YOUNG STORYTELLERS®

COLLABORATIVE SCRIPT TO STAGE HEAD MENTOR HANDBOOK

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2023 - 2024 SCHOOL YEAR

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Our Mission and Vision
Young Storytellers equips young people to be the driving force of their own narratives. We're passionate about bringing people together and creating stories to raise the voices of those who don't often get heard.

We believe that when a young person understands the power of their own story — made of their unique background, culture, race, gender, sexuality, immigration status, geographic location, and economic status — it creates a more empathetic and equitable future for everyone.

We raise voices, one story at a time.

We Value

Belonging
We celebrate originality and individuality. Our community is made better when we can speak fully from our unique perspectives and identities.

Connection
People are at the center of everything we do. Genuine connection requires empathy, sensitivity, and honesty.

Exploration
Being vulnerable and inventive requires a supportive environment. We foster spaces where we can explore ourselves, the communities in which we live, and how we can impact the world.

Play
Play with purpose allows us to investigate the world with wonder. This is how we open the road to creativity.

Equity
Unique identities, backgrounds, and perspectives make the world a better place. We fight against the racism, prejudice, and bias that exist in our systems and cultures so that all people are treated with respect and dignity.

Why We Do This Work

The fundamental intention behind Young Storytellers isn't to create the next generation of screenwriters, but rather to develop creative learning behaviors through the art of storytelling.

In Script to Stage, we use storytelling to help young people explore their creativity and imagination. We get them excited about writing by giving them a chance to write what they want. Plus, we pair them with a one-on-one mentor who shows up for them consistently and encourages the expression of their creative voice. Throughout the program, mentors give students the individualized attention and room to try new things, make mistakes, work through challenges, and make discoveries. We are committed to setting our students up for success, especially by tailoring the experience to their learning needs. The mentor finds out what works and doesn't work for their writer and interacts with them in the way they learn best: visually, auditorily, kinesthetically, or some combination of all three. The YS classroom is structured a bit differently from the typical classroom, giving students the space to discover their goals, strengths, likes/dislikes, learning style, and voice.

The world that young people operate in today is more complex, economically competitive, and interconnected than at any other time in human history. To ensure that students are fully prepared to meet the demands of the 21st Century, we engage them in a program to develop their ability to recognize and manage emotions, build relationships, solve interpersonal problems, and make effective and ethical decisions. This hope for our students to realize the impact that their thoughts, feelings, and words can have on the world is at the heart of all our programs.

Volunteer Bill of Rights

At Young Storytellers, we want our volunteers to know exactly what they're getting into and that means that each individual is entitled to certain rights. This applies to Head Mentors, mentors, and actors, who each have:

- The right to work in a safe environment.
- The right to be treated with respect by all staff members.
- The right to be engaged in meaningful work and be actively included regardless of any physical limitations.
- The right to be told what impact your work has had on the community.
- The right to ask any staff member about the organization's work.
- The right to provide feedback about your experience.
- The right to receive financial information or an annual report.

If you ever have questions about any of this, please don't hesitate to contact us.

Reimbursements

Please fill out a Reimbursement Form, which can be found on the Volunteer Resources Page. You will need a receipt or invoice to complete the form.

Reimbursements will be paid out on our general bookkeeping dates of the 15th and last day of the month. For budgeting and tax purposes related to the timing of our fiscal year, we stop accepting receipts one semester past the end of the term for which the receipt was used (i.e., if you have a receipt from Fall 2021, we cannot reimburse past Spring 2021).

Scripts

Our Script Reading Committee reads all of our student scripts to find selections for The Biggest Show (our annual celebration and fundraiser), pieces for social media, and other communications to get more people interested in Young Storytellers!

Send your final scripts to: scripts@youngstorytellers.com

Program Overview

In this program, writers will work in groups to create a screenplay collaboratively, using the writing process: brainstorming, planning, writing, and editing a story. Throughout the sessions, students will develop ideas and create an outline for their script. Their characters will pursue a goal and overcome obstacles to learn a lesson. As the program progresses, students will draft, add details, and revise a five-page script with their mentor. At the end of the program, writers will meet actors, explain their creative choices to them, and watch them perform their scripts via a Big Show.

Collaborative Script to Stage Programmatic Goals

The Collaborative Script to Stage program will:
- Support writers as they co-author a five page screenplay with a group of peers, under the guidance of a mentor.
- Support the development of a caring relationship between a mentor, a young writer, and their peers.
- Provide a space for writers to explore any topic or theme that is exciting to them, and bring that idea to life in story form.
- Feel celebrated for their creative ideas through a Big Show or other cumulative event.
- Collaborate with their peers to brainstorm, negotiate, and build upon each other's ideas.

YS Anchor Standards

Through the design of each piece of our programs, we aim to enhance the ability of our writers to:
- Have confidence in their ability to create stories and share their creative ideas with others.
- Collaborate with their peers and mentors through the creation of agreements, learning feedback models, and collaborative exercises and writing.
- Bring their creative ideas to fruition through planning and outlining processes.
- Reflect on personal experiences through storytelling, mentorship, and community-building exercises.
- Understand perspectives different from their own through story creation and sharing.
- Have access to a space to explore their feelings, views, goals, and challenges in life.
- Express themselves around themes, subjects, and issues that are important to them.
- Feel and think that what they have to say is of value to others.
- Connect with others through creative writing, sharing, and interactive exercises.

Common Core English Language Arts Alignment

English Language Arts Standards » Writing » Grade 5
Text Types and Purposes:
    CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.5.3
    Write narratives to develop real or imagined experiences or events using effective technique, descriptive details, and clear event sequences.
        CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.5.3.A
        Orient the reader by establishing a situation and introducing a narrator and/or characters; organize an event sequence that unfolds naturally.
        CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.5.3.B
        Use narrative techniques, such as dialogue, description, and pacing, to develop experiences and events or show the responses of characters to situations.
        CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.5.3.D
        Use concrete words and phrases and sensory details to convey experiences and events precisely.
        CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.5.3.E
        Provide a conclusion that follows from the narrated experiences or events.

Production and Distribution of Writing:
    CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.5.4
    Produce clear and coherent writing in which the development and organization are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience.
    CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.5.5
    With guidance and support from peers and adults, develop and strengthen writing as needed by planning, revising, editing, rewriting, or trying a new approach.

English Language Arts Standards » Speaking & Listening » Grade 5

Comprehension and Collaboration:
    CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.5.1
    Engage effectively in a range of collaborative discussions (one-on-one, in groups, and teacher-led) with diverse partners on *grade 5 topics and texts*, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly.
        CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.5.1.B
        Follow agreed-upon rules for discussions and carry out assigned roles.
        CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.5.1.C
        Pose and respond to specific questions by making comments that contribute to the discussion and elaborate on the remarks of others.

Social Emotional Learning Alignment
Core Competencies from Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning (CASEL)

Self-Awareness:

The abilities to understand one's own emotions, thoughts, and values and how they influence behavior across contexts. This includes capacities to recognize one's strengths and limitations with a well-grounded sense of confidence and purpose.

Self-Management:

The abilities to manage one's emotions, thoughts, and behaviors effectively in different situations and to achieve goals and aspirations. This includes the capacities to delay gratification, manage stress, and feel motivation and agency to accomplish personal and collective goals.

Responsible Decision-Making:

The abilities to make caring and constructive choices about personal behavior and social interactions across diverse situations. This includes the capacities to consider ethical standards and safety concerns, as well as to evaluate the benefits and consequences of various actions for personal, social, and collective well-being.

Relationship Skills:

The abilities to establish and maintain healthy and supportive relationships and to effectively navigate settings with diverse individuals and groups. This includes the capacities to communicate clearly, listen actively, cooperate, work collaboratively to problem solve and negotiate conflict constructively, navigate settings with differing social and cultural demands and opportunities, provide leadership, and seek or offer help when needed.

Social Awareness:

The abilities to understand the perspectives of and empathize with others, including those from diverse backgrounds, cultures, and contexts. This includes the capacities to feel compassion for others, understand broader historical and social norms for behavior in different settings, and recognize family, school, and community resources and supports.

Social Justice Alignment

Social Justice Anchor Standards and Domains, from Teaching Tolerance (a project of the Southern Poverty Law Center)

<u>Identity</u>: Students know who they are and express pride in themselves.
> **ID.4**
> Students will express pride, confidence, and healthy self-esteem without denying the value and dignity of other people.

<u>Diversity</u>: Students are curious and respectful about learning about others.
> **DI.6**
> Students will express comfort with people who are both similar to and different from them and engage respectfully with all people.
> **DI.9**
> Students will respond to diversity by building empathy, respect, understanding, and connection.

<u>Justice</u>: Students can recognize unfairness taking place in the world around them.
> **JU.11**
> Students will recognize stereotypes and relate to people as individuals rather than representatives of groups.

<u>Action</u>: Students have the tools and skills to respond to unfairness.
> **AC.16**
> Students will express empathy when people are excluded or mistreated because of their identities and concern when they themselves experience bias.
> **AC.18**
> Students will speak up with courage and respect when they or someone else has been hurt or wronged by bias.

Before Your First Session

Recruit mentors. It is the head mentor's responsibility to gather a group of mentors, enough for a two-to-one ratio (student:mentor). Reach out to past mentors from your school and community. Invite friends, colleagues, family members, and people you meet in line at Trader Joe's! Send them to us for a training, application, and background check and consider what a wonderful gift you are giving them by inviting them into the Young Storytellers programs and community! Our staff will help place mentors at your school, too. But remember, it is on you to keep count and communicate what you need.

Pre-Session Meet Up with Mentors (30-40 min)

A Pre-session meet up with all your mentors is helpful to foster a sense of community and belonging, especially with first time mentors! This space can also be helpful to alleviate any concerns. Your mentors can get familiar with the materials and see what the expectations are.

Example of Agenda for this Meet-Up:
1. Ice Breakers with mentors
    "If someone were to play you in a movie, who would it be?"
    "What is something (hobby, tv show, etc.) you've picked up or restarted recently?"
2. Have everyone look at the materials and answer any questions.
3. Ask about comfort with leading activities and teaching sections. Go over leadership expectations.
    Since mentors will be taking a bigger leadership role leading the groups, it's okay if you do most of the group teaching. However, we still encourage utilizing your mentors to lead if possible.
4. All mentors should be trained by this point, but take a moment to reiterate best student engagement group practices.
5. Set mentor/HM communication expectations/preferences
    Create "agreements" around how mentors can support classroom management.
6. Make sure your mentors know what to expect when checking into the school and have completed any necessary paperwork or sign ups based on your school and district.
7. Remind your mentors that the education sector is historically underfunded and overworked, so we should treat teachers, front desk folks, and other school staff with patience and understanding.
8. Address any questions and concerns — be sure to carve out time at the end for this!

How to work with your School Liaison / Teacher

Having a great working relationship with your school liaison can make your semester run smoothly! Before your session starts, schedule a meeting with your liaison at least a week prior to the first session. This meeting is an opportunity to:
1. **Introduce Yourself**
   - Establish a personal, warm relationship. Find out their preferred mode of communication (i.e., email, call, text).
   - State your commitment to this program and the students you will be working with.
2. **Discuss Program Logistics**
   - Review the schedule to make any necessary adjustments. Let your Young Storytellers contact know about any schedule changes.
   - Receive a complete list of students (legal & nicknames if applicable) from the liaison if you have not received one by then.

