

**YOUNG STORYTELLERS<sup>®</sup>**

\_\_\_\_\_'S

**SCRIPT TO STAGE  
HEAD MENTOR HANDBOOK**

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# Welcome to the Year!

First things first: thank you so much for being a Young Storytellers Head Mentor! We say this a lot, but we don't mind being a broken record—we couldn't do our work without you. We know you put countless hours into making your programs your own, for the sake of your students, mentors, and actors.

In order to prepare you for leading a Script to Stage program, this handbook includes information about our approach, values, and mission. Additionally, we have included best practices, helpful tips, and detailed weekly lesson plans for each session. We'll be in touch through weekly emails. Please send any questions our way and don't hesitate to share your roses and thorns with us.

We want to make your time in the classroom as smooth as possible, so we've designed this handbook with a few things in mind:

1. This comes out of over 25 years of combined experience, from what we've known has worked from the very beginning, to new ideas that we've adjusted over the years.
2. Whether you're a first time Head Mentor or can't even remember how many semesters you've been doing this, there's something in this book for you. Need detailed lesson plans that show you lesson objectives and game play how-to? Want to understand "why" we created our curriculum in the way we did? Only want one page to refer to as you go through the hour? We got you.
3. We're privileged to work with the populations we work with, and there are more tips and options to modulate lessons.

Inside, you'll find space for notes, a key for how to use specific sections, and appendices for additional resources.

And as always, if you have an issue, concern, or highlight you can't wait to tell us about, let us know! We can't wait to see what amazing things will come out of your classrooms this year.

The Young Storytellers Staff

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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 mentor one-on-one 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 discover things about themselves and the world.

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. At the core of all our programs is our hope for students to realize the impact that their thoughts, feelings, and words can have on their peers, communities, and the world.

# 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:

[www.youngstorytellers.com/resources](http://www.youngstorytellers.com/resources)

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 2022).

## 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](mailto:scripts@youngstorytellers.com)

# Program Overview and Goals

In Script to Stage, writers will create a screenplay using the writing process: brainstorming, planning, drafting, editing, and sharing their 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.

The Script to Stage program will:

- Empower our students to share their voice confidently.
- Help our young writers understand that they have a unique story worth telling.
- Validate our young writers' ideas.
- Guide writers through the process of bringing an idea to fruition, through the creation of a five page screenplay.
- Support the development of a caring relationship between the one-on-one mentor and the young writer
- Enhance the social, communication and language skills of our young writers
- Emphasize the value of listening to others and exchanging 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.

# Standards Alignment

## 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 the capacity 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, and 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 support.

## Social Justice Alignment

### Social Justice Anchor Standards and Domains, from Learning for Justice (a project of the Southern Poverty Law Center)

Identity: Students know who they are and express pride in themselves.

ID.1 Students will develop positive social identities based on their membership in multiple groups in society.

ID.4 Students will express pride, confidence, and healthy self-esteem without denying the value and dignity of other people.

Diversity: 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.8 Students will respectfully express curiosity about the history and lived experiences of others and will exchange ideas and beliefs in an open-minded way.

DI.9 Students will respond to diversity by building empathy, respect, understanding, and connection.

Justice: 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.

JU.12 Students will recognize unfairness on the individual level (e.g., biased speech) and injustice at the institutional or systemic level (e.g., discrimination).

Action: 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 one-to-one ratio with writers. 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. As you recruit, consider what a wonderful gift you are giving 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.
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 go 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.
- 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.

# 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.

- Review the To-Do List on our Volunteer Resources page ([www.youngstorytellers.com/volunteer-resources](http://www.youngstorytellers.com/volunteer-resources))
- 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 during the session. 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.

## 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 in 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 mentors can ask regarding violence in scripts:

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

# Lesson Plan Breakdown

## The Lesson

### Goal:

This is the overarching theme of the day and the task(s) your group will complete.

### Writers Will:

- These are the learning objectives, the things we want our writers to learn or be able to do by the end of each session. Each are aligned with Common Core English Language Arts Standards.
- There is no need to share these with your mentors on a weekly basis, but you should visit this list before and after your session to make sure your group is on the right track.

### Session Prep Checklist:

- Key things to print out
- Key things to prepare in order to have a successful session
- You may have to do some of these things a day (or a few) in advance

### 5 Minute Check-In:

We know things can get stressful and it can be hard to let ourselves be present with the people around us. The activities suggested in this section are just for you to take a moment for yourself before you lead a lesson (or anytime, really)! They are also totally optional, so if you don't like them, or they're not effective, that's totally ok—we won't be offended.

### Tip:

There are certain ways of doing things that many Head Mentors find useful and effective. See the yellow bubbles for more info!

### The Lesson at a Glance:

Major

Sections

With

Space

For

Writing

Notes

Or

Assigning

Mentors

### Why?

Delegation to mentors and sharing the role of teaching makes the classroom environment more conversational. When adults model sharing in a group, it invites students to speak up and out as well.

You should go over these sections before entering the classroom so that you can use this more as a reference rather than as a script!

There is a suggested time listed for each activity and writing portion of the lesson. You may have to assess how things are going and adjust accordingly. Sections you may cut for time will be *italicized and highlighted in green*.

## Why?

Some of our activities may seem arbitrary, but there's a lot of intention put into them. See the pink bubbles for more info!

## PLAY

We highly value meaningful play as a method to engage our students and mentors, and to create a fun sense of community. We encourage you to delegate some of the games to your mentors. Detailed instructions on game play and variations can be found in [Appendix A](#).

## LEARN

This is what you will be teaching. The way you teach it will support our values of creativity and empowerment, which are essential to our curriculum.

Corresponding pages from the student workbook will be placed throughout this book so that you can easily see what your students are seeing. Note that their page numbers and your page numbers will not be the same! References to Writer Workbook page numbers will be highlighted in blue and in parentheses (pg. 5).

## OR:

There are many options for how to do things—see these green rectangles for more info!

## CREATE

The task they are to complete by the end of the day, working one on one with their mentors.

## SHARE

This is time set aside at the end of the session for students to read their ideas aloud to the rest of the group. This practice also cultivates our sense of community.

## REFLECT

Once the writers have left, spend 5-10 minutes with your mentors going over the day to assess how clear you are and what you might need to spend some extra time the following week. This practice builds community and empowerment among your mentors.

## SESSION ONE

### Welcome, Young Storytellers!

#### LEARN (IMPORTANT THINGS COVERED IN OUR MEETINGS)

Over the next nine weeks you will:

- Write a five-page movie script.
- Play games, learn new things, and work on your scripts one-on-one with a mentor.
- See your script performed live at the BIG Show.
- Walk down a special red carpet and introduce your script with your mentor.
- Watch professional actors perform your script live in front of your peers, family, and friends.
- End the program with a party!

#### CREATE (THINGS YOU WORKED ON WITH YOUR MENTOR)

##### Writer/Mentor Interview

Take some time to get to know your mentor. What two additional questions do you want to ask each other?

*(There should be a few options written on the board for you)*

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

Write down as many answers as possible to your three interview questions on the next page. Then, work together to select your top answer to each question.

## **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, Young Storytellers!

(Writer Workbook pg. 5)

### Goal:

By the end of the session, the group will establish expectations and each writing group will create agreements.

### Writers Will:

- Envision what they will accomplish over the course of the program.
- Articulate and agree to agreements that identify how they want to behave and be treated over the course of the program.
- Connect with their mentor through a one-on-one interview.

### Session Prep Checklist:

- Writer workbooks, one for each writer (you will need these every week)
- Write mentor names on them for mentor/writer pairings (If you don't have them yet, please arrange with YS HQ)
- PENS, ONE FOR EACH WRITER
- List of your students' names and which classroom they are coming from
- Poster and markers for agreements
- Write the title, goals and an outline of the day on your whiteboard (the outline serves as a great cheat sheet for the day)
- Set up a circle of chairs for as many people as there are in the group
- Have mentors sit in every other chair so that the writers can fill in the spaces (mentor, writer, mentor, writer...)
- Print out Big Show Flyers in advance (enough for each writer and mentor to have a copy)

### The Lesson, at a Glance:

Welcome

Name Game

Set Expectations, Describe Program

Create Agreements

Assign Mentors

Mentor / Writer Interviews

Share

High Fives Out the Door!

Reflect

### Why?

Keeping students informed helps to alleviate anxiety. This will also help you stay on track when you can point to all the things the group needs to get done each week.

### 5 Minute Check-In:

If you're feeling anxious or uncomfortable before your lesson, take a few minutes for yourself before everyone else gets there. Set a timer, sit or lie down, and focus on your breath. Breathe in deeply and calmly, and breathe out in the same way. Remember: **it'll all be ok!**

A student just like you wrote this script!

## DON FALCON'S PIZZAS

BY DAYANA MOTA

"A STORY ABOUT PIZZAS. GIRL POWER. AND MEAN PEOPLE."

INT. DON FALCON'S PIZZAS - DAY

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.

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.

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.

**TO BE CONTINUED...**



## WELCOME

Have mentors sit in every other chair so that the writers can fill in the spaces (mentor, writer, mentor, writer...). When the writers enter the room, give them a standing ovation!

### Why?

We do this to empower our writers through celebration and to acknowledge their courage for showing up!

15 min

## PLAY

Introduce the group: **Name Game** (see **Appendix A** for details)

25 min

## LEARN

### Set Expectations: (pg. 5)

Ask the questions below to get the ball rolling:

- Who knows why we are here? **To write stories!**
- What kind of story are you going to write? **A movie script, or screenplay.**
- Do you think you are capable of writing a screenplay?
- *What types of stories are there? **Drama, adventure, comedy etc.***
- *What is one of your favorite stories, and why?*
- What is this going to look like?
  - Have the mentors act out the first scene from Don Falcon's Pizza (pg. 4).

### Let Them Know That:

Each one of them was specially selected for this program because their school believes in them and thinks they have a really interesting story to tell. Each of them will have a mentor to guide them through the program.

### Cover Other Basic Program Info:

- Everyone will write a five-page movie script
- Everyday we'll play games, learn something new, and work on stories with our mentors.
- Professional actors will perform everyone's script live at our Big Show (write show date and

## SESSION ONE

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#### LEARN (IMPORTANT THINGS COVERED IN OUR MEETINGS)

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- Watch professional actors perform your script live in front of your peers, family, and friends.
- End the program with a party!

#### CREATE (THINGS YOU WORKED ON WITH YOUR MENTOR)

##### Writer/Mentor Interview

Take some time to get to know your mentor. What two additional questions do you want to ask each other?

