and learning how to talk to one another. These are the skills students need beyond the classroom. They don't need to know how to recall information; they need to know how to apply, analyze, and re-imagine information.

The more material you have at your fingertips to teach and reach the 21st century learner, the better. Enjoy!



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CREATIVE THINKING

Creative thinking comes with some preconceived notions.

First, that to be creative means you're coming up with the best idea. Creative thinking does not mean coming up with one idea, with the perfect idea, or even with the right idea. Creative thinking means coming up with **all the ideas**. It means creating more ideas than you need, encouraging wrong choices. This means students have to be comfortable and confident around failure, which is always difficult. It's difficult to equate creativity with failure.

Another preconceived notion for creative thinking is that being creative means being talented. Students (and many adults) often have a knee-jerk reaction when asked to be creative - *I can't do that, I'm not creative. I'm not talented*. They think that being creative is something you're born with, rather than a skill that can be learned or practiced.

To be creative simply means to come up with something different. To think in a different direction. Anyone can apply creativity to any situation. This is especially important to bring up to students who feel insecure in the drama classroom. Creativity is not about talent, or being the best. It's about doing something different.

In the classroom, this can mean rehearsing a scene backwards, switching roles, or figuring out practical ways to use a smartphone in rehearsals. There are so many ways to be creative that are available to every student.

FOUND OBJECTS EXERCISE

This simple classroom scene exercise challenges students to not only prepare a scene for a staged reading performance, but to also include a variety of theatrical “extras” using items found in the classroom. Students must use their time wisely to ensure they have enough time to prepare their scene (they’re given just one class period to rehearse) and incorporate the various found objects. At the same time, they must think creatively about what items they’ll use, how they’ll use them, and where they’ll incorporate them into the scene.

INSTRUCTIONS

1. Divide students into partners or small groups.
2. Give each group a short scene. You can find free two-person scenes and group scenes at theatrefolk.com/free-resources, or select your own.
3. Within their groups, students will determine who will play what role, and come up with blocking for the scene. As this exercise is meant to be completed in one class period, scenes will be rehearsed to be presented as staged readings – no need for students to memorize the lines.
4. Using only objects found in the drama classroom, on their persons, or in their bags, students must include all of the following elements in their scene:
 - a. Three different props
 - b. Three costume items
 - c. One sound effect
 - d. One lighting effect

Variations: If you wish, you may provide a “tickle trunk” with various objects that students can use in their scenes. Or, for a challenge, you may give each student one object that they **MUST** incorporate into their scene somehow. Which element they use it for, however, is their choice. For example, they might choose to use a light-up fairy wand as one of their prop items OR as their lighting effect.

5. Found Object Rules & Restrictions:
 - a. Objects must be incorporated into the scene. For example, it’s not enough for a student to carry a backpack throughout the scene; the backpack must be used in an interesting or theatrical manner.
 - b. Objects do not have to be used for their intended purpose. For example, if a student uses a chair as a prop item, they don’t have to sit on the chair, but they can if they want to.

- c. Students may not use three of the same object in their scene. For example, they cannot use three chairs as their three props. They must use three different items. Also, they cannot use one prop three different ways. For example, the chair cannot be used in the same scene as a computer, a car, and a tent. They must use three separate, unique objects.
 - d. If there is a limited number of objects to go around (for example, only six rehearsal blocks for ten groups), students will have to share during their presentations.
 - e. For lighting effects, students may use the overhead lights (if permitted by the teacher) or other items in the classroom. For example, they may open or shut window blinds, or use a flashlight app on their phone. For safety, please ensure students do not turn the lights on and off randomly, as other students might injure themselves in the darkness.
- 6. Students will present their scenes to the rest of the class, incorporating their found objects.
 - 7. If time permits, allow students time to give feedback to other groups, pointing out what worked well and what could be improved next time.
 - 8. Students will complete and submit an individual reflection.

FOUND OBJECTS EXERCISE

Reflection

1. Write down one thing you learned from this exercise.
2. How does this exercise help you become a better actor?
3. What was the easiest part of working in a group today?
4. What was the most challenging part?
5. Given the chance to do this exercise again, what would you do differently?

FOUND OBJECTS EXERCISE

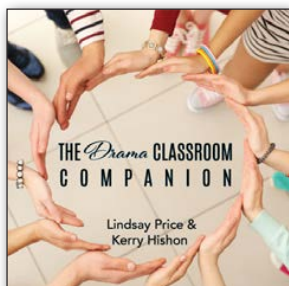
Rubric

REQUIREMENT	BELOW AVERAGE	SATISFACTORY	PROFICIENT	ADVANCED
All found object elements included within scene (3 props, 3 costumes, 1 SFX, 1 LFX)	2	4	6	8
Stays on task during exercise	2	4	6	8
Works well with partner/group members	2	4	6	8
Participates in feedback discussion, both as a performer and an audience member	2	4	6	8
Reflection sheet completed thoroughly and thoughtfully	2	4	6	8
Overall effort	4	6	8	10

TOTAL ____/50

Teaching Resources

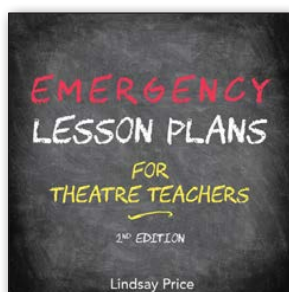
Quality resources to use in your drama classroom



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.

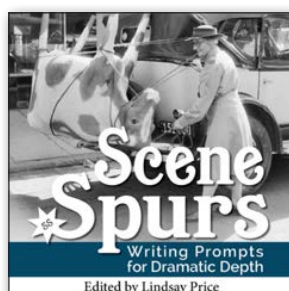
theatrefolk.com/companion



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.

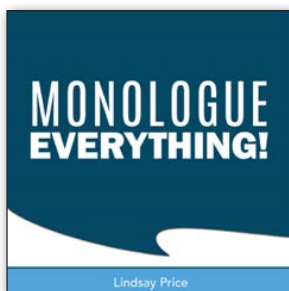
theatrefolk.com/elp



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



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?

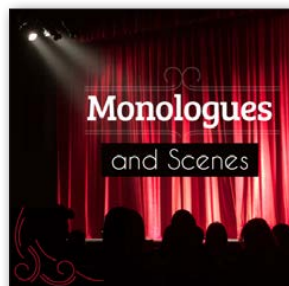
theatrefolk.com/monologue-everything



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.

theatrefolk.com/ptt

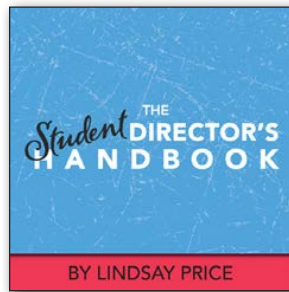


Monologue and Scene Collections

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



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



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



Competition Material

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

theatrefolk.com/competition



www.theatrefolk.com/resources