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- Discuss how and why writers were chosen. Are there any students who need additional support? Is there anything you need to know about certain students? Be aware that certain information may be confidential, like special education accommodations, so your liaison may not be able to share everything with you.
- Take a tour or walkthrough of the YS classroom space. Identify where to check in, who to check in with, how to get to the space, the nearest bathroom, etc.
    - **_If your space is outdoors_**, please check in with your liaison to see who will provide the necessary classroom materials (portable white board, microphone if necessary, etc).
3. **Discuss Safety and School Protocols**
    - Ask whether students can take their survey in Session Nine on school devices, like a computer lab, or laptop / iPad / Chromebook cart, etc.
    - Ask the liaison how the school is enforcing any safety protocols among the students. This could include health protocols like vaccinations or testing.
    - Start the conversation with your liaison about protocols for an in-person Big Show.
        - Will it be in an indoor auditorium or an outdoor space?
        - How many classrooms will be invited?
        - How are they handling one-time volunteers?
        - Will parents / families be invited?
        - Is an in-person Big Show logistically possible given what you know now?
            - _Note to HM:_ _We'll keep in contact with you if the need for a virtual Big Show arises later in the semester._

Day to Day Best Practices

Despite our staff's diligent scheduling, conflicts like half days, parent conferences, testing days, and random field trips may still be scheduled. These could throw off the Young Storytellers' schedule. To avoid unpleasant surprises, try to check in with your liaison as much as possible, this will make everything go more smoothly.
- Call the school in the morning to see which kids are absent and inform their mentors.
- Check in with the school upon leaving to confirm next week's schedule.
- Remember to be as flexible and understanding as possible with your school liaisons. Almost everyone in most public school systems are overworked and underpaid.
- If you need support — ask our team. We are here for you!
- Before your sessions:
    - Ask yourself: "How will I accomplish what I need to do today?"
    - Prepare: Plan your activities and questions in advance.
    - Review your lesson plan and think about the best way to reach your writers.
    - Email your mentors for each week and remind them what they will be doing each week. We encourage you to delegate games and discussion points to your mentors in order to create a group atmosphere.
    - Bring lots of energy, enthusiasm, passion, fun, and humor.
    - Write your goals for the day on the whiteboard — this will help you follow your plan without glancing at notes all the time.

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A Note on Not Writing Violence

Young Storytellers envisions a more empathetic and equitable world, as such we see violence as a last resort in resolving conflicts. Whether armed or unarmed, the use of deadly force — or force capable of causing bodily harm — is to be avoided in our writers' stories. Mentors should encourage students to look for the most creative, least destructive solutions in their lives as well as storytelling; both to promote the value of life and the value of creative thinking. Further, mentors should encourage students to promote human health, happiness, and understanding, not ignorance and human suffering.
Questions mentor can ask regarding violence in script:

1. Consider the audience you are writing for.
2. What message does your violent act say? Is it absolutely necessary or gratuitous?
3. Is this the most original and creative solution you can create?
4. How does this support the lesson of your story?

The Breakdown

This handbook will guide you through the steps involved in leading each session.

Sessions consist of the following main components:

Session Prep: We want you to feel prepared for each Session. Make sure you've read over the lesson plans for the day and checked off any tasks and delegation you need to do for each session.

Intro: We want our students and mentors to know what's going on during the session. This helps relieve anxiety and gives students an idea of everything we're accomplishing each day.

Play: We highly value meaningful Play as a method to engage our students and mentors and to create a fun sense of community. Play also enables us to develop/practice skills (in a fun and engaging way) that our students will utilize during the create section of the day.

Learn: What you will be teaching and the way you teach it will support our values of Connection and Exploration.

Create: The task they are to complete by the end of the day is directly related to our values of Connection and Exploration.

Share: Time set aside for students to express their ideas aloud to the rest of the group. This practice also enforces our sense of Belonging.

Reflect: Make sure to check in with your mentors to see how they and the students are doing.

Volunteer Resources

We try to include a lot of helpful information in this handbook, but there are some things you may still need! For information that updates frequently, we have a Volunteer Resources page, found on the Young Storytellers website. (https://www.youngstorytellers.com/volunteer-resources) Here you will find your Head Mentor To-Do List, Staff Contact Information, film examples, and other helpful tools.

Warm-Ups

Because Young Storytellers values play, each session begins with a game or playful connection to the content. These games are essential to the curriculum. Sometimes, though, your writers may need an additional transitional activity to enter the space. To help writers transition into a more playful, connected, and open place, you can do a warm-up at the beginning of your session, in addition to the designated game. These warm-ups should take no more than five minutes and can be played before the Play section of your lesson plan. See Appendix B for a variety of warm-up options.

Session One - Welcome to Young Storytellers

During this session, writers will learn about the Young Storytellers Collaborative Script to Stage program, expectations, and Big Show. Then, they will meet in their writing groups to get to know each other and create agreements for collaborative storytelling.
Goal: By the end of the session, the group will establish expectations and each writing group will create agreements.

Writer Learning Objectives

By the end of the session, writers will be able to:
- Envision what they will accomplish over the course of the program.
- Create collaborative group agreements that identify how they will behave and how they want to be treated over the course of the program.

Run of Show
Welcome & Intro
Name Game
Program Overview, Expectations, & Big Show
Inspiration for Storytelling
Class Agreements
Group Work
Share
Goodbye

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Session Plan

What to do before your session:
- ❏ Meet with your school liaison and / or partner teacher.
- ❏ Decide student and mentor groups: Two students per one mentor.
    - ❏ Check out your writer selection forms to see how to divide them up! If you have enough mentors to double up, think about pairing a new mentor with a returning mentor, or pairing mentors with complementary skills (like facilitation and screenwriting experience) that can allow them to better support one another.
    - ❏ Note them down on the covers of the group workbooks.
- ❏ Use the giant post-it pads or a whiteboard to prep your lesson:
    - ❏ Agreements
    - ❏ Introduction Questions
- ❏ Email your mentors the plan for the Session (*mentor weekly emails can be found on the Head Mentor Resources page*).

What to do after your session:
- ❏ Ask mentors to stay for a few minutes after to check-in and recap the session.
- ❏ Complete your Head Mentor Session One check-in form.

INTRODUCTION (5 min)

Welcome everybody to their first session! Allocate some time at the top of the session for each student to transition to the space. Let the students know you're excited to be there and keep the energy up in the room. Start this session by asking them what they already know about the Young Storytellers program.

Introduce the Goal for the day and the Run of Show.
Goal:
By the end of the session, the group will establish expectations and each writing group will create agreements.

Run of Show:
Welcome & Intro
Name Game
Program Overview, Expectations, & Big Show
Inspiration for Storytelling
Class Agreements
Group Work
Share
Goodbye

PLAY (10 min)

NAME GAME
Purpose: To get to know the group.
Instructions: Have each writer pair up with the mentor next to them. They can work together to come up with an adjective and gesture. Ask everyone in pairs to think of an adjective (a descriptive word) that starts with the same first letter as their first name (or the same sound) and a gesture that fits their adjective. You can list several example adjectives on the board to both inspire and support students. When groups are ready, go around the circle and — one at a time — have each person say their name and adjective while doing their gesture (e.g. - "Hi, I'm Laughing Lexi"). After each person shares, the entire group should repeat their intro and gesture together ("Hi, Laughing Lexi").
Helpful Tips:
- It's okay if writers struggle a bit with this. Struggling a little can be part of the learning process and it's okay if writers need help (that's why we're here).
- Another way you can do this is by having everyone create a "middle name" with a word, phrase, nickname, or superlative in between their first and last name. ("Hi I'm Netta 'Angel Voice' Most" "Hi Netta 'Angel Voice' Most!")

LEARN (20 min)

Discuss the Collaborative Script to Stage program, expectations, and Big Show. The students will all be creating a collaborative script together.

Make sure to cover these points:
- We want to include everyone's ideas and create a story we are all proud of.
- We're going to have many group discussions and will work in small groups to brainstorm, write, edit, and revise scenes.
- This is how a lot of TV shows are written, and even some movies.
- We will be working in groups and each group will write and introduce their five-page script at the Big Show.
- In the end we'll have some cool scripts that mesh together everyone's ideas in a pool of creativity, and actors will perform them in a Big Show here at school for your classmates!

Discuss where they can get inspiration from for their story ideas.

Like professional writers, they'll be working in groups to really flesh out their stories in detail.

Writers often get inspiration from their real lives, and their world and surroundings often influence the world and surroundings in their story.

Like each of us, each character has an identity, formed by their experiences with the world and with other people.

They have traits and characteristics that might affect how they act, and those can change sometimes.

Discuss their group assignment.

Today, you'll be meeting with your small groups to get to know each other and prepare you to write a story together.

You'll be discussing your own lives and what could possibly inspire you, as well creating collaborative group agreements to make sure that working together is as fair and easy as possible.

Since we're all collaborating and building on each others' ideas, we have to pay extra special attention to the Agreements to make sure everyone is comfortable sharing and has a voice in the writer's room.

Professional writers do this in order to write the best possible stories, and also to have the most fun in the process!

Review Class Agreements
- Most of your work will be done in these groups, BUT we will be learning some key concepts in each session together as a whole class. We'll need to set some Agreements for when we meet in a big group.

Class Agreements:
1. **Listen and be respectful** — Be an active listener when someone else is speaking.
2. **No violence** — Violence shouldn't be taught as a solution, so get creative with your script ideas and how to solve problems.
3. **Original ideas only** — We want you to feel full ownership of your script idea. It's okay to be *inspired* by an existing book, video game, movie or TV show, but the characters, setting, goal, and obstacles for your stories should be unique.
4. **No real names** — These stories will be performed live in front of other students and adults. We don't want to use this story to complain about or make fun of anyone. While some of the story may be inspired by people in our real lives, let's avoid using specific names of people we know in case they see this and feel bad.

CREATE (20 min)

Break the students and mentors out into their groups.
[This is where your mentors will utilize the Group Handbook to guide their small group. Below are the instructions for your mentors.]

First they will discuss these **Essential Questions:**
1. *What is your favorite movie and why?*
2. *Pick one character from the movie. What words would you use to describe that character?*

3. Would you describe yourself or anyone in your life with those words too?

Create Group Agreements
Since we're all collaborating and building on each others' ideas, we have to pay extra special attention to the Agreements to make sure everyone is comfortable sharing and has a voice in the writer's room.

Everyone here wants to have the best experience possible and for others to have fun too. It's okay if we accidentally break an agreement — everyone makes mistakes! — but we should always respect our group. It can help to think about what behavior we want from ourselves and others.

Have the group create agreements essential to collaborating, building ideas together, and showing respect for other people's ideas

Answer these **Essential Questions:**
- *What can we do to make sure we are coming up with ideas together?*
- *What do we do if someone breaks an agreement?*
- *What are some things we can do or say if we see an agreement being broken? If you accidentally break an agreement, how do you want someone else (student or mentor) to address it?*
    - *I noticed...*
    - *I feel...*
    - *Can we try...*

Have each group select one agreement to share out to the class. A student or mentor can share an example of what they would do or say if a mentor breaks an agreement (because adults make mistakes too sometimes!).

SHARE (5 min)

Each group will share one agreement they came up with to do if an agreement is broken.

You can use a circle, cold call groups, have them volunteer, or have them call on another group to go after them.

Thank them for being so creative, and express how excited you are for the next session.

Have the mentors give the students a round of applause and say Goodbye!

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REFLECT (5 min)

After your students have left the session, take some time to reflect with your mentors on how it went. You can give them a run down of the following session and / or ask for volunteers to lead some teaching points, be the note taker, or be tech support for the next session.

Session Two - Our Story

During this session, writers will review the story elements through collaborative gameplay and talk about the purpose of storytelling. They will also discuss how to use their creative voices to teach an important lesson. Then they will work in a small group to brainstorm story elements and create a logline for their script.

By the end of the Session, each group should have completed a Divide a Story and Logline.

Writer Learning Objectives

By the end of the session, writers will be able to:
- Identify the basic story elements (setting, character, goal, climax, resolution, lesson).
- Name the two different types of characters: protagonist and antagonist.
- Create a one-sentence logline based on the brainstormed story elements for their script.

Run of Show

Welcome & Intro
The Wind Blows
Story Elements
Line Up Game
Divide a Story
Loglines
Group Work
Share
Goodbye

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Session Plan

What to do before your session:
- ❏ Post or write your class agreements out on a giant post-it pad or whiteboard
- ❏ Prepare a giant post-it or whiteboard with the Divide-a-Story and Logline Activity
- ❏ Email your mentors the plan for the Session *(mentor weekly emails can be found on the Head Mentor Resources page).*

Optional:
- ❏ Delegate teaching points out to your mentors.