*(There should be a few options written on the board for you)*

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

Write down as many answers as possible to your three interview questions on the next page. Then, work together to select your top answer to each question.

time on board)

- There will be time to celebrate and reflect on the last day!

### Make Sure Big Show Expectations Are Clear:

Ask them if they've been to a YS Big Show. If they have, ask them describe it to you (make sure the below is covered). If they are a new YS school, describe the below parts of the show.

- Scripts will be performed live—we're not actually making movies.
- Props or costumes won't be needed because the actors will become anything they want and their story can take place anywhere.
- One actor will be cast as your narrator, you don't need to create a narrator role—they will read all the action in your script.
- Writers will walk down a red carpet.
- Writers and mentors will introduce their scripts in front of the audience.
- The audience will be made up of their peers, family, and friends.

### Create Agreements as a Group (Writers and Mentors) by Asking the Below Questions:

This should be simple and fast. Ask one of your mentors to write the agreements down while you or another mentor lead the discussion.

What do we want everyone to agree to for all of us to feel comfortable and safe sharing ideas?

What can we write about?

**Original ideas (no video games and stories we already know)**

**Almost anything we want (write about stuff we like)**

What can we NOT write about?

**No violence = No killing, shooting, stabbing... - Keep it PG!**

**No names of people at school - KEEP IT RESPECTFUL!**

*What happens if we are late or can't follow the agreements?*

#### Tip:

A classic YS "consequence" is to do the chicken dance if you are late - but do what works for your group!

### Assign Mentors:

Mentors are randomly assigned to writers by writing names on the cover of writer workbooks. You do this by writing down a different mentor name on each of the writer workbooks. Spread them out on the floor, cover down, and ask the writers to, one at a time, pick a notebook and call out the name of their mentor.

Ask everyone to sign the agreements after assigning mentors. (There's a place in their workbook where they acknowledge the agreements— (pg. 2).

Be sure to stress that the pairing process should be a big exciting deal for everyone. It needs to be HIGH ENERGY and FUN! Make the students feel really special when the mentors REALLY want to work with them.

#### OR:

You can also assign mentors by pulling names out of a hat. If you want to set pairs in advance, you can write both names on the workbooks.

#### YOUNG STORYTELLERS WRITER AGREEMENT

Let it be known that I,

\_\_\_\_\_

*(print writer's full name)*

and my mentor,

\_\_\_\_\_

*(print mentor's full name)*

Promise to abide by the agreements written by our group of Young Storytellers in order to help build a safe creative environment for myself and all my fellow writers/mentors.

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_



10 min

## WRITE

Highlight the importance of the writers' workbooks. Show them the pages and let them know that all their amazing ideas will live there. Make sure mentors know that they will be writing everything down there.

### Mentor/Writer Interviews: (pg. 6)

Let everyone know that they will discuss the question, "What's your favorite movie?" Then, list questions on the board and ask your mentor/writer pairs to select two more questions that they would like to discuss for their "get to know you" interview. Have them write those in the workbook, especially the writer's favorite movie as that will be important later.

Things like:

- What are your favorite places to go on the weekend?
- What are your favorite things about yourself?
- Who are your favorite people?
- What are your pet peeves (things that bug you)?

Ask the group to spread out and start interviewing each other. Encourage them to come up with as many answers as possible to these questions and to chat about why they picked their answers. Then, after they have had time to chat about their responses, ask them to pick their top answer for each question.

There should be enough time left for this to be a meaningful encounter between the two. This is their chance to start to form their relationship.

### Why?

This activity encourages brainstorming from the very beginning of the program. A major part of writing is coming up with lots of ideas and then deciding which one(s) you want to develop.

### Tip:

They can divide the answer page in half so that both writer AND mentor answers can be recorded.

### Why?

This part of the lesson allows the group to build community and bond through reflecting on shared experiences, so every writer has the opportunity to share in a way that works for them.

10 min

## SHARE

- Have everyone come back to the circle. Then have each mentor and mentee introduce the other and share three things they've learned about each other.
- Remind them about the Big Show day and time. Have them write down the information on pg. 7 in the workbook, then ask them to rip out the page to share with their family.

## OPTIONAL CLOSE-OUT

If time, close out this session with the game, Color the Word. (See Appendix A for instructions) Let writers know that this game shows how we each have different perspectives and our own voices to share. We bring our unique point of view to everything we do, including our Young Storytellers sessions and games.

Give everyone high fives out the door!

## REFLECT

Meet with your mentors before leaving to help you build community with them and clarify expectations. Check in and see if they have any questions or concerns. Remind your mentors to familiarize themselves with Final Draft if they don't already know how to use it. Congratulations on completing the first session!

**REMEMBER** (THINGS TO KEEP IN MIND FOR NEXT TIME)

- To fill in your Big Show day, time, and where at school it will happen below
- To rip this page out (yes, really!)
- To give this flyer to people you want to come see your show!

**YOUNG STORYTELLERS®** presents...



I've been writing a script with my mentor for seven weeks and now actors are going to perform it - live! Please come see my Big Show!

**DATE:** \_\_\_\_\_

**TIME:** \_\_\_\_\_

**SHOW LOCATION:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Tip:**

Have the writers write the date of the Big Show in their workbooks so they remember!

A YOUNG STORYTELLERS PRODUCTION



# THE MISSION

SECRETS, DANGER, AND A 10-YEAR-OLD GIRL

WRITTEN BY LAUREN LEGASPI

# Session Two

## What's Your Story?

(Writer Workbook pg. 9)

### Goal:

By the end of the session, each writer will complete a Divide a Story and Logline.

### Session Prep Checklist:

- Writer Workbooks
- Print out Line Up Cards (download: [www.youngstorytellers.com/resources](http://www.youngstorytellers.com/resources))
- Write the title, goals and an outline of the day on your whiteboard
- Set up a circle of chairs

### 5 Minute Check-In:

We don't always let ourselves acknowledge what's going well. Think about five things that went well today, this week, or this month. Write them down!

1. ....
2. ....
3. ....
4. ....
5. ....

### Writers Will:

- Identify the basic story elements (setting, character, goal, climax, lesson, resolution).
- Name the two different types of characters, protagonist and antagonist.
- Create a one-sentence logline based on brainstormed story elements for their group script.

### The Lesson at a Glance:

- The Wind Blows  
.....
- Teach Story Elements  
.....
- The Line-Up  
.....
- Group Divide a Story  
.....
- Individual Divide a Story  
.....
- Logline  
.....
- Share  
.....
- High Fives Out the Door!  
.....
- Reflect



10 min **PLAY**

*The Wind Blows* (see [Appendix A](#) for details)

20 min **LEARN**

**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 narrative 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. *Ask them to give you an example of the element from a popular movie to deepen their understanding of key elements (see [Volunteer Resources for film examples](#)).*

**OR:**  
You can draw an example on the board to help visualize, and/or give another example from an animated film.

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

**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)

**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! (You

**SESSION TWO**  
**What's Your Story?**

**LEARN**

**THE STORYTELLING ELEMENTS**

**SETTING**—where the story takes place

**CHARACTERS**—these are the people or creatures in a story. The two main types of characters are called the **protagonist** and the **antagonist**.

**PROTAGONIST**—the main character in the story

**ANTAGONIST**—the person who gets in the way of the protagonist trying to achieve their goal

**GOAL**—what the protagonist hopes to achieve

**OBSTACLES**—things or people that get in the way of the protagonist achieving their goal

**CLIMAX**—this is the most exciting part of the story where the protagonist either succeeds or fails at achieving their goal. It's also the peak of the action.

**LESSON**—what the protagonist learns from their journey

**RESOLUTION**—this is what happens to the protagonist after the climax. It's also the very last scene of a story and what we like to call the “Happily (or not!) ever after moment.”

9



can draw an example on the board to help visualize and/or give another example from an animated film—see Volunteer Resources). This is going to be where your 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 (see Appendix A)

In pairs, have mentors and writers turn to pg. 9 to see a list they can always reference.

### Teach 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.

**Tip:**  
If you skip this section, make sure to emphasize the importance of brainstorming!

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.

20 min

## WRITE

### Group Divide a Story (pg. 10)

Before pairs do their own Divide a Story, create one with the group. Emphasize that this is a brainstorming activity. The ideas they put in their Divide a Story don't have to end up in their story, it's just a way to get the creativity flowing.

Fill in each box with one story element by taking ideas from as many writers as possible so everyone's voice is heard. It's ok if the different elements don't make sense with each other. You're not putting the story together right now, just throwing out ideas to see what works.

### OR:

If you have extra time, fill each box with multiple ideas. If strapped for time, skip the group divide a story, but don't forget to emphasize the importance of brainstorming.

CREATE

DIVIDE A STORY

A brainstorming exercise!

Jot down the first ideas that pop in your mind. Real or Imaginary. Fill in at least one idea per box. Then fill in as many more as you like.

BRAINSTORMING TIP!

Writers are often inspired by their own lives. Feel free to use the tips in blue to help you come up with ideas for your divide a story.

<p style="margin: 0; font-weight: bold; font-size: 0.8em;">SETTING:</p> <p style="margin: 0; font-size: 0.7em; color: #00AEEF;">What are settings/locations you love to go to?</p>	<p style="margin: 0; font-weight: bold; font-size: 0.8em;">CHARACTER:</p> <p style="margin: 0; font-size: 0.7em; color: #00AEEF;">Who are some characters you've met or dreamt of?</p>
<p style="margin: 0; font-weight: bold; font-size: 0.8em;">GOAL:</p> <p style="margin: 0; font-size: 0.7em; color: #00AEEF;">What are some goals you have? Or things you'd like to do?</p>	<p style="margin: 0; font-weight: bold; font-size: 0.8em;">OBSTACLE:</p> <p style="margin: 0; font-size: 0.7em; color: #00AEEF;">What gets in your way? What are you afraid of?</p>
<p style="margin: 0; font-weight: bold; font-size: 0.8em;">CLIMAX:</p> <p style="margin: 0; font-size: 0.7em; color: #00AEEF;">What are some exciting ways to tackle a big obstacle?</p>	<p style="margin: 0; font-weight: bold; font-size: 0.8em;">LESSON:</p> <p style="margin: 0; font-size: 0.7em; color: #00AEEF;">What lessons have you learned recently?</p>

10



**A LOGLINE IS A ONE SENTENCE SUMMARY OF YOUR STORY!**

In a \_\_\_\_\_ , \_\_\_\_\_  
(setting) (protagonist)

wants \_\_\_\_\_  
(goal)

but \_\_\_\_\_ stands in their way,  
(obstacle/antagonist)

so they \_\_\_\_\_  
(climax)

learning \_\_\_\_\_  
(lesson)

In a \_\_\_\_\_ , \_\_\_\_\_  
(setting) (protagonist)

wants \_\_\_\_\_  
(goal)

but \_\_\_\_\_ stands in their way,  
(obstacle/antagonist)

so they \_\_\_\_\_  
(climax)

learning \_\_\_\_\_  
(lesson)

**REMEMBER**

- Your Big Show - what's the day and time again?
- Keep writing loglines if you want. There are more blank divide a page and logline sheets in the back of this workbook. Now you know how it goes, feel free to come up with a bunch of ideas.

