

Scripting the Stage: Mastering the Playscript

Learning objective: To structure a playscript using standard conventions, including stage directions, character names, and dialogue.

Use this scaffold to draft a scene for your own original play. Remember to place character names in the left margin, use colons after names, and place stage directions in brackets or italics to show how the actors should move or speak.

The curtain rises to reveal a dusty, forgotten library where Pip the caterpillar is perched atop an enormous dictionary.

Word bank: cautiously · exclaims · with a trembling voice · meanwhile · abruptly · gazing into the distance · subsequently · shudders · triumphantly

1. Setting the Scene: Describe the atmosphere of your stage. What can the audience see and hear when the curtain first rises? Start with: 'The stage is set in...' (2 marks)

2. Character Introduction: Introduce your two main characters. How do they enter the stage and what is their initial mood? Start with: 'Enter [Character Name], who appears to be...' (2 marks)

3. Dialogue Development: Write a short exchange where the characters disagree about something. Use stage directions to show their emotions. Start with: '[Character Name]: (angrily) ...' (3 marks)

4. The Turning Point: Explain why a sudden change in the plot occurs. Justify why your characters react the way they do to this new discovery. Start with: 'Suddenly, a loud noise echoes as...' (3 marks)

5. Compare and Contrast: Compare the personality of your protagonist with your antagonist. How does their dialogue reflect their differing motivations? Start with: 'Whilst [Name] speaks with..., [Name] responds by...' (4 marks)

6. Conclusion: Write the final stage direction that brings the scene to a close. What might happen if the characters do not resolve their conflict? Start with: '[Character Name] exits, leaving the audience to wonder...' (2 marks)

Extension challenge: Imagine your play is being performed in a large theatre. Write a paragraph explaining how lighting and sound effects could be used to enhance the mood of your scene. Justify your choices by linking them to the characters' emotions.