What to do after your session:
- ❏ Ask mentors to stay on for a few minutes after to check-in and recap the session.
- ❏ Reach out to YS staff for support if things didn't go well and you need help **OR** fill out the optional check-in form if you want to report any issues or celebrations from the session.

INTRODUCTION (5 MIN)

Introduce the Goal for the day and the Run of Show.

Goal:

By the end of the Session, each group should have completed a Divide a Story and Logline.

Run of Show:
Welcome & Intro
The Wind Blows
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PLAY (10 min)

THE WIND BLOWS
Purpose: To build connection
Instructions: In the circle of chairs, have everyone stand up and remove one chair from the circle. One person stands in the middle and says something that is true about themselves personally and adds this to the phrase, "The wind blows..." ("The wind blows anyone who loves chocolate"). Everyone in the

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circle who this is true for has to switch places. One person will be without a chair, and they must go to the middle spot and name something true about themselves.

Helpful Tips:
- As the group becomes more comfortable with the game, you can encourage them to say more personal things like things they value and care about.

LEARN (20 min)

Review Class Agreements
1. Listen and be respectful
2. No violence
3. Original ideas only
4. No real names

Teach Story Elements:
Hand out the Line-Up Cards to all your mentors. Each card has a question on it and an answer that corresponds with one of our YS story elements (i.e., Q: What do we call the players in a story? A: Characters).

One at a time, in a completely random order, ask your mentors to read aloud the question on their card to the writers in the group. Facilitate as needed in order to get your writers to tell you all the answers.

OPTIONAL: Ask them to give you an example of the element from a popular movie to deepen their understanding of key elements. OR you can draw an example on the board to help visualize, and/or give another example from an animated film. Film examples with elements are available on the Volunteer Resources page.

Setting: Where and when the story takes place.

Character (Protagonist): The main character whose journey we follow in the story.

Goal: What the protagonist wants or hopes to achieve.

Obstacle (Antagonist): The character standing in the way of the protagonist getting their goal.

Climax: The most exciting part of the story, where the protagonist and antagonist face each other.

Resolution: What happens at the end of the story (after the climax).

Lesson: What the character and audience learn from the story.

Clarify Climax and Resolution if needed (they can be challenging elements for writers to fully grasp)

Climax: The climax is the most exciting part of the story, when everything is at risk. We aren't sure what's going to happen — it's the peak! This is going to be where the protagonist faces the most challenging obstacle and either succeeds or fails at achieving their goal.

Resolution: The resolution is the final image of the story, where all the pieces come together in the end.

The Line-Up Game (see Games Appendix)

Divide a Story
Let the students know that this activity is all about brainstorming. Brainstorming is when you try to come up with a bunch of ideas before settling on one idea. Before deciding on their movie idea, we want to give you time to brainstorm a bunch of ideas they can put in their movie idea.

Ask the group for suggestions for each "box." Combine ideas together if needed. Have the group come up with detailed ideas. You set the tone for what they will come up with with their mentors.

You can use a go in a circle, cold call students, have them volunteer, or encourage the group to share in the chat for you to read out loud.

NOTE: You DO NOT need to ask all of the above questions for each box. But can use them and other questions as ways to ask the students to come up with or expand on their ideas.

Divide-A-Story

Let's come up with the story elements for our story!

Setting: *Where and when could this story take place? What kinds of things might be in that place?*	**Character (Protagonist):** *Who could be the protagonist of a story? What are they like and what makes them that way?*
Goal: *What could the protagonist want and why? How could they try to get that goal?*	**Obstacle (Antagonist):** *Who or what is trying to stop the protagonist from getting what they want? Why are they doing that?*
Climax/ Resolution: *What happens when the protagonist and antagonist go head to head? How does the story end?*	**Lesson:** *What are important lessons that the characters in our story or the audience watching our story could learn?*

Logline

Using the ideas you wrote down, fill in the logline with the student examples and say aloud some loglines to model one-sentence stories for the students.

Logline

Let's simplify the Divide A Story ideas to plug into the Logline so we can easily and quickly remember what our story is about.

A one sentence summary of our story!
Fill in the blanks with the idea we brainstormed in the Divide a Story exercise.

In a _____ , _____
                       (setting)   (protagonist)

wants

_____
                                    (goal)

but _____ stands in their
                             (obstacle/antagonist)

way, so they _____
                                  (climax)

learning _____ .
                                 (lesson)

The Purpose of Storytelling
When thinking about your story ideas it can be helpful to keep in mind that stories are a way to share our ideas on how we see the world and how the world should be. It's a very powerful way to tell the audience something really important. That's why when we write, we should think about the lesson we want to teach.

A lesson is a specific thing you want the audience to take away. For example, if your story is about teamwork or a team, a lesson might be that you should ask for help when you need it, or that teammates shouldn't keep secrets because it can hurt people. If your story is about standing up for what's right, your lesson could be that it's okay to be different or to stick up for people who are being bullied.

It can help to start with the lesson so your story has a clear message. If you feel your writers can handle the challenge, have them come up with a lesson first and build a story that clearly teaches it.

However, this can be high-level, so if they are getting stuck on the lesson, it's okay to start with other elements. It's also okay to go back and adjust the lesson once the writers have the other story elements.

CREATE (30 min)

Break the class out into Writing Groups.

[This is where your mentors will utilize the Group Workbook to guide their small group. Below are the instructions for your mentors.]

Mentors will review the Group Agreements from Session One.

Divide-A-Story (25 min)
Mentors will use the Divide a Story page for their group to brainstorm some ideas together.
Answer these Essential Questions:

Setting:
- *Where and when could this story take place?*

Character / Protagonist:
- *Who could be the protagonist of a story?*
- *How would you describe them and why?*

Goal:
- *What could the protagonist want and why?*
- *How could they try to get that goal?*

Obstacle / Antagonist:
- *Who or what is trying to stop the protagonist from getting what they want?*
- *Why are they doing that?*

Climax / Resolution:
- *What happens when the protagonist and antagonist go head to head?*
- *How does the story end?*

Lesson:
- *What are important lessons that we think the characters in our story or the audience watching our story could learn?*

Logline (15 min)
- Pull up the logline. Ask students to decide on one idea for each element and plug those elements into the Logline. This will help them easily and quickly remember what their story is about.
- Then decide on who is going to share out the group's lesson to the class.

SHARE (5 min)

Have each group share the lesson their story will be teaching.

Have the mentors give the students a round of applause and say Goodbye!

REFLECT (5 min)

After your students have left the session, take some time to reflect with your mentors on how it went. You can give them a run down of the following session and / or ask for volunteers to lead some teaching points, be the note taker, or be tech support for the next session.

Session Three - Our Obstacles

In this session, writers will learn about the importance of obstacles. They will work in writing groups to add obstacles to their story ideas and then create a detailed outline to serve as their script roadmap.

By the end of the session, each group will outline their stories from beginning to end.

Writer Learning Objectives

By the end of the session, writers will be able to:
- Plan out a script by using an outline (practice planning and organizing skills).
- Create obstacles that build and start their story off with a Big Thing That Happens Right Away.

Run of Show

Welcome & Intro
Obstacle Game
Outline Format
Group Work
Share
Goodbye

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Session Plan

What to do before your session:
- ❏ Prep the outline elements on a giant post-it or whiteboard.
- ❏ Email your mentors the plan for the day.
- ❏ Select a mentor to play / act in the Obstacle Game.

Optional:
- ❏ Delegate teaching points out to your mentors.
- ❏ Make sure the mentors have access to the Essential Questions for the session.

What to do after your session:
- ❏ Ask mentors to stay on for a few minutes after to check-in and recap the session.
- ❏ Reach out to YS staff for support if things didn't go well and you need help **OR** fill out the optional check-in form if you want to report any issues or celebrations from the session.

INTRO (5 min)

Introduce the Goal for the day and Run of Show.

Goal:

By the end of the session, each group will outline their stories from beginning to end.

Run of Show:
Welcome & Intro
Obstacle Game
Outline Format
Group Work
Share
Goodbye

PLAY (15 min)

OBSTACLE GAME:
Purpose: To physically demonstrate the importance of having obstacles in our scripts.
Instructions: Have one mentor play the protagonist on one side of the room and ask them to walk to the other side. Easy. Boring. Now, have the writers come up with an imaginary obstacle for them to get over, under, or through. Have another mentor physically represent that obstacle, and have the first mentor try to cross over to the chair again. See how much more interesting that is? Have the writers add two more obstacles (one at a time, played by two more mentors) and repeat.

Helpful Tips:
- Encourage writer ideas and opinions throughout the game.
  - Ask them if it was interesting to watch someone just walk over to the other side of the room (no!) and why. They might not remember the word obstacle, but we all know that the struggle is the most interesting part.
  - Have the writers come up with the obstacles that the mentors will perform. Challenge them to come up with obstacles that aren't easy to overcome. This will encourage them to pick strong obstacles in their scripts.
  - Ask the writers to come up with how the mentor will overcome the obstacle. This will encourage them to come up with creative solutions in their scripts.
- Make sure the mentor you have selected for this game is comfortable improvising, as they will have to figure out how to deal with multiple obstacles in front of the group.
- Do not let the writers participate in this demonstration, as this is an important lesson and they will retain it better if they watch. If you have an eager group, allow them to be sound effects but encourage them to watch the mentor-protagonist struggle. As much as we love involving our writers, they learn these important technical concepts better if they are observing the action rather than participating.

Alternative:
- If you have an especially excitable class that may have trouble focusing on too much action in the middle of the circle, have one mentor play the protagonist and simply mime the obstacles.

Debrief
Ask, "What was the story like in the first round, when there were no obstacles?"

"What made it more interesting in the second and third rounds?" OBSTACLES! Emphasize that obstacles make the story.

LEARN (15 min)

Discuss why we need obstacles in our stories (P. 8 in Workbook)
Ask the group why the story became more entertaining during each addition to the Obstacle Game.

There's a famous saying, "If at first you don't succeed, try, try again." Let them know that **the key to a good story is struggle**. And there's another saying that we love at Young Storytellers: "All good things come in threes." Which is why we added three obstacles in the game.

Tell the writers that the first step in writing a great story is brainstorming, which they did last week for their logline. The next step is writing an outline, which is what they will do today. The outline will be the map they can turn to if they get lost while writing their stories. This session, they'll be creating an outline, or a sort of skeleton for their story that will help them once they start writing.

Briefly remind the students of the elements they came up with last week for their story:
- Setting
- Character
- Goal
- Obstacle / Antagonist
- Climax
- Lesson

Go over the outline format with the students, pointing out the new terms as you go.

- Opening Setting
- Protagonist
- Big Thing That Happens Right Away
- Goal & Motivation

- Antagonist
- Obstacle #1 to overcome and how they overcome it
- Obstacle #2 to overcome and how they overcome it

- The Final Biggest Obstacle / the Climax and how they overcome it
- Resolution
- Lesson

Introduce:
The Big Thing that Happens Right Away — This moment is what forces your protagonist into action and starts off their adventure. This can be the point at which you introduce your protagonist's goal and motivation.

For example, if Maria wakes up, goes to school, and then turns in her book report, that's not very big and it doesn't happen right away. However, if Maria wakes up and a dragon flies in to steal Maria's book report, forcing her to chase a magical creature to turn in her homework and keep her straight A's, that's a BIG thing that happens RIGHT AWAY!

Expand on Obstacles
Obstacles - The best obstacles are the ones the protagonist has to creatively solve, not ones that are easy or that the protagonist has an easy solution for.

For example, if Joaquin has to cross a wide river and happens to have magical shoes that can walk on water, that's pretty convenient and not an interesting way to get around an obstacle. Whereas if Joaquin sees a ship full of dancing pirates and has to teach the captain a new move in order to gain passage and cross the river, that's a creative solution for getting around an obstacle and way more fun.

Optional if time:
Motivation - When you're writing, make sure you think about why the protagonist wants to achieve their goal and why the antagonist is standing in their way. The protagonist should have a good reason to want their goal and the antagonist should have a good reason to stop the protagonist from getting it.