10 min

**SHARE**

Come back to the circle and have each writer stand up and share one of their logline in their best movie trailer voice. Ask them if they remember the Big Show day and time. Give everyone high fives out the door!

**REFLECT**

Check in with mentors. Ask for questions or concerns and if any stories are breaking the “Keep it PG” or “originality agreements.” Well done on completing the second session!

**Tip:**

Shy students may ask their mentors to share for them.

Young Storytellers presents

# THE ESCAPEE

**RUN AS FAST AS YOU CAN...**

written by Alexander Carrera



produced by Maxx Capps

# Session Three

## Script Outlines

(Writer Workbook pg. 14)

### Goal:

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

### Writers Will:

- 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.

### Session Prep Checklist:

- Writer Workbooks
- Identify a designated mentor with strong acting chops for the Obstacle Game
- Write the title, goals and an outline of the day on your whiteboard
- Set up a circle of chairs

### The Lesson at a Glance:

Obstacle Game

Discuss Obstacles

Discuss: The Big Thing That Happens Right Away, Obstacles, Motivation

Write

Share

High Fives Out the Door!

Reflect

### 5 Minute Check-In:

Sometimes it's good to name the things that stress us out so we can acknowledge feelings and think of solutions. Think about 5 things that are giving you anxiety today, this week, or this month. For each, think of one way you can address it through your own actions or by asking for help. Write them down.

1. ....
2. ....
3. ....
4. ....
5. ....

### Tip:

If you ever have mentor/ writer pairs that finish activities quickly, they can go back through their workbook to do optional activities.



10 min **PLAY**

**Obstacle Game** (see [Appendix A](#))

15 min **LEARN**

**Discuss why we need obstacles in our stories** (pg. 14).

Debrief from Play: 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.

There’s a famous saying that states, “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.

### Teach Outlining

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 their map where they can always find their way if they get lost while writing their stories.

Briefly remind the students of the elements they came up with last week for their story:

- Setting
- Character
- Goal
- Obstacle / Antagonist
- Climax
- Resolution

## SESSION THREE

### Script Outlines

#### LEARN

There are three new terms we’ll add to our story:

#### 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. **BUT** 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 to keep her straight A’s, that’s a **BIG** thing that happens **RIGHT AWAY!**

#### 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 a very 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 to getting around an obstacle and way more fun.

#### MOTIVATION (IF TIME...)

When you’re writing, make sure you think about why your 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 a very interesting goal, **BUT** if Zari has to collect moon rocks to feed the Moon Dog she is secretly keeping in her room, that’s a good “why.” And if her brother Darius wants to stop her because he’s bored, again that’s not very interesting. But if Darius knows feeding a Moon Dog moon rocks turns them into massive Moon Monsters, that’s a pretty interesting “why.”

• Lesson

Go over the outline format with the students, pointing out the new terms as you go. Every story follows the same basic format:

Opening Setting  
Character/Protagonist  
Big Thing That Happens Right Away  
Goal (Optional: 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 a few new ideas**

**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 a simple 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.

**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**

The **OUTLINE** will be your map to follow as you write your script.

Fill in this outline. Expand on your ideas from your logline or come up with new ones!

Opening Setting:

Character/Protagonist:

Big Thing That Happens Right Away:

Goal (Why do they want their goal?):

Antagonist (Why is the antagonist against the protagonist?):

Obstacle #1 to overcome:

Obstacle #2 to overcome:

The Final Obstacle—**THE CLIMAX** (Does your protagonist succeed or fail at achieving their goal?):

Lesson:

Resolution:



**WRITE**

Have mentors and writers pair up to write the story outline for their story (pg. 15). They can use one of the loglines they came up with last week or create an entirely new story if they want. **Ask mentors to write the story outline in the Writer Workbook and then give it to you at the end of class.**

Remind your mentors to keep writers focused and on point by asking open-ended questions: who, what, when, and where.

“Tell me more about that?”

“Describe that to me?”

“Close your eyes and tell me what you see.”

Let all the ideas come from the students. The mentor’s job is to help them structure their story, not help them come up with their story, so make sure they don’t lead them with their own ideas.

**OUTLINE**

**Need more space to organize your ideas? Here’s a second outline to do just that!**

Opening Setting:

Character/Protagonist:

Big Thing That Happens Right Away:

Goal (Why do they want their goal?):

Antagonist (Why is the antagonist against the protagonist?):

Obstacle #1 to overcome:

Obstacle #2 to overcome:

The Final Obstacle—**THE CLIMAX** (Does your protagonist succeed or fail at achieving their goal?):

Lesson:

Resolution:

**REMEMBER**

- If you want to write a new script after this program, there’s another outline in the back for you to use.

**Tip:**

The resolution is the final image the audience is left with, where we see how the story comes to an end and where all the pieces land. We like to call it “the happily (or not!) ever after moment.”

5 min

## SHARE

Have each student share one of their obstacles or one of their character's goals and why.

## COLLECT YOUR WRITERS' WORKBOOKS

Review their outlines in their workbooks over the week and catch any problems or challenges early on (i.e. violence, misunderstood concepts etc).

Give everyone high fives out the door!

### Tip:

You may want to take photos of each outline for backup.

## REFLECT

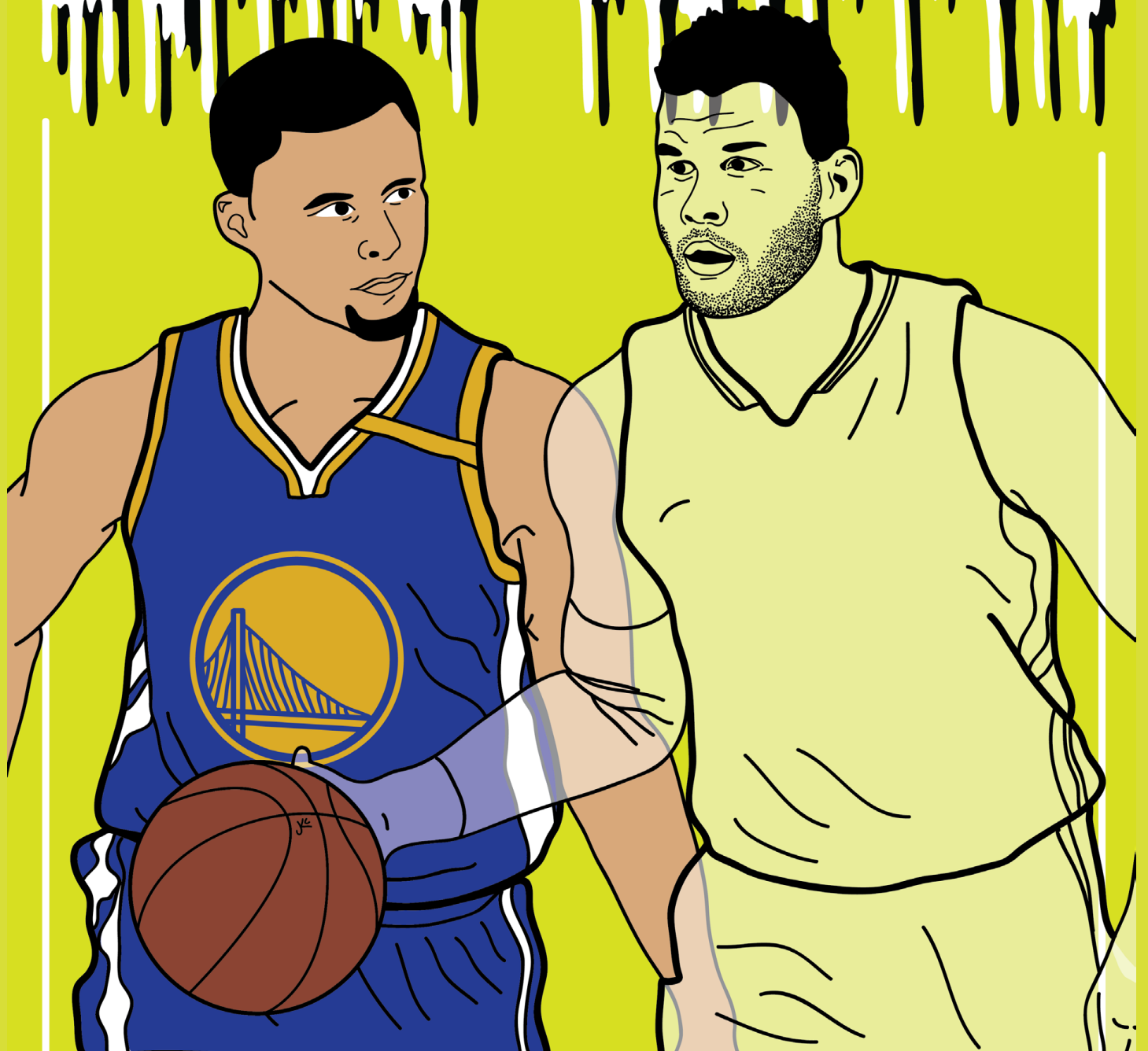
- How is everyone's writer doing?
- Remind them that there can be no violence, unoriginal ideas, or real people in their writer's story.
- Let the mentors know that starting next session, **they should bring their computers** to the session if they can because they will be typing up their writers' screenplays. If they need screenwriting software they can get a free temporary license of Final Draft. Codes for installing Final Draft will be emailed to Head Mentors.
- Let the mentors know that you will take a look at the students' outlines to make sure their writers are on track.

Session Three! You did it!

BY TYLER BELL | A YOUNG STORYTELLERS PRODUCTION

"DESTROYED BY A ROOKIE... HE WILL HAVE HIS REVENGE!"

# THE GHOST OF BLAKE GRIFFIN



## Screenplay Format

(Writer Workbook pg. 18)

### Goal:

By the end of the session, writers will learn screenplay format and write the first scene of their script.