For example, if Zari wants to visit the moon because she's bored, that's not quite as interesting as if she has to collect moon rocks to feed the Moon Dog she is secretly keeping in her room. And if her brother Darius wants to stop her because he's bored, that's not as interesting as if he knows that feeding a Moon Dog moon rocks turns them into massive Moon Monsters.

CREATE (20 min)

Last week, the group came up with an antagonist or larger obstacle that the protagonist has to overcome. This week, we'll be getting more specific and planning three obstacles — two new obstacles that lead to the largest obstacle created last week.
Tell them they will plan three obstacles because good things come in threes, and it's a common rule in writing and filmmaking.

Remind them that the obstacles should get bigger as the story progresses, and the last obstacle should be the biggest. The last obstacle is also called the Climax, and it's where the protagonist faces the Antagonist and either gets their goal or doesn't.

Remind them of the Class Agreements.

Break the class out into Groups.
[This is where your mentors will utilize the Group Workbook to guide their small group. Below are the instructions for your mentors.]

Mentors will go over the Group Agreements and the Logline from the last session.

Fill out the outline sheet to really flesh out their ideas for the story.
- Mentors can ask each student one question and have them take between 30 seconds and 1 minute to think about the answer, or ask one student a question and ask the next to build on the previous student's answer.

Answer these Essential Questions:

Opening Setting
- *Where does our story start and where does the opening scene take place?*

Protagonist
- *What is the protagonist doing at the beginning of the story?*
- *Who is the protagonist and what are they like?*

Goal
- *What does the protagonist want and why?*
- *What do they do or say to show this?*

Big Thing That Happens Right Away
- *What happens to spring the protagonist into action?*

Antagonist
- *How do we introduce the antagonist?*
- *What does the Antagonist want and why?*

Obstacle #1 to overcome and how they overcome it
- *What is the first obstacle presented to the protagonist?*
- *How does the protagonist overcome this obstacle?*

Obstacle #2 to overcome and how they overcome it
- *What is a BIGGER obstacle presented to the antagonist?*
- *How does the protagonist overcome this obstacle?*

The Final Biggest Obstacle / the Climax and how they overcome it
- *What happens when the protagonist goes face to face with the antagonist and how is this the biggest challenge?*
- *How do they overcome this obstacle?*

Resolution
- *What happens at the end after the climax?*
- *Where do the protagonist and antagonist end up?*

Lesson
- *What do the characters or audience learn from the story?*
- *How do we know they've learned this?*

Have the group decide which obstacle they want to share and who will share out on behalf of the group.

SHARE (5 min)

Have each group share out one of the obstacles they wrote.

Have the mentors give the students a round of applause and say Goodbye!

REFLECT (5 min)

- After your students have left the session, take some time to reflect with your mentors on how it went. You can give them a run down of the following session and / or ask for volunteers to lead some teaching points, be the note taker, or be tech support for the next session.

Session Four - Our Screenplay

In this session, the group will learn basic screenplay format. In small groups, writers will draft the first scene of their script in screenplay format using their outlines as a guide.
By the end of the session, each group will learn screenplay format and will write the first scene of their script.

Writer Learning Objectives

By the end of the session, writers will be able to:
- Accept and add on to the ideas of others.
- Understand and use screenplay format (action, dialogue, slugline).
- Collaborate in small groups to write scenes in screenplay format.

Run of Show
Welcome & Intro
Warm Up
Learn Screenplay Format
Madison Paragraph
Group Work
Share
Goodbye

Session Plan

What to do before your session:
- ❏ Write out the screenplay elements and Madison Paragraph(s) on a giant post-it or whiteboard.
- ❏ Email your mentors the plan for the day.

Optional:
- ❏ Delegate teaching points out to your mentors.

What to do after your session:
- ❏ Ask mentors to stay on for a few minutes after to check-in and recap the session.
- ❏ Reach out to YS staff for support if things didn't go well and you need help **OR** fill out the optional check-in form if you want to report any issues or celebrations from the session.

INTRO (5 min)

Introduce the Goal for the day and Run of Show.

Goal:
By the end of the session, each group will learn screenplay format and will write the first scene of their script.

Run of Show:
Welcome & Intro
Warm Up
Learn Screenplay Format
Madison Paragraph
Group Work
Share
Goodbye

* Check in with each group during and after the session to see how their writing is progressing and get a sense of whether they are on track or whether they may need extra writing time. If 1-2 groups are behind this session, see if extra writing time in the following sessions can get them up to speed.

PLAY (10 min)

Emotions Game
Purpose: Help students brainstorm dialogue that might arise from certain emotions.
Instructions: Ask one student or mentor to name an emotion. Then, ask another student to share a word, phrase, or sound they might make when they are feeling that emotion. If they are stuck, you can ask them what scenario might make them feel that emotion and what words or sound they might use in that situation. Finally, ask a third student or mentor to say the word / phrase or make the sound, and then act out a movement that they might make to embody that word / phrase / sound. Repeat this process 2-3 times with different people naming an emotion, naming a word / phrase / sound, and adding a movement.

Debrief
Adding emotions to our scripts makes them interesting, but showing how our characters are feeling is even more interesting. As we add dialogue to our scripts, we can think about what they may say or do.

LEARN (20 min)

Briefly look at a script together. **Go through the first page of the sample script**, Don Falcon's Pizza on page 36 of this handbook and page 13 of the writer workbook, together. Ask students what they notice and allow them to carry the conversation to anything they notice. Next, have students identify some Basic Storytelling Elements they see in the script: Setting, Characters (Protagonist and Antagonist), The Big Thing That Happens Right Away, Goal, and Obstacle.

The Difference Between a Book and a Script

Ask the writers what makes a screenplay different from a traditional story they would read in a book.

A book is meant to be read whereas a screenplay is meant to be performed, which is why it's so important that they write out exactly what they want their actors to DO and SAY. We call talking in movies dialogue, and it's very important to move the story along.

Today is when the students will start to turn their story from an idea to an actual script that actors can read and perform. That's why, just like in the Emotions Game, it's helpful not only to think about how a character feels, but how they might express it through words, sounds, and movements.

Teach Screenplay Format / Basic Screenplay Elements

A **Slugline** tells us the setting and it always has 3 parts: whether the scene is inside or outside (INT. / EXT.), where it is, and what time of day it is.

Action tells us what is happening, that is, what the characters are doing and what the audience is seeing; it's also where characters are introduced and described.

When **characters** are first introduced, their name is in all caps and there is usually a short description of the character.

Dialogue is what the characters say.

Parentheticals are a part of dialogue that tells actors HOW that particular line is said; it could be a certain voice, volume, accent, emotion, or even an action done while they say the line.

Reference the Don Falcon's script mentioned earlier.

THIS IS A SLUGLINE
It tells us - quickly - where we are and when. It has three parts:

1.

Inside / Outside
Location
Time of day

INT. DON FALCON'S PIZZAS – DAY
Character description

Character name

ELLA, the head Pizza Chef, makes a pizza. Ella searches for flour in the cabinet. She accidentally bumps a bowl of olives. The olives fall on Donald's pizza.

THIS IS AN ACTION LINE
It tells us what the characters are doing when we see them.

Ella bakes the pizza with olives on it.

5 MINUTES LATER.

Ella carries two pizzas to DONALD'S, the owner, table. She places the one with olives in front of him.

Ella is about to leave, but Donald notices the olives.

THIS IS DIALOGUE
It is what the characters are saying.

                DONALD
                 (screams)
            Why is there olives on my pizza?! A
            girl shouldn't be a chef!

Ella feels embarrassed.

                 ELLA
               (in a teary voice)
            Sorry. I'll bring another one.

Ella takes the pizza away. She places it on the counter and goes to--

INT. DON FALCON'S BATHROOM – DAY

Ella cries in the bathroom.

She stops crying and thinks for a moment. She remembers what he said and has an idea.

INT. DON FALCON'S PIZZAS – DAY

Ella exits the bathroom. She goes up to Donald.

                 DONALD
           Where's my pizza!?

                 ELLA
           I don't think it was fair that you
           said girls shouldn't be chefs. So
           I'm gonna make a pizza commercial
           to prove they can.

Donald looks at Ella like she's crazy. Ella leaves.

Donald pulls out his cell phone and makes a call.

Do the Madison Paragraph as a group

MADISON PARAGRAPH
- **Purpose:** To apply new knowledge of screenplay elements by turning a paragraph into a screenplay.
- **Instructions:**
    - Have someone read the Madison Paragraph out loud (either from the post-it / whiteboard or the group workbook).
    - Once you've taught the Basic Screenplay Elements, have the writers turn it into screenplay format, line by line.
    - It should look like this:

Paragraph version:

Twelve-year-old sassy Madison dribbles her basketball in the driveway.

Her dad walks outside and says, "Madison, I told you to come inside and

eat your lunch!" Madison keeps dribbling and says, "But Dad, I'm

practicing!" Her dad scoffs and says, "Your food is going to get cold."

Madison stops dribbling and says, "Aww Dad, you never let me have any

fun!" as she storms inside the house.

Screenplay version:

```
EXT. DRIVEWAY - DAY

MADISON (12 years old, sassy) dribbles her basketball. Her DAD
walks outside.

                    DAD
          Madison, I told you to come
          inside and eat your lunch!

Madison keeps dribbling.

                    MADISON
```

```
                    But Dad, I'm practicing!

                            DAD
                        (scoffs)
                    Your food is going to get
                    cold.

     Madison stops dribbling.

                            MADISON
                    Aww Dad, you never let me
                    have any fun!

     Madison storms inside.
```

- **Helpful Tips:**
    - Encourage the students to reference the screenplay elements you have written and posted to remind themselves of how a screenplay is structured.
    - You can go in a circle, cold call students, or have them volunteer.

CREATE (20 min)

Last week, the group came up with an outline for the story. This week, we'll be writing out what the characters actually say and do in screenplay format so it can be performed at the Big Show!

Remind them of the Class Agreements.

Break the class out into Groups. Mentors will be using Final Draft on their laptops or tablets this week as the students begin to write.
- Go over the Group Agreements.

Mentors go over the Outline in Writing Groups from the last session.

In these scenes, groups should be answering the relevant Essential Questions for the scene they're working on:

- *Where is the first scene taking place (INT / EXT, location, time of day)?*
- *Which characters are in the scene and what are they doing or saying?*

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- *How do we introduce the protagonist's goal and motivation?*
- *What happens to spring the protagonist into action (the Big Thing that Happens Right Away)?*

Obstacle #1:
- *What is the first obstacle presented to the protagonist?*
- *Where does the protagonist face that obstacle (INT / EXT, location, time of day)?*
- *What do the characters do and say to overcome this obstacle?*

Groups will likely be working on the first scene this session, but in case they get ahead, mentors can use these questions for the next part of the script.

Obstacle #2:
- *What is the second obstacle presented to the protagonist?*
- *Where does the protagonist face that obstacle (INT / EXT, location, time of day)?*
- *What do the characters do and say to overcome this obstacle?*

Have the group decide who will share their favorite line of dialogue and the parenthetical for the group.

SHARE (5 min)

Have each group share out their favorite line of dialogue and the parenthetical that goes with it.

Have the mentors give the students a round of applause and say Goodbye!

REFLECT (5 min)

After your students have left the session, take some time to reflect with your mentors on how it went. You can give them a run down of the following session and / or ask for volunteers to lead some teaching points, be the note taker, or be tech support for the next session.

[*OPTIONAL*] Have the mentors send you their scripts so you can monitor each group's progress. **We recommend checking in with each group during and after the session to see how their writing is progressing and to get a sense of whether they are on track or whether they may need extra writing time. If one-two groups are behind this session, see if extra writing time in the following sessions (by choosing a shorter warm up or cutting optional activities) can get them up to speed.**

Session Five - Our Details

Writers will learn about the value of details and how to add rich details and descriptions to their stories. Then they will work in small groups to add details and continue writing their script. **By the end of the session, each group should have finished writing at least one-two of their obstacle scenes.**

Writer Learning Objectives

By the end of the session, writers will be able to:
- Understand how to add rich details and descriptions to their scripts.
- Collaborate in small groups on the addition of rich details to scenes in their scripts.

Run of Show

Welcome & Intro
McDonald's Game
Details Discussion
Group Work
Share
Goodbye

Session Plan

What to do before your session:
- ❏ Email your mentors the plan for the day.
- ❏ Select mentors to act in the McDonald's Game.

Optional:
- ❏ Delegate teaching points out to your mentors.
- ❏ Make sure the mentors have access to the Essential Questions for the session.
- ❏ Print out the McDonald's Scene for your mentors to read from if they are acting.

What to do after your session:
- ❏ Ask mentors to stay on for a few minutes to check-in and recap the session.
- ❏ Start to recruit actors for your Big Show! We suggest at least 6 and take into account how many characters your scripts have. This time your mentors can act in their Big Show!

INTRO (5 min)

Introduce the Goal for the day and Run of Show.

Goal:
By the end of the session, each group should have finished writing at least one-two of their obstacle scenes.

Run of Show:
Welcome & Intro
McDonald's Game
Details Discussion
Group Work
Share
Goodbye

* Check in with each group during and after the session to see how their writing is progressing and get a sense of whether all groups are on track.

PLAY (5 min)

<u>BORING MCDONALD'S SCENE</u>
Purpose: Demonstrates the importance of details in a scene.
Instructions: Have two mentors act out a short scene taking place at McDonalds. One person is the

cashier and the other is the customer. Follow this script:

INT. MCDONALD'S - DAY

The CUSTOMER walks up to the CASHIER.

> CUSTOMER
> Can I have a cheeseburger?

> CASHIER
> Sure. That'll be $1.50.

The customer pays the cashier. The cashier gives them a cheeseburger.

> CASHIER
> Here's your order.

> CUSTOMER
> Thanks.

The customer walks out.

After the scene is performed, ask the group what they thought of the scene and ask them how they can make the scene more interesting the next time around (more details!). Do one or two more performances of the scene, each time adding more and more details/story elements. By adding details slowly, your writers will be able to clearly see how each addition enriched the scene. Make sure the mentor actors stick to the script to show how writing these things into the story and action lines changes the delivery even if the dialogue stays the same.
2nd time: Give the customer and cashier a goal, motivation, and/or obstacle.
3rd time: Give them both character traits and descriptions.

Helpful Tips:
- Before adding details during the last two performances of the scene, take suggestions from your writers. It's important for them to be a part of the ideation process. It will give them an opportunity to see a creative idea come to life, which is a vital part of our work!
- Pick fun and expressive mentors with acting experience. They're going to have to take direction on the spot.

Debrief
Ask students which round of the McDonald's Scene was the most interesting or felt like the most complete story. Emphasize that the details are the thing that makes it more interesting.

LEARN (20 min)

Details discussion:
During the Big Show, actors will only be acting out what is written on the page because they won't know what else to do.

In order for the actors to bring their vision to life, they need to put in detailed descriptions of how a character moves and speaks. Scripts are meant to be performed. We usually can't hear what a player is thinking so it's important that we can tell what they're thinking by what they SAY and DO.

They should also be describing the setting and characters so the audience can imagine what each scene looks and sounds like.

Let them know about an important phrase: "If it's not on the page, it's not on the stage!" (You can do this as a call and response if you choose).

Transitions
Mention that another important detail that each scene needs is how the characters get from one scene to the next.

They should keep in mind what happens before and after each scene. Think about how that might affect the details of their scene.

For example, if a character had to win a race in the last scene, they might enter the next scene tired and out of breath.

CREATE (25 min)

Last week, the group started writing their first scene. This week, the class will continue writing and making sure to add details to each scene.

Remind them of the Class Agreements.

Break the class out into Groups.
- Go over the Group Agreements

Mentors go over the outline and what's happened so far in the script.

When writing the dialogue and action, use these questions to prompt:

Obstacle #1:
- *What is the first obstacle presented to the protagonist?*
- *Where does the protagonist face that obstacle (INT / EXT, location, time of day)?*
- *What do the characters do and say to overcome this obstacle?*

Obstacle #2:
- *What is the second obstacle presented to the protagonist?*
- *Where does the protagonist face that obstacle (INT / EXT, location, time of day)?*
- *What do the characters do and say to overcome this obstacle?*

Obstacle #3 / Climax:
- *What is the biggest obstacle the protagonist has to overcome?*
- *What do the characters do and say when they go face to face with the antagonist?*
- *How do they overcome this obstacle?*

Resolution (time permitting):
- *What happens after the climax?*
- *Where do the protagonist and antagonist end up?*
- *What do the characters or audience learn from the story?*
- *What do they have to say about everything that has happened?*

Have the group decide which detail to share and who will share out on behalf of the group.

SHARE (5 min)

Have each group share one detail from the script.

Have the mentors give the students a round of applause and say Goodbye!

REFLECT (5 min)

After your students have left the session, take some time to reflect with your mentors on how it went. You can give them a run down of the following session and / or ask for volunteers to lead some teaching points, be the note taker, or be tech support for the next session.

Remember to check in with each group during and after the session to see how much of their script they've written and get a sense of whether all groups are on track.

Session Six - Our Lesson & Resolution

The group will revisit the importance of a story's lesson and resolution. They will work in small groups to continue writing their stories with the lesson and resolution in mind.
By the end of the session, each group should have reached the climax of their script.

Writer Learning Objectives

By the end of the session, writers will be able to:
- Understand the importance of the resolution and lesson to a story.
- Add a climax to their story with rich details.
- Write a resolution that reveals a lesson to their audience.

Run of Show

Welcome & Intro
Don Falcon's Pizza Pictures
Resolution & Lesson
Group Work
Share
Goodbye

Session Plan

What to do before your session:
- ❏ Email your mentors the plan for the day.

Optional:
- ❏ Delegate teaching points out to your mentors.

What to do after your session:
- ❏ Ask mentors to stay on for a few minutes after to check-in and recap the session.
- ❏ Continue recruiting actors for your Big Show!

INTRO (5 min)

Introduce the Goal for the day and Run of Show.

Goal:
By the end of the session, each group should have reached the climax of their script, and may continue on to the resolution.*

Run of Show:
Welcome & Intro
Don Falcon's Pizza Pictures
Resolution & Lesson
Group Work
Share
Goodbye

* Continue checking in with each group to monitor progress. Note any groups who might need extra writing time.

PLAY (5 min)

Choose from Warm Up or Games appendix

LEARN (15 min)

Don Falcon's Pizza Pictures

Hold up the before and after image from Don Falcon's Pizza (see below). Ask the writers these questions to describe what they see:
- ● What is going on in the first photo?
- ● What is going on in the second photo?

- What is different about the two photos?
- These photos show the beginning and end of a story. What do you think happened in the middle?

Each time a student gives an observation, make sure to ask, "What makes you say that?"
- We want to engage our writers' critical thinking. Instead of just saying what they notice, we want them to think about why they see it that way.
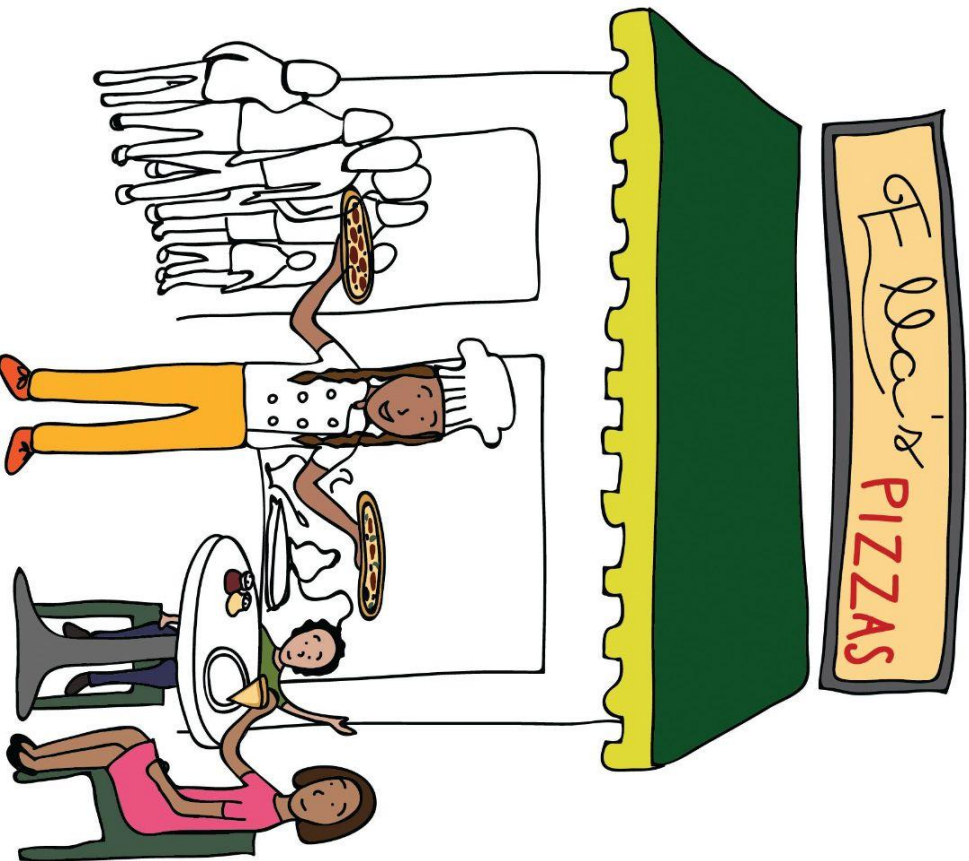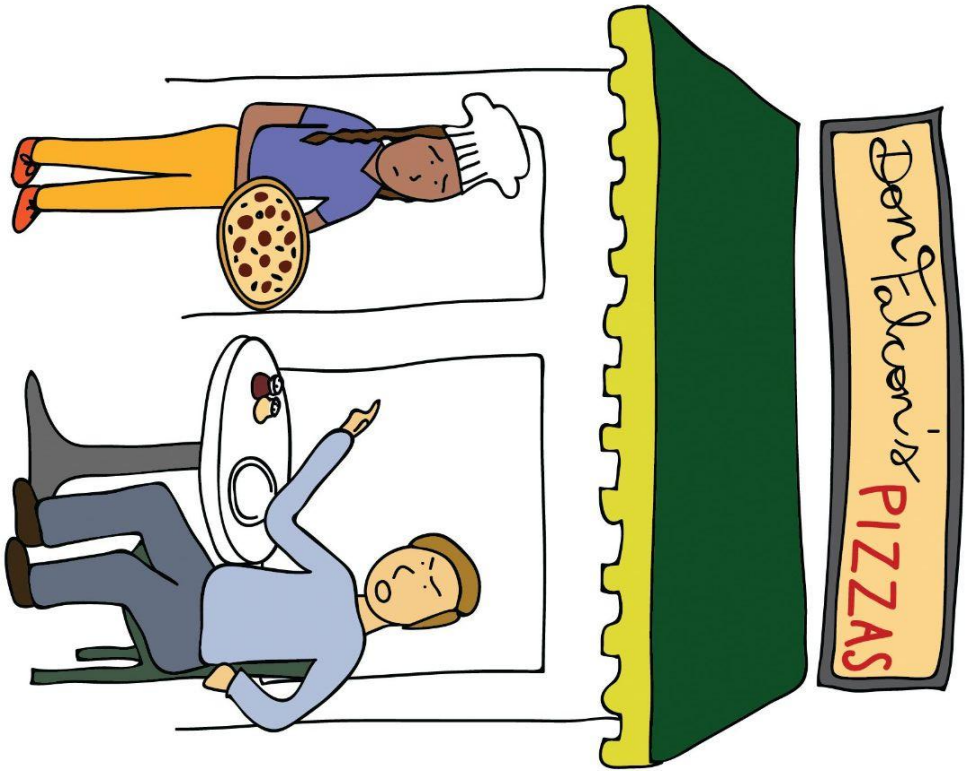
Lesson and Resolution

The Resolution is the final lasting image or scene the audience sees, so make it spectacular. We like to think of it as the happily-ever-after (or not) moment that tells us where the protagonist and our main characters end up and how they are different.