### Writers Will:

- Understand and use screenplay format (action, dialogue, slugline).
- Write scenes that include narrative elements in screenplay format.

### Session Prep Checklist:

- Writer Workbooks
- Copies of the script for the actors
- Laptops, if mentors are using them
- Let 2 mentors know they'll be acting in the Parenthetical Game if you are choosing to use it in this session
- Write the title, goal, and an outline of the day on your whiteboard
- Set up a circle of chairs

### The Lesson at a Glance:

Emotions Game

Script Example

Screenplay Format

Madison Paragraph

*Parenthetical Game*

Write

Share

High Fives Out the Door!

Reflect

### 5 Minute Check-In:

Here are few quick things you can do to distract yourself from stressful thoughts:

- Take one, slow, long, deep breath
- Make a fist, then release it slowly
- Sit up straight, relaxing your shoulders
- Text a family member or friend: "I love you"
- Make a funny face

# The Details

10 min

## PLAY

Emotions Game (see Appendix A)

20 min

## LEARN

### 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.

### Script Example

Have the group go to the sample script in their writer workbook (pg. 19).

- Explain that this is how an actual script looks and it's exactly how their scripts will look too. If they have any questions about screenplays, they can just look at it to see how it's done.
- Ask students what they notice about the screenplay and allow them to carry the conversation to anything they notice. What do they see? What looks new? What do they have questions about? (You don't have answer questions now! Just let them observe and digest the format.)
- 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, and Goal.

### The Difference between a Book and a Script

Ask the writers what makes a screenplay different from a traditional story you would read in a book. A book is meant to be read, whereas a screenplay is meant to be performed.

That's why it's so important that you write out exactly what you want your actors to DO and SAY. We call talking in texts dialogue and it's very important to move the story along.

### Basic Screenplay Elements

Ask the writers if they know anything about screenplay format already. Then explain to them that there are three main elements in screenplay format:

## SESSION FOUR Screenplay Format

### PLAY

Look at the first page of the sample script on the opposite page. Try to find some of the different storytelling elements we've learned like setting, characters, and goal. What else do you notice? What looks interesting? What do you have questions about?

### LEARN

When writing in script format, we break the script down into three main parts: slugline, action, and dialogue.

1. A **SLUGLINE** tells us the setting and it always has three parts: if the scene is inside or outside, where it is, and what time it is.
2. **ACTION** tells us what is happening, that is, what the characters are doing, and what the audience is seeing.
3. **DIALOGUE** is what the characters say.

Here is a sample script written by a Young Storyteller a few sessions ago:

Don Falcon's Pizzas

Written by

Dayana Mota

Tagline:

A story about pizzas, girl power, and mean people.

18

## THIS IS A SLUGLINE

It tells us - quickly - where we are and when. It has three parts:

1.

Character name

Inside / Outside

Location

Time of day

INT. DON FALCON'S PIZZAS - DAY

Character description

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.

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.

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.

## THIS IS AN ACTION LINE

It tells us what the characters are doing when we see them.

## THIS IS DIALOGUE

It is what the characters are saying.

MIKE (V.O.)  
Hello. How may I help you?

DONALD  
This is Donald! The owner of Don  
Falcon's Pizzas! A girl named Ella  
is going to call you to make a  
pizza commercial. Don't help her! I  
am a wealthy man! If you do what I  
say, I will repay you!

INT. BEATRIZ'S PRODUCTIONS - CONTINUOUS

MIKE, the accountant, sits at the front desk on the phone.

MIKE  
Okay! Sure, I like doing business  
with you.

INT. DON FALCON'S PIZZAS - CONTINUOUS

Donald hangs up, feeling really smart.

INT. DON FALCON'S KITCHEN - DAY

Ella stands in the kitchen on the phone. She's on hold. We  
hear regular hold music.

They finally pick up.

MIKE  
Hello. How may I help you?

ELLA  
I was wondering if you could help  
me make a commercial.

INT. BEATRIZ'S PRODUCTIONS - CONTINUOUS

Mike talks on the phone to Ella.

MIKE  
Oh sorry. We're busy. We're full  
right now. Sorry. Have a nice day.

Mike hangs up the phone.



INT. DON FALCON'S KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS

Ella is surprised. She doesn't want to give up. She pulls out a phone book from the drawer. She flips through it.

INT. DON FALCON'S PIZZAS - DAY

Donald calls Ronald's Productions. He's mad.

RONALD (V.O.)  
Hello. Ronald's Productions. How  
can we--

DONALD  
(interrupts)  
Today at work the Chef came and  
gave me a pizza with olives, when I  
specifically asked to not have  
olives on it. Now she wants to make  
a commercial.

RONALD (V.O.)  
Dad, don't worry. It will never  
happen.

INT. ELLA'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Ella finds Ronald's Productions in the phonebook, but she doesn't know it's Donald's son's company. She calls him.

RONALD (V.O.)  
How can we help you?

ELLA  
I'm trying to make a pizza--

RONALD (V.O.)  
(interrupting)  
Where do you work?

ELLA  
Don Falcon's Pizzas.

RONALD (V.O.)  
Sorry, we can't help you.

Ronald hangs up.

ELLA  
I'm tired of calling these  
production companies. I'm just  
gonna make my own commercial!

EXT. PARK- MORNING

Ella is at the park putting flyers on the trees. As Ella is posting flyers, a couple girls come up and start to read them.

The flyer reads: Need help to make Pizza Commercial. If you're interested, please meet here tomorrow.

The GIRLS go up to Ella.

GIRLS  
(excited)  
We wanna help!

EXT. PARK-THE NEXT MORNING

While Ella's walking to the park she sees the Girls sitting on benches and she walks over to them.

ELLA  
Thank you for coming. If you were wondering the reason why I wanted to do this, it's because my boss yelled at me and told me that girls shouldn't be chefs. So I decided to make a commercial. I was thinking you guys could help me, and act in the commercial.

GIRLS  
Don't worry! We'll help you.

The Girls go back to Ella's house, to start shooting the commercial.

ONE WEEK LATER

INT. ELLA'S HOUSE-6 PM

The girls and Ella are waiting to watch the commercial they made.

Commercial pops up on TV. They are all excited for it.

THE COMMERCIAL

Ella spins pizza dough in the air. The Girls play waiters on roller blades and hand out pizza to customers.

ELLA (V.O.)  
Come eat at Don Falcon's Pizzas! We  
have the best pizza's on earth!

INT. DON FALCONS HOUSE-6PM

Don Falcon watches the commercial. He throws the remote control.

DONALD  
(screaming.)  
How did this happen? I told the  
production companies not to help  
her!

He storms out.

INT. DON FALCON'S PIZZAS-THE NEXT DAY

Ella comes into work before they open, when she walks into the kitchen she sees Donald just standing there.

Ella is confused, Donald is never there.

DONALD  
(in a rude way)  
You never had my permission to make  
the commercial.

ELLA  
I don't need your permission. The  
staff took a vote and I won. I'm  
the boss now.

DONALD  
(stomping mad.)  
Fine! That's how its gonna be. I'm  
going to work at another place, I  
don't need you guys.

Donald storms out.

A MONTH LATER.

EXT. ELLAS PIZZA SHOP - DAY

This is the opening of Ella's shop. Ella is there and is so happy. The restaurant is full of people. They eat pizza with a huge smile.

THE END

- A slugline tells us the setting (with three parts: interior or exterior, location and time)
- Action describes what's happening
  - Write character names in
  - Include a **description of the** them in the action section
- Dialogue is what the characters say

ALL CAPS when introduced **characters** when we first meet

**Tip:**  
Write it on the board if you want to reinforce it. This is a great tactic to help your visual learners retain important information.

An optional element in screenplay format is a **parenthetical**, which tells the reader HOW a line is delivered, like with a certain voice, emotion, or action.

### Find the Basic Storytelling Elements in the Sample Script

Write the elements on the board for reference (pg. 18). Have them identify what elements are conveyed through screenplay format in the sample script, Don Falcon's Pizza on pg. 19.

**Wait a minute. What's the difference between a book and a script?**

This is what a story looks like in a book:

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.

Now try to turn it into a script with your group!

24

Now here is what that looks like in a script:

The Slugline tells us three things about the setting: whether it's inside or outside, where they are, and what time of day it is. This is because when you are making a movie, you need to know this to help decide where you might want to film, what kind of lights to use, and what time you want to shoot.

EXT. DRIVEWAY - DAY

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

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

Madison keeps dribbling.

MADISON  
DAD  
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.

When you first introduce a character, you capitalize their name and include a short description of who they are. This is so people reading the script know that this is a new character and what they're like.

Character names, parentheticals, and dialogue are all scrunched in the middle of the page. This helps actors quickly see what it is they have to say and who they're having a conversation with.

Parentheticals help give direction for actors on how to say dialogue. They can be emotions, attitudes, or even accents you want actors to show while saying that particular line. We shouldn't overuse parentheticals but they're helpful if you want the line said a special way, like if they have to whisper or say something sarcastically.

**CREATE**

- If you have time in your lesson, play around with parentheticals on the next page!
- Write your first scene by translating your outline into script format. You can use the pages at the end of this workbook!

25

Below are two Madison scripts with empty parentheses. *If you have time in your session*, try out different words to give a character a specific direction.

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

( )

Your food is going to get cold.

Madison stops dribbling.

MADISON

( )

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

Madison storms inside.

**Now, see how different you can make the scene by just changing the parentheses.**

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

( )

Your food is going to get cold.

Madison stops dribbling.

MADISON

( )

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

Madison storms inside.

## REMEMBER

- A great script has a nice balance of action and dialogue.

## Madison Paragraph: Adapt a Paragraph into Screenplay Format (pg. 24)

Point out the sample paragraph in their workbooks (or have it pre-written on the board):

With help from the group, turn the paragraph into screenplay format. Start with Slugline, Action, and Dialogue. Make sure to add a **description of the characters when we first meet them in the action section** and to write their names in CAPS.

25 min

### WRITE

Break up into pairs for one-on-one time. *Parenthetical Game* (see Appendix A) (pg. 26)

#### OR:

When pairs have finished, take suggestions from the group, then have 2 mentors act out the scene.

Pairs should focus on writing their first scene, taking direction from their outlines. **And remember, mentors should be doing all the writing and/or typing.** (Blank pages in writer workbooks start on pg. 52.)

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

#### Setting/Character/Goal/Big Thing

- 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?
- How do we introduce motivation, if using?
- What happens to spring the protagonist into action (the Big Thing that Happens Right Away)?

#### Obstacle #1

- What is the first obstacle the antagonist is presenting 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?

Writers likely will 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 the antagonist is presenting 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?

5 min

### SHARE

Collect outlines/workbooks from everyone. Have everyone share their favorite line of dialogue and parenthetical. Give everyone high fives out the door!

### REFLECT

- How is everyone's writer doing? Do they understand screenplay format?
- Ask mentors to send you a copy of their writer's script in case they miss a session.
- Remind those who haven't about downloading the screenwriting software.

Hooray - you made it to the end of Session Four!

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# ISABELLA'S

THE FUTURISTIC WORLD

by ELLA JAGHINYAN

# ADVENTURE

IS BENEATH US...

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# Session Five

## If It's Not on the Page

(Writer Workbook pg. 28)

### Goal:

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

### Writers Will:

- Understand how to add rich details and descriptions to their scripts.
- Add rich details to scenes in their scripts.

### Session Prep Checklist:

- Writer Workbooks
- Laptops for mentors (when applicable)
- Cast two actors for the Boring McDonald's Scene
- Write the title, goal, and an outline of the day on your whiteboard
- Set up a circle of chairs

### The Lesson at a Glance:

Boring McDonald's Scene

Discuss Details and Transitions

Write

Share

High Fives Out the Door!

Reflect

### 5 Minute Check-In:

Complimenting others is a great way to refocus energy, feel good, and destress - and you might feel that good energy reflected back to you. Think of someone in your life that you appreciate and why. Be as specific as possible, then tell them in a text, a call, or in person! Here's an example:

When you.....  
.....,  
it makes me feel.....  
.....,  
and I appreciate that!

5 min

## PLAY

Boring McDonald's Scene (see Appendix A)

20 min

## LEARN

### Debrief Boring McDonald's Scene

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.

### 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.

#### OR:

Do a call and response:  
"If it's not on the page?"  
"It's not on the stage!"

In order for the actors to bring their vision to life, writers need to put in detailed descriptions of how a character moves and speaks. Scripts are meant to be performed and we usually can't hear what a character 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 a really clear picture of 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!"

### 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 the scenes they are working on (even if it's stuff that happens before or after the story starts/ends) and 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.

30 min

## WRITE

Last week, writers started writing their first scene. This week, the class will continue writing and adding details to each scene.

Break off for one-on-one time and write as much as

## SESSION FIVE

### If It's Not on the Page

#### LEARN

In a script, "if it's not on the page it's not on the stage." So **DETAILS** are important. Make sure to include detailed character descriptions, specific goals, obstacles, and settings. The more details in your story, the more interesting and unique it will be!

#### REMEMBER

- If it's not on the page, it's not on the stage.

possible. Have 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 their ideas:

### **Obstacle #1**

- What is the first obstacle the antagonist is presenting 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 the antagonist is presenting 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?*

5 min

### **SHARE**

- Ask everyone to share one detail they added to their story today.
- Ask them if they remember the BIG Show day and time - remind them if needed.

Give everyone high fives out the door! Collect outlines, pairs are still using them.

### **REFLECT**

- How is everyone's writer doing?
- Remind them that there can be no violence, unoriginal ideas or real people in their writer's story.

P.S. You're amazing: you've completed six sessions!

COMING FALL 2016  
A YOUNG STORYTELLERS PRODUCTION



KITCHEN  
**CATASTROPHE**

by JOAN MORENO

# Session Six

## A Lesson Learned

(Writer Workbook pg. 30)

### Goal:

By the end of the session, each writer will reach the climax of their script.

### Writers Will:

- 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.

### Session Prep Checklist:

- Writer Workbooks
- Laptops when applicable
- Write title, goal, and an outline of the day on your whiteboard.
- Set up a circle of chairs.

### The Lesson at a Glance:

Game of Your Choosing

Don Falco's Pizza

Discuss Resolution

Discuss Lesson

Write

Share

High Fives Out the Door!

Reflect

### 5 Minute Check-In:

Imagining yourself in a calm place can help slow your body down. Think of a place where you feel content and at ease. Whether it's the beach, the woods, or your favorite coffee shop, add as many details as you can.

What are you seeing? What are you hearing? What are you smelling? Spend some time visualizing this place, and how you feel in it. Return to this place whenever you need a little bit of calm! Write it down if you need.

.....

.....

.....

# The Details

5 min

## PLAY

Warm-Up game of your choosing (see [Appendix A](#))

15 min

## LEARN

### Resolution & Lesson Discussion: (pg. 30)

Hold up the before and after image from *Don Falcon's Pizza*. Ask the writers these questions to describe what they see:

- What is going in 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?

### Why?

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.

Each time a student gives an observation, make sure to ask, "What makes you say that?"

### 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 you want the audience to learn.

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

35 min

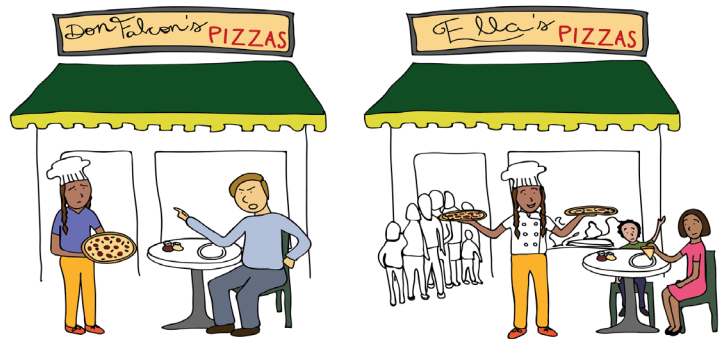
## WRITE

Last week, writers added some details to their scenes and wrote some more. This week, writers will continue writing, keeping their lesson and resolution in mind.

## SESSION SIX A Lesson Learned

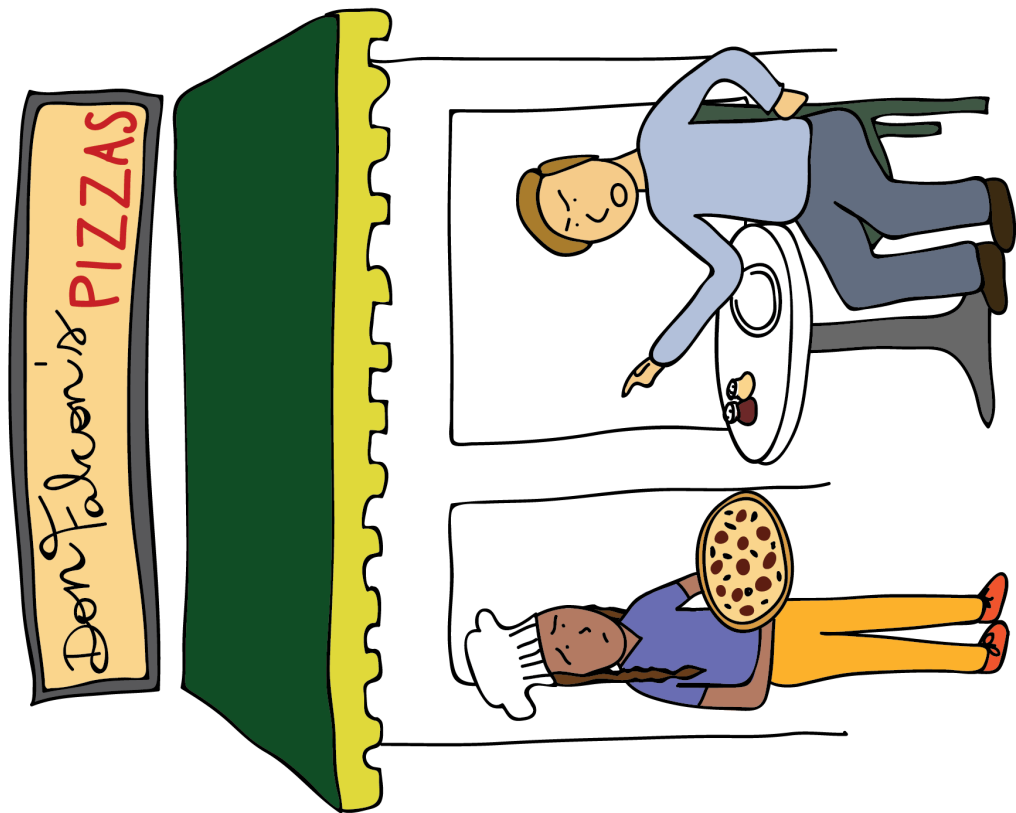
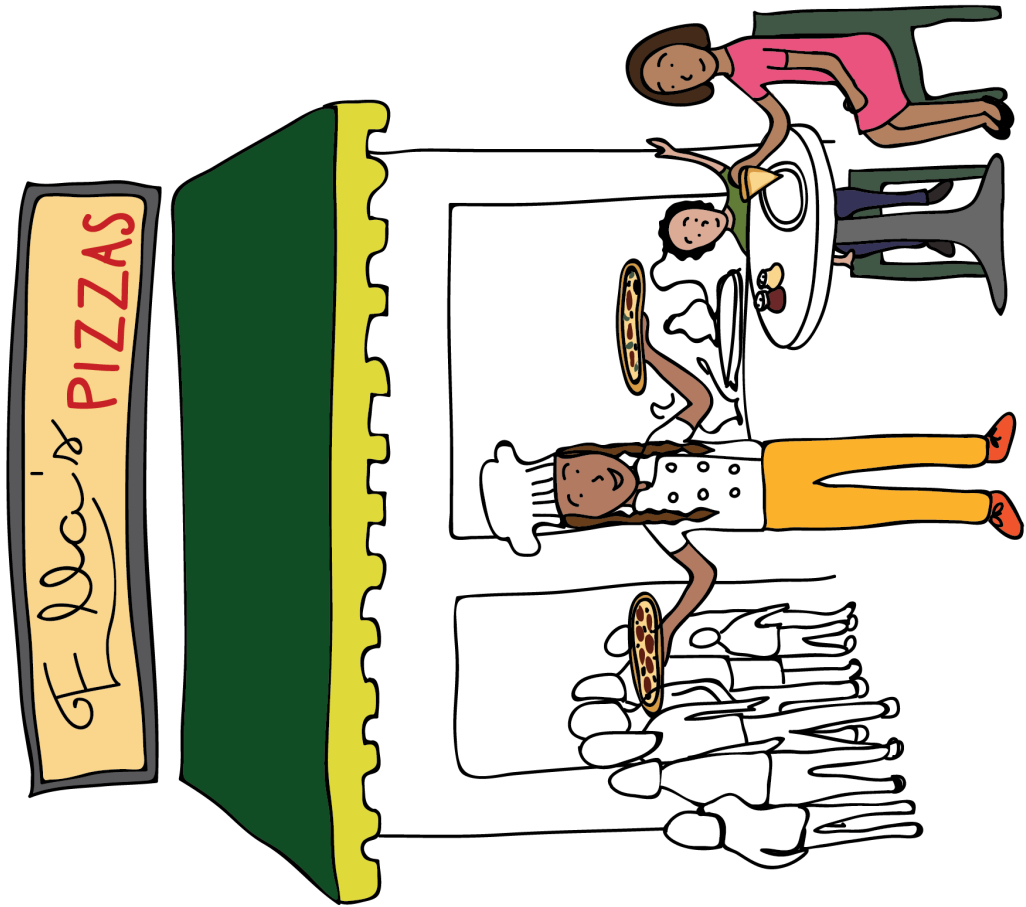
### LEARN

Thinking about our sample script from Sessions One and Four, look at the images below. On the left is how the characters started and on the right is how they are at the end of the script. We don't know what happened in between, but what do we see about how they are different from the beginning of the movie? What might have happened to get them there? What lesson might they have learned?