Lessons provide meaning to a story. Lessons show the audience what we care about and why it is important to us. Writers often reveal their lessons through the resolution — the characters can have a realization or reach a goal that reveals what the author wants them to learn.

Ask, "What do you think the resolution of Don Falcon's story was? What could be a possible lesson?"

CREATE (30 min)

Last week, the group added some details to their scenes and wrote some more. This week, groups will continue writing, with their lesson and resolution in mind as they write.

Remind them of the Class Agreements.

Break the class out into Groups.
- Go over the Group Agreements.

Then groups will finish their scripts and answering these Essential Questions:

Obstacle #2:
- *What is the second obstacle presented to the protagonist?*
- *Where does the protagonist face that obstacle (INT / EXT, location, time of day)?*
- *What do the characters do and say to overcome this obstacle?*

Obstacle #3 / Climax
- *What is the biggest obstacle the protagonist has to overcome?*
- *What do the characters do and say when they go face to face with the antagonist?*
- *How do they overcome this obstacle?*

Resolution:
- *What happens after the climax?*
- *Where do the protagonist and antagonist end up?*
- *What do the characters or audience learn from the story?*
- *What do they have to say about everything that has happened?*

Have each group decide one line of dialogue to share and who will share it out to the large group.

SHARE (5 min)

Each group will share one line of dialogue from their script.

REFLECT (5 min)

After your students have left the session, take some time to reflect with your mentors. You can give them a run down of the following session and / or ask for volunteers to lead some teaching points, be the note taker, or be tech support for the next session.

Remember to check in with each group during and after the session to see how much of their script they've written and get a sense of whether all groups are on track.

Session Seven - Our Screenplay

The group will finish their scripts. They may hear their script read aloud, share feedback, and make revisions to sections of their scripts. Students will then create the title and tagline for their story. The session will end with a brief conversation about what to expect at their virtual show.
By the end of the session, each group should have finished writing their full script.

Writer Learning Objectives

By the end of the session, writers will be able to:
- Be able to accept and add on to the ideas of others.
- Take turns listening and sharing in order to engage in group conversations.
- Understand how to add rich details and descriptions to their scripts.
- Be able to provide and accept constructive feedback.

Run of Show
Welcome & Intro
Tagline Off
Revisions
Feedback Model
Table Read
Revise or Finish Writing
Big Show Info
Goodbye

Session Plan

What to do before your session:
- ❏ Email your mentors the plan for the day.

Optional:
- ❏ Delegate teaching points out to your mentors.
- ❏ Find Taglines to use in the Tagline Off.

What to do after your session:
- ❏ Ask mentors to stay on for a few minutes after to check-in and recap the session.
- ❏ Send out scripts to Actors and make sure they have the Big Show information. Look at the weekly email templates for an actor email template.

INTRO (5 min)

Introduce the Goal for the day and Run of Show.

Goal:
By the end of the session, each group should have finished writing their full script.

Run of Show:
Welcome & Intro
Tagline Off
Revisions
Feedback Model
Table Read
Revise or Finish Writing
Big Show Info
Goodbye

If a group hasn't finished by the end of the session, you can encourage the students to brainstorm a really exciting moment to use as a cliffhanger and end their script with "To Be Continued..."

PLAY (10 min)

<u>TAGLINE OFF!</u>
Purpose: Teach taglines in a fun and engaging way.
Instructions:
- ● This is a mentors vs. writers game, so to play, the mentors and writers line up across from each other.

- Tell writers that a tagline is a short "hook" to get people excited about their scripts by giving them a sneak peek into their story.
- Choose a word they need to shout before they get to answer (so they don't just yell out the answer).
- Let them know that you will read a tagline from a famous movie and the first mentor or writer who says the word will get to answer. If the answer is right, that team gets a point. If it's wrong, the first person on the other team who said the word gets a guess. If they miss it, neither team gets a point and you move onto the next tagline.
- The first team to get 5 points wins!

Helpful Tips:
- Remember, this game is meant to teach the writers about what a tagline is. Remind your mentors not to get too competitive.
- Pick movies that both writers and mentors would know (like superhero movies or Disney movies from the last 5 years).

Here are some PG tagline you could use:
- "There's magic in all of us…almost all of us." -Encanto
- "Growing up is a beast." - Turning Red
- "Sit. Stay. Save the world." -DC League of Super Pets
- "Meet the little voices inside your head." – Inside Out
- "There are 3.76 trillion fish in the sea. They're looking for one." – Finding Nemo
- "A long time ago in a galaxy far far away…" – Star Wars

LEARN (5 min)

Tagline Discussion

Discuss why the Taglines from the Tagline Off were good taglines for their respective movies. What did they tell us about the movie before even watching?

A tagline is a short "hook" to get people excited about a movie.

It's like a sneak peek into the story!

Let them know that they'll be coming up with a Title and Tagline for their script later in the session.

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OPTIONAL

This session should be focused on making sure that groups finish their scripts in time for the Big Show next session. *If **all** groups are close to finished,* feel free to include this in the Large Group section. **However, if you just have one or two groups that are finished with their scripts (or very close), we suggest touching base with the mentors of the group(s) beforehand OR visiting the group(s) and explaining Revisions and the Feedback Model in Groups so that other students can focus on finishing.**

Revisions Discussion
Let them know that the rewriting process is an opportunity to reflect on their writing before anyone else has a chance to see it.

Let the students know that the mentors will be reading the script aloud so the students can hear what it sounds like.
While the script is being read out loud, they should think about:
- Each scene should have a Slugline, and a nice balance of Action and Dialogue.
- Most of the script should be about the protagonist trying to overcome their obstacle.
- Keep the resolution and lesson in mind when writing the ending.
  - Every scene should build up and work towards the end.
  - It should be clear what the characters learned and how their journey taught them that lesson.

Feedback Model

Let the students know that after their scripts have been read, they will have a chance to give feedback. There are two types of feedback: Warm Feedback and Cool Feedback.

Warm feedback is used to show our appreciation and point out things that stood out to us. '
Cool feedback is a chance to ask questions and bring up anything that was unclear or that we want the group to think about.

Students learn the feedback model during the lesson and after the read-through, they can share their views and ask questions in a respectful manner using the feedback model.

Table Read & Share Feedback
- The mentors will read the scripts out loud.
  - Encourage them to use different voices for different characters.

- ○ Remember, the narrator is a character too!
- After the table read, each student can share one piece of warm feedback and, optionally, one piece of cool feedback.
- If unfinished, the group can brainstorm ways to address cool feedback. If finished with the script, they can brainstorm even more revisions throughout the script.

CREATE (35 min)

Last week, the group learned about the importance of the Lesson and Resolution. This week, groups will come up with a title and tagline, finish their scripts, and write an introduction. If they have extra time, groups can revise.

Remind them of the Class Agreements.

Break the class out into Groups.
- Go over the Group Agreements.

Groups should be coming up with a Title and Tagline for their script.

Then groups will finish their scripts and answer these Essential Questions:

Obstacle #3 / Climax
- *What is the biggest obstacle the protagonist has to overcome?*
- *What do the characters do and say when they go face to face with the antagonist?*
- *How do they overcome this obstacle?*

Resolution:
- *What happens after the climax?*
- *Where do the protagonist and antagonist end up?*
- *What do the characters or audience learn from the story?*
- *What do they have to say about everything that has happened?*

As a group, write a Group Intro for the script.

- Here is an idea for a script introduction format:
  - ○ Our story is about [Protagonist(s) + description].
  - ○ They want [Goal] .
  - ○ However, [Antagonist / obstacle] stands in their way.
  - ○ What inspired us to write this is...
  - ○ The title of our script is [title] and the tagline is [tagline].

In circle order or on a volunteer basis, assign each student to write one of the above sentences of the intro so that you have enough sentences for each student. They will recite that sentence in the Big Show session as the group introduces their script.

- Make sure the mentors also write this down.
- They should send you the intros and final scripts (with titles and taglines) so you can cast actors.

SHARE (5 min)

Instead of groups sharing out this session, you will share the Big Show Plan and Run of Show:
- Welcome & Intro
- Warm Up
- Introductions
- Auditions
- Casting
- Big Show
- Round of Applause

REFLECT (5 min)

After your students have left the session, take some time to reflect with your mentors on how it went. Thank them for their time and efforts and let them know that the culmination of this program is coming. Make sure they know what to expect during the Big Show and are aware of their responsibilities (coming early, sending you their scripts, and printing enough copies for the show).

Session Eight - Our Big Show

At this session the group will meet professional actors, describe their characters, introduce their script, and see it performed.

By the end of the session, each group should have seen their script acted out and brought to life.

Writer Learning Objectives

By the end of the session, writers will be able to:
- Introduce their script by describing what inspired their group.
- To reflect on this experience by identifying what they gained from their experience and their favorite and least favorite parts of the program.
- Connect through the shared experience of the show and this program.

Run of Show
Welcome & Intro
Warm Up
Introductions
Auditions
Casting
Big Show
Goodbye

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Session Plan

NOTE: *The following is subject to adjustment on a school by school / program by program basis. The Program Staff will keep you updated throughout the semester if anything changes. More specific guidelines and instructions will also be sent via weekly email. Please reach out to the team with any questions, comments, or concerns regarding Big Show.*

What to do before your BIG SHOW:
- ❏ Email your mentors the plan for the day.
- ❏ Email your actors to prep them for the show.
- ❏ Reach out to your YS contact if you need support casting.
    - ❏ Make sure to recruit actors representative of your writer community or leave some spots for YS to recruit actors that are representative of your students for the show.
- ❏ Connect with your actors 15-20 minutes before the students arrive to give them the Actor Talk.
    - ❏ Remind them to play to their truths and avoid the obvious choice (avoid stereotypes).
    - ❏ Let them know to play with the space and have fun with it.
    - ❏ If you are unable to meet with your actors early due to school check-in procedures, you can also give them this speech right before casting while students and mentors are deliberating on casting decisions in their groups.
- ❏ Set up some chairs near the front of the stage as "VIP" seats for each group to watch their scripts from.

Optional before your BIG SHOW:
- ❏ Create an **invitation** and send it to your School Liaison, mentors, and actors to use for promotion *(template can be found on the Head Mentor Resources page).*

What to do after your session:
- ❏ Feel really proud of what you've accomplished and created for your community!
- ❏ Send a *thank you* note to mentors and actors.
- ❏ *OPTIONAL:* Coordinate writer thank you cards/emails with your mentors.

INTRO (15 min)

Actor Talk

- ● Connect with your actors 10-20 minutes before the start of your pre-show practice session to give them the actor talk.
    - ○ *NOTE: If you are unable to connect with your actors early due to school check-in procedures, you can also give them this speech right before casting while students and mentors are deliberating on casting decisions in their groups.*
- ● Ask them to be BIG, LOUD, and FAST. Remind them to act out all scenery and background. They must stick to the script — no ad libbing! The narrator must keep the pace up at all times,

and tell them that you may pop on stage to remind them to speed up during the show if needed.
- Remind them to play to their truths and avoid the obvious choice (stereotypes).
- Let them know to play with the space and have fun with it.

Introduce the Goal for the day and the Run of Show.

Goal:
By the end of the session, each group should have seen their script acted out and brought to life.

Run of Show:
Welcome & Intro
Warm Up
Introductions
Auditions
Casting
Big Show
Goodbye

PLAY (10 min)

Choose one of your group's favorite Games or Warm Ups (See <u>Warm Up Games</u>).

LEARN (15 min)

Have everyone introduce themselves. Actors can say their name and answer an icebreaker question of your choice like:
- What is your favorite role you've played?
- If you were a food, which one would you be?
- What job did you want when you were in 5th grade?
- Etc.

Have students and mentors introduce themselves and practice their intros.

OPTIONAL

Instead of talking with the actors early, you can give the groups a moment to meet and go over their introductions while you give the actors the Actor Talk.

CREATE (50 min)

Auditions (20 min)

Actors will be given one-two minutes to act out all the silly kinds of characters they can play. They should make big physical choices and speak loudly. Ask them to show off any fun special skills — dancing, singing, voices, etc.