One important element you need to think about is your story's **RESOLUTION**. The resolution is the final lasting image or scene that you will leave your audience with. Make it a spectacular one! You can think of it as the "happily ever after (or not) moment" that tells the audience where the main characters end up, how they are different from where they began, and the **LESSON** they learned along the way. As you write your script, think about how each scene helps teach the lesson and leads to the resolution.

30





Break the group out into their writing pairs. Pairs will finish their scripts and answer these Essential Questions:

### **Obstacle #2**

- What is the second obstacle the antagonist is presenting 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?

**Give everyone high fives out the door!**

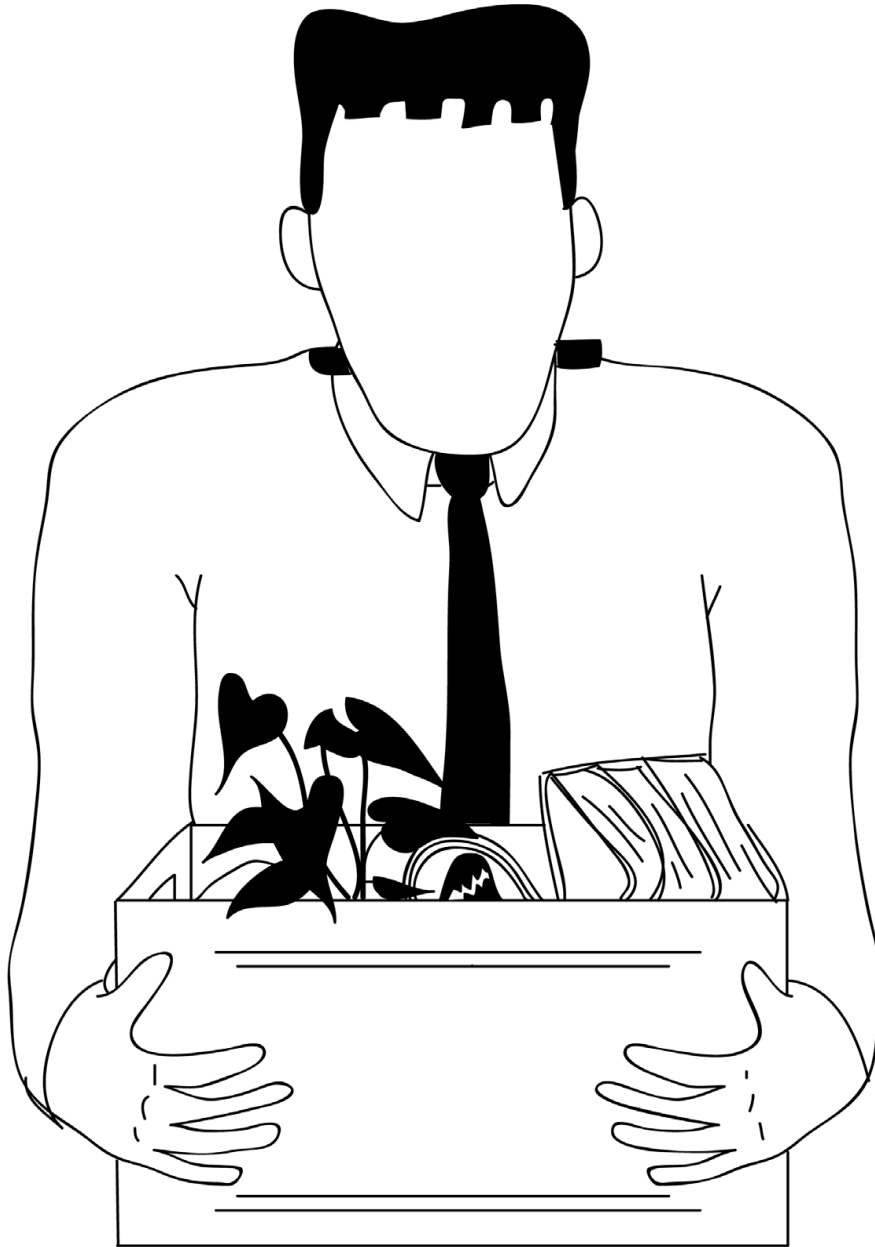
5 min

### **REFLECT**

- How is everyone's writer doing?
- Does everyone's script have a goal? Are there enough obstacles? Can the obstacles be bigger?
- Talk to the mentors about actors for the Big Show and let them know that an additional one-on-one session with their writer can be scheduled if they need.
- **Tell the mentors to please email you a copy of their writer's script so you can take a look and see where everyone's at.**
- Remind them that they (and you) are doing an amazing job!

*FRANKENSTEIN*

is



**UNEMPLOYED**

What if the scariest monsters  
were just like you?

by Moses Nicholas  
Young Storytellers

# Session Seven

## Coming Soon to a Stage Near You!

(Writer Workbook pg. 32)

### Goal:

By the end of the session, each writer will finish writing their full script.

### Session Prep:

- Writer Workbooks
- Three to five taglines for Tagline-Off
- Sample title page
- Write title, goal, and an outline of the day on your whiteboard
- Set up a circle of chairs
- Sheet to collect titles and taglines
- Big Show flyers

### 5 Minute Check-In:

When we're stressed, it often shows in our posture, and this can affect our ability to breathe deeply and face challenges. Think about how you are standing or sitting. Breathe in slowly and as you exhale, relax your shoulders, dropping them away from your ears. Imagine there is a string running through your body, from your belly to the top of your head, pulling you upright. Remain here for a minute or two, breathing deeply. Repeat throughout the day as necessary!

### Writers Will:

- Write a lesson that is revealed through the story's resolution.
- Create excitement around their story by creating a title and tagline.

### The Lesson at a Glance:

Tagline-Off

Tagline Discussion

*Discuss Rewriting*

Write

Share

Mentor/Writer Intros

High Fives Out the Door!

Reflect

10 min

## PLAY

Tagline Off (see Appendix A)

10 min

## LEARN

### Connect Taglines to Films

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.

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?

Today, you will be writing your own title and tagline! The title should be short and indicate what or whom their stories are about. You’ll use the Tagline Word Web to brainstorm some themes from your story, and then decide on your final title and tagline.

Feel free to model using the Title Word Web to brainstorm and then decide on a title and tagline.

### Rewriting Discussion:

#### OR:

If your writers aren’t ready for this discussion, skip it and give them more writing time.

Begin the discussion by commending your writers. Mention that you’ve read all their scripts - feel free to give the group specific praise based on their work so far. Let them know that they are ready for something called rewriting.

The rewriting process is an opportunity to:

- Reflect on what’s been done before anyone else has the chance to see it.
- Make sure that scripts are no longer than five pages. If scripts are too long, this is the time to decide what must stay in the story and what can be cut.

## SESSION SEVEN

### Coming Soon to a Stage Near You!

#### LEARN

A **TAGLINE** is a phrase or sentence that makes people want to go see a movie.

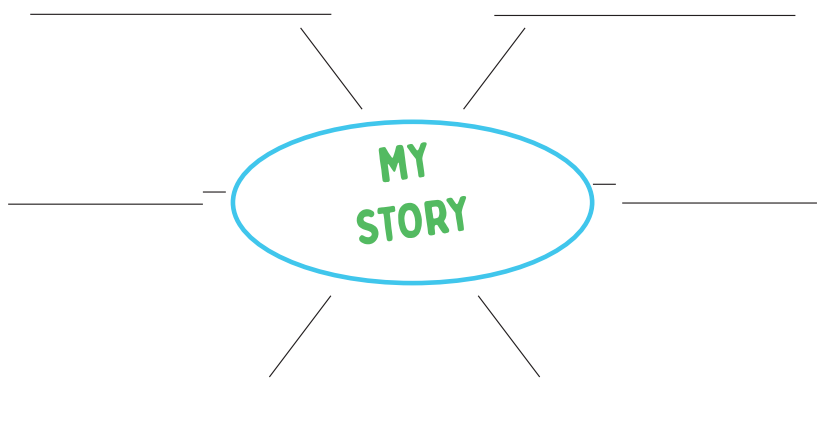
Try to guess what movies these taglines belong to:

- The snow queen cometh.
- A long time ago in a galaxy far, far away...
- Welcome to the urban jungle.
- There are 3.76 trillion fish in the sea. They’re looking for one.

My final tagline is: \_\_\_\_\_

#### CREATE

Think about some themes, words, and phrases that show up in your script. They could be related to your protagonist, obstacles, setting, lesson, goal, or genre. When you think about your script, what things immediately come to mind? What do you want the audience to think about while reading or watching your script? Before reading or watching your script?



32

To help guide the work, advise your mentors to ask questions like these (also on [pg. 34](#)):

- “Is the end of my story about the same topic as the beginning of my story?”
- “Is the lesson clear without having to have a character or narrator spell it out to the audience?”
- “Is my story missing anything? Could it use more obstacles? Character development? Drama or humor?”
- “Did I add extra scenes that were not in my outline? If so, do I need them?”

If your script is over five pages and there are any major moments not about your protagonist achieving their goal, that’s a good place to start cutting.

- “Is there a healthy balance of action and dialogue? Is my script properly formatted?”
- “Does everything in my story make sense?”

Encourage your mentors to use these questions when writing and/or rewriting today. They can help writers answer these questions and offer tips on how to improve scripts!

30 min

## WRITE

Have the group break off into their writing pairs. They first should write the title and tagline for their scripts.

Next, they can finish their script and then begin their rewrite! If any student is finished, let them get a head start on their intro script on [pg. 35](#).

### Remember:

- Five-page scripts!
- 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.
- While finishing and rewriting scripts, remember the importance of the Resolution and the Lesson. Make sure the final scene leaves the impression and impact the writer wants.

Make sure to collect everyone’s title and tagline for their screenplay and share with our office.

10 min

## SHARE

Instead of writers sharing out this session, you will share the Big Show Plan and Run of Show:

- Welcome & Intro

### OUR BIG SHOW STORY

Next week is when all of your hard work pays off! Read this out loud to your mentor:

On Big Show day, I will go and meet with the other Young Storyteller writers and mentors. I might be dressed up in an outfit I really like since it’s a big day and I want to look my best.

Once I arrive, we’ll meet the actors - we’ll all warm up together and introduce ourselves. After that, the actors will audition for us so they can have parts in our scripts. I might get nervous on this exciting day, but I will have my mentor and the group to support me the entire time. I’ll sit down with my mentor and decide which actors I want to play each of my characters in my script. When it’s my turn, I’ll give the actors the script with their part and any directions I have on how to act out certain characters, actions, or lines.

When it’s not my turn, my mentor and I will practice introducing my script. Before the show starts, I’ll get to walk down the red carpet with my VIP badge. VIP means “Very Important Person,” which I am. We’ll watch all the scripts being performed. When it’s my script’s turn, I’ll go up with my mentor and say the script we rehearsed:

**Mentor:** I really liked working with \_\_\_\_\_ because \_\_\_\_\_

What inspired you to write your script?

**Writer:** I was inspired by \_\_\_\_\_.

**Mentor:** The title of the script is \_\_\_\_\_

**Writer:** The tagline is \_\_\_\_\_

Once we introduce the script, we’ll sit in the seats with the best view for watching the actors. After my script is done being performed, the audience will clap and my mentor and I will go back to our normal seats.

Once all the scripts are done, the audience will give us all a huge round of applause and we will take some pictures with our mentors and as a group.

### REMEMBER

- Look at the next page for key Big Show information!

### Why?

Share is intentionally structured differently today in order to prepare the group for their show next week, so nobody feels put on the spot.

- Warm Up
- Introductions
- Auditions
- Casting
- Big Show
- Round of Applause

There is a Big Show story in the Writer Workbook, written from the perspective of the writer, that writers can review to get a better sense of the run of show.

**Mentor/Writer Intro Script:** (pg. 35)

Have the writers and mentors pair off to complete their intro script.

Mentors can start off by listing all of the things they enjoyed about their writer/their writer’s strengths and end with the thing they like most about their writer. After that, they can ask their writer to tell them all the things that inspired them to come up with their story idea. Then, they should work with their writer to pick the most important point(s) of inspiration.

Intro Script

Mentor: I really liked working with \_\_\_\_\_ because \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_.

What inspired you to write your script?

Writer: What inspired me is \_\_\_\_\_.

Mentor: The title of the script is \_\_\_\_\_.

Writer: The Tagline is \_\_\_\_\_.

Give everyone high fives out the door!

**Tip:**  
You can print and hand out the Big Show plan for mentors (find on our website).

**REFLECT**

(Let your mentors know this will take longer than usual) Ask your mentors: How did the intro prep go? Is their writer ready and excited?

**Make sure your mentors all know what they need to prepare for the Big Show:**

- Print and staple copies for every character in the script PLUS two for the narrator and writer. Write the character names on the title page and highlight their lines and actions throughout the script.
- Show them the sample copy of the title page.
- Prepare an additional copy for your writer (but make sure to give it to them after the show so they’re not reading during the performance).
- **Email the head mentor the final version of the script before the show.**
- Make sure all action is written in the script.
- Confirm when and where the Big Show is taking place.

**Mentor tips for preparing writer scripts:**

- Characters who do something important but don't have lines need a copy too. For example: three bullies come up and push Alex around, requires three extra scripts for the bullies, so they know they will have a specific action to do. But, All the kids cheer, doesn't require any extra copies.
- For the narrator, all the sluglines and action should be highlighted.
- Read through and make sure all the necessary action for the actors is included. Since they won't have time to read it beforehand, they will purely be reacting. We don't want to change their scripts, but it's okay to add some clarification to the description if it's something the actors will need.

We don't want to change writers' scripts, but it's okay to add some clarification to action description if it's something the actors will need. For example:

EXT. PLAYGROUND - DAY

The bell rings.

Alex  
Hey.

Carrie  
Hey.

The actors need to know to come on stage. So the description should be:

The bell rings. Alex and Carrie B run out of the school.

**Your mentors have been instrumental to this process and now it's time to see everything come together at the show, so make sure to wrap up this session with a big thank you!**

# BIG SHOW CHECKLIST

Remember: if you have any issues with anything, reach out to YS Headquarters for help!

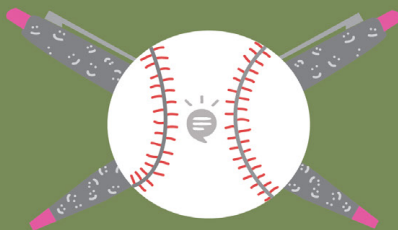
- Email your program info to YS! Make sure the **title, tagline, writer, and mentor** information are in the order that you want for the show. Make sure names and titles are spelled correctly.
- Confirm ten to twelve actors for the Big Show (if you are having issues with recruitment, please let us know!).
- Get enough water for the actors.
- Collect and read all your scripts. Email all of your scripts to YS after reading them.
- Make sure you have all the materials you need for the Big Show (you should have collected them at the beginning of the semester with your Writer Workbooks and this handbook).
- Ask your mentors to come extra early on the day of the Big Show to write their mentee a note on [pg. 43](#) of their workbooks.
- Review the Big Show plan so you're ready to manage a big and exciting day for your group!
- Reflect on all the amazing work you and your group have done in just seven weeks—your Big Show is going to be amazing.



1908

Madness

BY ZACHARY LIFTON



# Session Eight

## The Big Show!

### Goal:

Every writer will have their script performed and will feel celebrated!

### Session Prep Checklist:

- 10-12 confirmed actors (have their emails and phone numbers if possible)
- Water for the actors
- Red carpet
- VIP badges
- Programs
- A highlighter (in case a mentor forgets to highlight their scripts)
- Your Writers' Workbooks

### Writers Will:

- Introduce their script by stating their title, tagline, and source of inspiration.
- Be able to cast their screenplay with professional actors.
- See their creative work performed live in front of their peers.

### The Lesson at a Glance:

Liaison Check-In

New Actor Check-In

Warm-Up

Introductions

Auditions

Casting

Writer Rehearsal

Actor Talk

Head Mentor Intro

Script Intros & Performances

*Mid-Show Shakeout*

Finale

### 5 Minute Check-In:

Nervous about the Big Show? That's totally ok. Just remember that no matter what happens, everything will work out! Maybe you've noticed progress in one of your more difficult students. Maybe you can't wait to see the looks on their faces as they watch their show. Whatever makes the Big Show a success for you, focus on that! Write down three moments you're looking forward to:

.....

.....

.....

# The Details

## Tip:

Space is provided in the margins to note the approximate time each section should start. It may be helpful to start with the Big Show time, and work backward from there.

## IMPORTANT REMINDERS

- **The writers are the stars of the show!** Celebrate them as individuals as much and as often as possible. This is a unique experience for them, so make it the best it can be.
- Have mentors use their phones with the flash on and act like paparazzi as the writers enter (but remind them not to block the view for the audience).
- Please do not let the students hold their scripts or workbooks during the performance—they don't watch the show when they do this.

## PRE-SESSION CHECK-INS

### School Liaison:

Before everyone gets there, check in with your liaison and request that the audience be in their seats on time for the show to start promptly (they can start entering while writers finish casting). Make sure you have everything you need in the school's Big Show performance space.

Have your mentors come extra early to write their mentee a note on [pg. 43](#) of the workbook.

### New Actors:

Ask new actors to come 15 minutes early so you can give them a brief run-through about the general plan for the day and how to have a successful Big Show audition. Answer any questions they might have, thank them for their time, and emphasize how important they are today!

### Audition Info:

Actors will be given 1-2 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, accents, etc.

**NOTE: Since we are not always sure about our students' backgrounds, caution actors against perpetuating gender or racial stereotypes.**

### Big Show:

They won't have much time with the scripts but if they do, they should look over their parts and put their scripts in show order using the program as a guide. They should not alter the text written by our writers.

If they aren't cast in a scene/script, they should still get involved by becoming scenery or groups in crowd scenes, making sound effects, etc.

15 min

## SESSION BEGINS - BIG SHOW PREP

(with everyone—writers, mentors, actors, and you!)

### Introductions Circle:

- **Warm-Up** (see [Appendix A](#) for ideas or play the group's favorite game from previous sessions).
- Hand out the workbooks to your MENTORS - make sure the workbooks stay with them to prevent distractions to the writers.
- Ask the actors to share their name and something short and fun with the group.

# SESSION EIGHT

## The BIG Show

### *Run of Show*

(This is what will happen at the Big Show, in the order it will happen)

**MEET:** Young Storytellers writers and mentors will meet as a group.

**WARM UP:** Everyone—writers, mentors, and actors—will play a warm up game.

**INTRODUCTIONS:** Everyone will introduce themselves. Writers and mentors will also practice their introduction speeches as the Head Mentor talks to the actors.

**AUDITIONS:** The actors will show off their skills to impress the writers.

**CASTING & SPEECH PRACTICE:** With the help of their mentors, writers will cast their scripts and practice their introductions.

**RED CARPET:** Writers will walk down the red carpet with VIP badges in front of the audience.

**BIG SHOW:** Everyone will watch the scripts in the order they are in the program. Each writer and mentor will introduce their script.

**BOW & PHOTOS:** The writers will take a big group bow and pose for the paparazzi.

#### **REMEMBER:**

There is one more meeting after the show called The Farewell. There will be a party!

- Writers and mentors should introduce each other and go through their intro script (pg. 35).
- *If time permits, you can go over the run of show on pg. 37.*

15 min

### Auditions

- Writers take seats in the audience and actors go on stage.
- One at a time, actors tell the writers who they are and why they should cast them (i.e. what roles they can play).
- Writers can start thinking about who can play which character as they watch the auditions.