Have writers take seats in the audience as actors go on stage. One at a time, the actors will tell the writers who they are and why they should cast them. Writers can start thinking about who can play which character as they watch the auditions, and mentors can take notes.

Casting (20 min)

Instruct writers to cast before they hand out the scripts to speed up the process. Cast one script at a time and in program order. Mentors and writers should go up together. Writers should hand scripts to actors. Mentors and writers who are not actively casting should practice their intro scripts in pairs (not in front of the group).

Before the Show (10 min)

Send the writers outside or to the back to prepare for their red carpet entrance. Designate a mentor or two to wait outside with the writers. Remind mentors and actors to act as paparazzi and take flash photography with their phones (put smartphones on flash mode) as the writers walk the red carpet.

SHARE (60 min)

THE BIG SHOW!!!

Head Mentor Intro:
Thank the school, the liaison, and the principal.
Explain the process, what Young Storytellers is, and what we do. For example:

> For the past seven weeks, volunteer mentors met once a week with their writers and helped them write these amazing screenplays you are about to see. All of the words and ideas are their very own! The mentors just helped guide them, so everything you see here today is from the minds of your friends! Another special, magical, wonderful thing about this performance is that these fantastic talented actors that you see behind me haven't had a chance to even read these scripts before now. Every physical act you see them do, they are making up on the spot, but

they're NOT making up the words. So have fun and enjoy this magical moment of screenplay history!

Thank the mentors! Introduce your actors as a group (not individually) — note to the audience that they JUST got the scripts, and that they are improvising ALL the physicality but NONE of the dialogue. Encourage the audience to make sound effects.

Then, the real stars of the show! Introduce each writer by name as they walk down the red carpet. Have them line up and take a bow.

Script Intros & Performances:
Remember that you have to stage manage and keep the show running on time. That means as soon as one story is finished, the next group should be onstage in seconds. Make sure the next pair is "on deck." After writers and mentors introduce their scripts on stage, they sit in the chairs of honor during the script performances.

Before each performance, have your mentors introduce the writers and each say some words about how it was to work with the writers, their strengths, etc.

Have the writers introduce their script. If a student doesn't want to share, they can have another student or a mentor take their part.

Then the actors will act out the script!

Afterwards, praise them! And move onto the next script, repeating the above steps.

OPTIONAL

Mid-Performance:
Give the audience a quick stretch/NASA Shakeout/Watermelon break (include the writers, so they can teach the group) if needed.

Finale

Bring all writers on stage for one big final bow. Thank your actors and mentors (invite mentors on stage), then thank your audience. Take a group photo — writers, mentors, actors, and YOU!

Remind writers and mentors that you're meeting for one more session.

Congratulations on a successful Big Show!

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Session Nine - Our Farewell

At this session, the group will reflect on the experience through a group conversation and brief survey.
By the end of the session, every writer will reflect on the program and complete a student survey.

Writer Learning Objectives

By the end of the session, writers will be able to:
- To reflect on this experience by identifying what they gained from their experience and their favorite and least favorite parts of the program.
- Connect through the shared experience of the show and this program.

Run of Show
Welcome & Intro
Warm Up
Roses & Thorns
Surveys
Celebrate
Goodbye

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Session Plan

What to do before your Farewell:
- ❏ Email your mentors the plan for the day.
- ❏ Contact your liaison to see if there is a way for all the students to take the survey electronically.
    - ❏ Otherwise, reach out to us and we will figure something out.

Optional before your BIG SHOW:
- ❏ Ask your mentors to write cards or notes for each of their writers.
- ❏ Print copies of the scripts to give to the students.

What to do after your session:
- ❏ Complete your Head Mentor Required Check-Out Form (*can be found on Head Mentor Resources page*).
- ❏ Feel really proud of what you've accomplished and created for your community!
- ❏ Send a *thank you* note to mentors and actors.

INTRO (5 min)

Introduce the Goal for the day and the Run of Show.

Goal:
By the end of the session, every writer will reflect on the program and complete a student survey.

Run of Show:
Welcome & Intro
Warm Up
Roses & Thorns
Surveys
Celebrate
Goodbye

PLAY (5 min)

Play your group's favorite Games or Warm Ups (See Warm Up Games).

Learn and Create (20 min)

<u>**Roses & Thorns**</u>

Break out into group and have writers and mentors share out their roses and thorns from the Big Show and program:
- What was your favorite and least favorite part of the Big Show?
- What was your favorite and least favorite part of the program?

After about fifteen minutes, bring the group back together and ask if anyone would like to share with the whole group.

SHARE (20 min)

Surveys (15 min)

Let the students know that they will now be completing a survey. This is just so YS can get their (very important) feedback and make the program even better for future students.

Share the link to the survey and have students complete it online. Some schools may provide tablets for completing this, while others may have students complete it another time — ask your liaison what the case is. **If students are not completing the survey in the session, skip this step.** There are no wrong answers on the survey — just answer honestly. We really appreciate it!

STUDENT SURVEY LINK will be sent out in Weekly Newsletter

Connect and Close Out (10 min)

End the program with a group reflection, telling their journey and referencing things you heard from the writers or praise they shared with the group.

Here is a suggested format:
- How much everyone has grown and learned over the past 9 sessions.
- What it was like in the first session (setting).
- Something they learned about each other early on (characters).
- Some challenges that the group may have faced but eventually overcame (goal + obstacle).
- What happened at the Big Show (climax).
- Things the students said were their takeaways or favorite parts of the program (lesson).
- How they can use what they learned to tell more stories if they want (resolution).

Example: I'm so proud of everyone, especially when I think about how much we've grown since we started. We were strangers but quickly learned about each other, like that Jaylene has a super contagious laugh and Pilar loves cheese. We didn't know what a climax or slugline was and had to work to add details to make our script oh-so-interesting. With the help of our mentors and some games, we got our ideas from inside our heads and onto the page. We worked together and created

something different than anything we could've come up with by ourselves! We saw amazing actors who were so excited to act out our stories. This might be our last time together in a Young Storytellers virtual classroom, but it's not the last time we'll get to write stories. You can use this experience and everything you learned to help you write your next story, or your next hundred stories. You all have so many stories to think up and we hope you keep telling them. Thank you for an amazing session!

Give your mentors and writers a moment to connect with each other one last time. This is when mentors can show their writers the note they wrote for them and leave their writer with some special words of encouragement.

Bring the group together for one final goodbye. Please use this time to celebrate your writers, one last time. Ways to do this include, but are not limited to:
- A final writer-led warm up game.
- High five line — mentors form two lines, facing each other and stick their hands out, ready to administer the best high fives ever. Writers walk through the line with both hands up, receiving high fives from all the mentors.
- Script awards — create a special award for each of your writers based on their writing style/the creative choices in their script (Most Original Use of Parentheticals, Best Dance Off Battle Scene, Most Surprising Plot Twist, etc).
- Give your writers' a framed copy of their title page.

Games Appendix

COLOR THE WORD

- **Purpose:** To build towards making individual creative choices in front of a group.
- **Instructions:**
  - Have the entire group sit in a circle. Ask the group to give suggestions for an interesting word, something they won't get bored of saying. Have each person in the circle say the word with no inflection or expression, one at a time, to the person next to them while making eye contact. Next, the game leader should say the word while expressing a specific emotion. Everyone else should say the word while mimicking the emotion and expression of the leader, one at a time, to the person next to them. For the third and final round, pass the word around the circle (just as before) but encourage each person to color the word any way they want by using an emotion of their own choosing.
  - After the game is done, ask the group which was their favorite round and why. Oftentimes the group enjoys the last round the best because they were able to make their own creative choices. You can connect the game to the program by letting your writers know that this program is an opportunity for them to do just that, to make and share creative ideas/choices.
- **Helpful Tips:**
  - Instead of an emotion, you can use a specific inflection or hand gesture with the word to make it fun and different from the first round.
  - If you notice that the group is getting tired of saying the same word, pick a different word for each round. Every group is different so feel free to adjust things in order to make them work for your writers.
  - Some Head Mentors like to have their writers say "I am a storyteller" instead of picking one word to pass around the circle. Enhancements intended to build the confidence of our writers are always welcome.
  - Have the game leader be the first one to say the word each time — it keeps things consistent and helps the game run quickly and smoothly.

EMOTIONS GAME

- **Purpose:** To get students thinking about actions and dialogue representing different emotions.
- **Instructions:**
  - Ask one student or mentor to name an emotion. Then, ask another student to share a word, phrase, or sound they might make when they are feeling that emotion. Finally, ask a third student or mentor to say the word / phrase or make the sound, and then act out a movement that they might make to embody that word / phrase / sound.
  - Repeat this process 2-3 times with different people naming an emotion, naming a word / phrase / sound, and adding a movement. Try not to have only mentors be playing this game and include students as much as they are comfortable.
- **Helpful Tips:**
  - If students are stuck, you can ask them what scenario might make them feel a certain emotion and what words or sounds they might use in that situation.

<u>**I AM A TREE**</u>
- **Purpose:** To encourage and practice brainstorming as a group (accepting and adding onto ideas).
- **Instructions:**
  - After gathering the group in a circle, ask for one volunteer to stand and say, "I am a tree," while taking on the physicality of a tree.
  - The next volunteer adds on to the tree, something that would be in that world (i.e., a leaf falling from the tree, an acorn under the leaves, a squirrel eating a nut). The third volunteer adds a third element just like the one before. Each of these volunteers should state what they are and physicalize the object/animal they have become.
    - *Remind the students to be mindful of space as they create this tableau by maintaining 3 feet of social distance and avoiding touching other people.*
  - After the third person has added their element, ask the first two to leave. Have the "third person" restate what they are and ask for two more volunteers to add to your new image.
- **Helpful Tips:**
  - If your writers catch on to the game and are ready for more, include story elements. Point out which story elements are in the tableau and ask for the next player to add a specific story element. Or, after a three-person tableau has been completed, ask the writers questions that get them thinking about potential story elements (what is the goal of this character? Why does he/she want that? What's the setting?).
  - You can do a round of this game where you don't stop after the third idea and everyone in the group adds an idea. This can be great in groups where the same set of writers always volunteers as it forces everyone to contribute.
  - If you have a writer who is hesitant to share an idea with the group or perform in any way, they can always share their ideas with their mentor and the mentor can go up for them (and give the writer credit for the idea). Since many students are selected because they are shy/struggle with confidence, it's always a good idea to think of different kinds of ways students can participate in our games.

<u>**THE LINE-UP GAME**</u>
- **Purpose:** To help writers understand basic story structure through various modes of learning (auditory, visual, and kinesthetic).
- **Instructions:**
  - After the group conversation in Session 2 about story elements, have the mentors line up holding the elements in a random order.
  - Ask the students what the three different sections of a story are (Beginning, Middle, End).
  - Then, ask those mentors to hold up their signs.
  - Ask the writers if the mentors are in the correct order. If they are not, have one writer at a time instruct a mentor where to move in order to create the correct order. Make sure the mentors are still holding their cards up.
    - *Have the writers instruct the mentors instead of physically moving them, in order to maintain social distancing and keep all parties comfortable.*

- ○ Ask different writers to arrange the elements into a classic story structure order underneath the different sections of the story. The structure/order we are looking for is: Beginning (Setting, Characters), Middle (Goal, Obstacles), End (Climax, Resolution, Lesson)
- ● Helpful Tips:
  - ○ You can let the writers know that this is the classic story structure order, and their stories should have all these elements. If they want to change the order around a little bit, that's ok! Many movies break these "rules" and it's a natural artistic impulse to want to challenge conventions. Sometimes the lesson is something a character learns in the middle that helps them overcome their last obstacle in the climax or sometimes the protagonist realizes their goal after overcoming an obstacle. Let them know that we can be creative with how we present our elements, but that we should still try to think of all of them during the brainstorming process. Before we start to break the "rules," we have to learn them and this story structure is a good place to start if they're new to writing stories or screenplays.
  - ○ If the group needs more context to understand the order, ask for examples of the elements from stories they know like "Coco," "Finding Nemo," or "Zootopia" as you go through the order. You can also ask your mentors to do this with their writer during one-on-one time.

MADISON PARAGRAPH
- ● **Purpose:** To apply new knowledge of screenplay elements by turning a paragraph into a screenplay.
- ● **Instructions:**
  - ○ Have someone read the Madison Paragraph out loud (either from he post-it / whiteboard or the group workbook)
  - ○ Once you've taught the Basic Screenplay Elements, have the writers turn it into screenplay format, line by line.
  - ○ It should look like this:

Paragraph version:

Twelve-year-old sassy Madison dribbles her basketball in the driveway. Her

dad walks outside and says, "Madison, I told you to come inside and eat your

lunch!" Madison keeps dribbling and says, "But Dad, I'm practicing!" Her dad

scoffs and says, "Your food is going to get cold." Madison stops dribbling and

says, "Aww Dad, you never let me have any fun!" as she storms inside the

house.

Screenplay version:

```
EXT. DRIVEWAY - DAY

MADISON (12 years old, sassy) dribbles her basketball. Her DAD walks
outside.

                         DAD
                Madison, I told you to come
                inside and eat your lunch!

Madison keeps dribbling.

                       MADISON
                But Dad, I'm practicing!

                         DAD
                     (scoffs)
                Your food is going to get
                cold.

Madison stops dribbling.

                       MADISON
                Aww Dad, you never let me
                have any fun!

Madison storms inside.
```

- **Helpful Tips:**
    - Encourage the students to reference the screenplay elements you have written and posted to remind themselves of how a screenplay is structured.
    - You can go in a circle, cold call students, or have them volunteer.

THE MCDONALD'S GAME
- **Purpose:** Demonstrates the importance of details in a scene.
- **Instructions:**
    - Have the two mentors act out a short scene taking place at McDonalds, one person is the cashier and the other is the customer. Pick fun and expressive mentors with acting experience if possible! For the first round, make sure these mentors act **without any emotion or expression (make it boring).** Follow this script:

```
INT. MCDONALD'S - DAY

The CUSTOMER walks up to the CASHIER.

                    CUSTOMER
           Can I have a cheeseburger?

                    CASHIER
           Sure. That'll be $1.50.

The customer pays the cashier. The cashier gives them a cheeseburger.

                    CASHIER
           Here's your order.

                    CUSTOMER
           Thanks.

The customer walks out.
```

- ○ After the scene is performed, ask the group what they thought and how they can make the scene more interesting (more details!). Do one or two more performances of the scene, each time asking the students and mentors to add more and more details / story elements. By adding details slowly, writers will be able to see how each addition enriched the scene. Make sure the mentor actors keep the interaction BRIEF to allot maximum writing time.
    - ■ Round 2
        - ● What is the customer's motivation in the scene / why do they want the cheeseburger? How can we tell that by the way they're speaking or moving?
        - ● How can the cashier impose an obstacle to the customer's goal? How do they feel about the customer's request? How can we tell that by the way they're speaking or moving? Is there something they say or do to show this?
    - ■ Round 3
        - ● How can they resolve their issue? What do they say and do?
        - ● How can we see how their feelings have changed based on their voice and movements?
- **Helpful Tips:**
    - ○ Remind the students that the details in a script will help actors play the character more easily, so encourage them to come up with details that will affect the way a character acts.
    - ○ You can go in a circle, cold call students, or have them volunteer.

<u>**OBSTACLE GAME**</u>
- **Purpose:** To physically demonstrate the importance of having obstacles in our scripts.
- **Instructions:**
    - Have one mentor play the protagonist on one side of the room and ask them to walk to the other side. Easy and boring, right?
    - Now have the writers come up with an imaginary obstacle for them to get over, under, or through.
    - Have the mentor mime physically overcoming the obstacle as they try to cross over to the chair again. Much more interesting.
    - Have the writers add two more obstacles (one at a time) and repeat.
- **Helpful Tips:**
    - Encourage writer ideas and opinions throughout the game. Ask them if it was interesting to watch someone just walk over to the other side of the room, and why. They might not remember the word obstacle, but we all know that the struggle is the most interesting part.
    - Have the writers come up with the obstacles that the mentors will mime. Challenge them to come up with obstacles that aren't easy to overcome. This will encourage them to pick strong obstacles in their scripts.
    - Ask the writers to come up with how the mentor will overcome the obstacle. This will encourage them to come up with creative solutions in their scripts. Make sure the mentor you have selected for this game is comfortable improvising, as they will have to figure out how to deal with multiple obstacles in front of the group.
    - Do not let the writers participate in this demonstration as this is an important lesson and they will retain it better if they watch rather than if they participate. If you have an eager group, allow them to be sound effects but encourage them to watch the mentor/protagonist struggle. As much as we love involving our writers, they learn these important technical concepts better if they are observing the action rather than participating.

<u>**TAGLINE OFF**</u>
- **Purpose:** To teach taglines in a fun and engaging way.
- **Instructions:**
    - This is a mentors vs. writers game, so have the mentors and writers line up across from each other. Choose a code word they need to shout before they get to answer, so they don't just yell out the answer.
    - Let them know that you will read a tagline from a famous movie and the first mentor or writer who says the code word will get to answer. If the answer is right, that team gets a point. If it's wrong, the first person on the other team who said the word gets a guess. If they miss it, neither team gets a point and you move onto the next tagline. The first team to get 5 points wins!
- **Helpful Tips:**

- ○ Think about popular movies among the students and look up their taglines on IMDb to use in the game.
- ○ Depending on time, you can use fewer or more taglines.

THE WIND BLOWS

- ● **Purpose:** To connect with the group.
- ● **Instructions:**
  - ○ Form a circle.
  - ○ One person stands in the middle and says something that the wind blows away that is true about themselves personally ("The wind blows everyone who loves chocolate").
  - ○ Everyone in the circle who that description applies to ("Everyone who loves chocolate") must switch places with someone else who it also applies to.
  - ○ Whoever is left out takes the middle place.
    - ■ *If possible, have each person stand at least 3 feet apart to create distinct spots and maintain social distance. If you have floor spots available, use those to mark spots.*
- ● **Helpful Tips:**
  - ○ As the group becomes more comfortable with the game, you can encourage them to say more personal things like things they value and care about.
  - ○ You can connect the game to our work by pointing out that some of the things we shared are character traits.
  - ○ When it's time to come up with characters, encourage them to think about the kinds of things the characters in their stories would share in this game.

Warm-Up Games

<u>BIPPITY BIPPITY BOP</u>
- **Purpose:** To loosen up and energize.
- **Instructions:** Stand in a circle. Starting with the facilitator, one person stands in the middle. This person has the goal of switching spots with someone in the circle. They can do this one of two ways:
  - The person in the middle can point to someone in the circle and say "bippity bippity bop!" If the person they're pointing to says "bop!" before the person in the middle can finish saying "bippity bippity bop!", then the person in the middle must find another person to switch with. If the person in the middle can say "bippity bippity bop!" before the person they point to can say "bop!", then the two must switch places.
  - The person in the middle can point to someone in the circle and say "bop!" and if the person they point to responds, they must switch spots. If the person they point to can stay silent, the person in the middle must find someone else to switch spots with. When two people switch spots, the new person in the middle must try to switch spots with another person.
- **Helpful Tip:** At any point (perhaps if your group plays this weekly), you can add a new rule to the game, such as:
  - Toaster: The person in the middle can point to someone and say "toaster!" and the person they point to must jump up and down saying "ding ding ding!" while the people on either side stick their arms around the person being pointed to. If any of those three fail to do so, the person in the middle switches spots with them.
  - Mermaid: The person in the middle can point to someone and say "mermaid!" and the person they point to must sing a song while the people on either side pretend to be waves splashing the person being pointed to. If any of those three fail to do so, the person in the middle switches spots with them.
  - Elephant: The person in the middle can point to someone and say "elephant!" and the person they point to must wave an arm like a trunk while the people on either side pretend to be the elephant ears of the person being pointed to. If any of those three fail to do so, the person in the middle switches spots with them.

<u>Eight's</u>
- **Purpose:** To build energy.
- **Instructions:** With everyone standing in a circle, identify four things that are stressful and assign one to each limb to shake off. One person starts the countdown with their right hand, shaking it 8 times while counting aloud (1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8), then same with the left hand, then right foot and left foot. Then it's back to the right hand for a seven count, then left hand, right foot, left foot, etc...
- **Helpful Tip:** The game leader can encourage the group to get louder and faster with each round to build energy.

<u>NASA SHAKEOUT</u>
- **Purpose**: To loosen up and energize.

- **Instructions**: Put your hands in the air, stretch up, count from three, bend over, yell, and shake your hands out.
- **Helpful Tips:**
  - Before doing the NASA Shakeout, you can explain why it's called the NASA Shakeout. You can say something like - "Have you ever seen when NASA astronauts go up in a rocket, shaking all over the place as they shoot up in the sky on a big journey into space? Well, we're going on our own journey, a creative journey, and we need to shake too. Sometimes we have to sit very quiet and still all day, but that's not very good because you might start getting restless, anxious, or bored. So let's shake all those feelings out to help us focus on all the fun things we're going to do today!"
  - If your group likes how Crazy 8's allows the group to identify and release a point of stress, do the same in this game. Ask everyone to think of one thing they would like to shake out before doing the Shakeout.
  - After you have played this game once, ask for writers to assist the leader and eventually have them lead on their own.
  - Some Head Mentors like to do the countdown in another language. Ask your writers if they speak another language and have them teach you how to do the countdown in their language of choice.

WATERMELON FORM
- **Purpose:** To focus energy.
- **Instructions:** While modeling the following steps for everyone, describe each step. You and everyone participating should be exhaling each time you speak.
  - Hold an imaginary watermelon in front of you.
  - Breathe in as you bring your hands out to the side and then together above your head.
  - With your hands together, bring them down in front of you. As you do this, tell everyone to "Cut the watermelon in half."
  - Breathe in as you let your left hand fall away from your right. Gently push your right hand across your body to the left as if pushing something away from you, while saying "Some for you."
  - Breathe in as you let your right arm relax. Gently push your left hand across your body to the right, while saying "Some for you."
  - Breathe in as you bring both hands out to the side and then together above your head.
  - As you lower your arms to chest level let your hands separate until your palms are face down, parallel to the ground. Say "You're Welcome."
- **Helpful Tip:** You can let the students know that this is a form of Tai-Chi that they teach to schoolchildren in China to harness chi, or spiritual energy. Harnessing chi helps people focus their energy and get in the headspace to tackle a challenge.

WHIP IT

- **Purpose:** To get to know the group, learn names and encourage teamwork by competing against the clock rather than each other.
- **Instructions:** Ask everyone to say their names out loud. Then, break out a timer and have everyone go around the circle saying their names as quickly as possible. Play 3 rounds, trying to get faster each time.
- **Helpful Tips**:
    - To help group members remember other names, play the game where each person has to say the name of the person to the left or right of them.
    - Alternate versions of the game can include trying to answer a different prompt as quickly as possible (e.g. favorite food, first language, favorite color, hometown, etc.).

ZIP ZAP ZOP

- **Purpose:** To energize and focus as a group.
- **Instructions:**
    - Invite students to stand in a circle. Ask the group to repeat the words "zip, zap, zop" three or four times, all together. Tell everyone that you have a bolt of energy in your hands. To start the game, you will send the bolt out of energy out of your body to someone else in the circle by facing them, making eye contact, clapping one hand straight towards them with a strong forward motion (use hands, body, eyes, and voice to make contact across the circle), and saying "zip."
    - Explain that the next person takes the energy and passes it immediately to someone else in the same way, except that they will say "zap." That person passes it on to another participant the same way with a "zop." Then that next person passes it on to another participant the same way with a "zip" once more. The game continues and the "zip, zap, zop" sequence is repeated as the energy moves around the circle.
- **Helpful Tips**:
    - Encourage all players to use their whole body to send energy and to make eye contact. They can send the energy to whomever they want but the goal is to include all players. Practice the game.
    - If there is a mistake, encourage students to simply resume playing without discussion. The group challenge is to go very quickly and stay consistent in rhythm; if students struggle, pause the game, discuss strategy, and try again.