15 min

### Casting

- Instruct writers to cast each role before they go 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 be handing scripts to actors.
- Mentors and writers practice their intro scripts (one-on-one, not in front of the group) while they are not actively casting.

#### Tip:

If you have more than six scripts, or just are feeling like you have a time crunch, you can pre-cast your scripts to save time.

5 min

### Rehearse

- *Dry run of walking down the red carpet, taking a bow, going up to the podium in order (including “on deck”), and sitting in special chairs, and finally, TAKING A BOW.*
- *Mentors and writers practice their intro scripts (one-on-one, not in front of the group).*

5 min

### Actor Talk

- Ask them to be BIG, LOUD and FAST.
- Remind them to act out all scenery and background.
- Stick to the script—no ad libbing to respect the writers’ ideas.
- 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.

#### OR:

You can place a note on the podium politely asking the narrator to read quickly.

5 min

### Right Before the Show

- Send writers outside or in 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 OR to turn their phone flashlights on and off as if taking flash photos.
- Collect the workbooks from the mentors. We want the writers to be focused on their and their peers’ scripts being performed.

#### OR:

If you have a particularly anxious student who wants to keep eyes on the run of show or their intro script let their mentor hold on to the workbook, but make sure the writer doesn’t look at it.

Varies

## THE BIG SHOW!

### Head Mentor Intro

- Thank the school, the liaison, and the principal.
- Explain the process—what is Young Storytellers and what do 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 merely helped guide them, but 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 the words are all in the script, so have fun and enjoy this magical moment of screenplay history happening in present time.

- Thank mentors for their hard work this season.
- 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.*
- AND NOW, FOR 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.” Also ensure:

- Writers and mentors introduce their scripts onstage.
- Writers and mentors sit in chairs of honor during script performances (placed near the front of the stage).
- Actors make big choices, are loud, and keep the energy up (you can check in with them if you need them to be louder/faster).
- Writers bow after their script is performed.

### **Mid-Performance:**

- *Give the audience a quick stretch/NASA Shakeout break (include the writers, so they can teach the group) if needed.*
- *Let the audience know when there are only 2 scripts left (kids can get restless).*

### **Finale**

- Bring all writers onstage for one big final bow.
- Thank your actors and mentors (invite mentors on stage).
- Thank your audience.
- See you next semester!
- Take a group photo (writers, mentors, actors and YOU)!
- Remind writers and mentors you're meeting next week for the final session.

**Congratulations on a successful Big Show!**

by Jacob Robinson || a Young Storytellers production

# MY RISOTTO AND ME



“ IT WILL CHANGE YOUR LIFE. ”

# Session Nine

## The Wrap Party

(Writer Workbook pg. 39)

### Goal:

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

### Session Prep Checklist:

- Writer Workbooks
- Pizza, plates, napkins, and drinks
- A few extra cards for mentors who forget to bring them
- Set up a circle of chairs
- Send mentors the survey link (they are also in the workbook on [pg. 41](#))

### 5 Minute Check-In:

You did it! As with anything, this semester probably had its ups and downs. Take a few moments to reflect on all that happened over the past few weeks—what’s your rose and thorn?

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

### Writers Will:

- Say goodbye and reflect on their experience one-on-one with their mentor.
- Be able to identify a rose and thorn from the Big Show and the program.
- Use their discussion to fill out a survey and give feedback.
- Have an opportunity to complete and reflect on their experience.

### The Lesson at a Glance:

The Group’s Favorite Warm-Up or Game

.....

Pizza!

.....

Writing Pairs Roses and Thorns

.....

Group Roses and Thorns

.....

Surveys

.....

Connect and Close Out



10 min

## PLAY

**The Group's Favorite Game**  
Pizza!

If you didn't do this in Session 8, have your mentors come extra early to write their mentee a note on **pg. 43** of the workbook.

30 min

## SHARE (pg. 39)

While eating pizza, have the mentors and writers pair up to talk about:

### Big Show Rose and Thorn

- What was your favorite moment of the show?
- Did you have a least favorite part of the show?
- Was there a part of the show you wish had been different or better?

### Program Rose and Thorn

- What was your favorite part of our time together?
- Did you have a least favorite part of the process?
- Was there a part of the program you wish had been different or better?

### Program Takeaways

- What did you learn from this experience?
- Are you able to do anything now that you couldn't do before?
- Will you keep writing stories?

### More Reflection Questions

- *Is there anything you would change about your script now that you've seen it acted out in the Big Show?*
- *What was your favorite moment of your script during the show?*

### Moving Forward

- *How can you continue the spirit of this program after today?*

### Talking points to help guide this section:

- Remind them that they have their workbook. They can use the process in the workbook to keep writing screenplays and stories. There are also other resources in that workbook (a link to Celtx, and an online class from Pixar).
- If they mention how their mentors helped them, help them think of people that can help them (if needed) at school and home. They can also always help each other by sharing their ideas.
- If they mention how their mentors helped them, help them think of people that can help them (if needed) at school and home. They

## SESSION NINE

### The Farewell

#### LEARN

**That's a wrap!** Now that you've written a screenplay and seen it brought to life, we hope you keep writing and sharing your creative ideas.

#### CREATE

##### Rose & Thorn

What were your favorite and least favorite things from our time together?

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What did you learn from this experience?

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#### REMEMBER

- **What you have to say is important!**
- You can use the last section of this workbook to create more ideas.

can also always help each other by sharing their ideas. Then, have everyone come back to the group and share their Big Show OR program Roses and Thorns.

10 min

## FEEDBACK FORMS AND SURVEYS

### Tell Writers:

- We use surveys/feedback forms to help people at the YS office improve our program each year. They want your honest feedback and thoughts about this program.
- This is not a test! We just want to know what you think. All you have to do is share your thoughts on the program and answer some very simple questions.
- Don't worry about spelling or grammar (we don't show these to teachers or parents).
- If on paper: please fill out the front AND back and make sure to put your name at the top.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_  
School: \_\_\_\_\_  
Date: \_\_\_\_\_

### Script to Stage Student Survey

Congratulations on writing a screenplay and seeing it performed live at your Big Show! Now that you have done our program, we want to ask you a few questions. Since young people like you are the reason why we do this work, your feedback is really important.  
Thank you!

Part One - Check the response you agree with the most:

1. Are you proud of the script you created in this program?  
 Yes, Definitely                       Not sure  
 A little                                       No, Not at all
2. Do you think you'll be able to use what you learned in the program when you work on writing assignments in English class?  
 Yes, Definitely                       Not sure  
 A little                                       No, Not at all
3. Did the program change how confident you feel about your writing abilities?  
 I feel much more confident                       Not sure  
 I feel a little more confident                       I feel the same
4. Did the program make you want to write more stories?  
 Yes, Definitely                       Not sure  
 A little                                       No, Not at all
5. Did the program change how confident you feel about sharing your creative ideas with other people?  
 I feel much more confident                       Not sure  
 I feel a little more confident                       I feel the same
6. Did the program make it easier for you to come up with ideas for your stories?  
 Yes, Definitely                       Not sure  
 A little                                       No, Not at all
7. Did the program make you feel more creative?  
 Yes, Definitely                       Not sure  
 A little                                       No, Not at all
8. Did the program help you talk about your creative ideas?  
 Yes, Definitely                       Not sure  
 A little                                       No, Not at all

Please turn this page over  
41

9. Did the program make you more interested in sharing your creative ideas?  
 I'm much more interested in sharing my creative ideas.                       Not sure  
 I am a little more interested in sharing my creative ideas                       I feel the same

Part Two - Please write down your response to each of the below questions:

1. What was your favorite thing(s) about the program and why?
  
2. What was your least favorite thing(s) about the program and why?
  
3. We would love to know about the script you created in this program. What was your story about?
  
4. What inspired you to come up with your story idea?

Please tear this page out of your workbook and hand it to your Head Mentor.

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Have mentors pull the link up on their phones or have writers turn to pg. 41-42. While they are taking the survey, please walk around the room and answer any questions the students might have about the surveys. Feel free to rephrase any questions if the students do not understand any of the questions. When writers finish, please have them tear out and turn in the forms to you if applicable, or submit the survey. If written, please make sure that the student has written their name at the top, answered all the questions, and that their writing is legible.

10 min

## CONNECT AND CLOSE OUT

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

End the program with a group story, telling their journey and referencing things you heard while the writers were discussing one-on-one or what they shared to the group. Here is a suggested format:

- Talk about how much everyone has grown and learned over the past 9 sessions.
- Talk about what it was like the first session (setting).
- List something they learned about each other early on (characters).
- List some challenges that the group may have faced but eventually overcame (goal + obstacle).
- Talk about what happened at the Big Show (climax).
- Talk about the things the students said were their takeaways or favorite parts of the program (lesson).
- Wrap it up and talk about the resources in the back of the workbook (resolution).

Bring the group together for one last 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.

Please send scripts to [scripts@youngstorytellers](mailto:scripts@youngstorytellers) and fill out forms for reimbursement unless you want us to consider it a donation. 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 (e.g. if you have a receipt from Fall 2021, we cannot reimburse past Spring 2022).

Our program team will see you at our next training day, potluck party, or volunteer event. In the meantime, please take some time for yourself: you were a huge part of creating a once in a lifetime experience for your group and deserve a little TLC!

### Tip:

The following pages in the Writer Workbook are a resource for writers to continue writing on their own! [Pages 52-63](#) are blank lined pages.

YOUNG STORYTELLERS PRESENTS

# THIRSTY DINOSAURS

— ON AN ADVENTURE IN BLUE CITY | STEVEN ARIAS —



## To My Amazing Writer:

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- Your Mentor, \_\_\_\_\_

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## HOW TO DESIGN YOUR OWN SCRIPT POSTER

Weren't the posters in this workbook cool? Try to make your own! Young Storytellers artist Jaylene has some tips for you on how to make your own.

You've written your story—Congratulations! Now you might be asking, **how do you get people excited about what you've written?** A poster is a great way to tell people what your story might be about (without giving away the ending), and that they should read/see more of it.

You might already have an idea of what you want your poster to look like, you might not—either is totally fine! Here are some tips for creating great, eye-catching pictures that show (rather than tell) what your story is about.

Think about your story. Some questions to ask yourself:

- What is a moment that is particularly interesting to you?
  - Are there any parts that you can see happening in your mind?
  - Are there unique characters or settings that you want to introduce to your audience?
  - Is there a big question or conflict?
  - What emotion do you want your audience to feel?
- If you're worried about making mistakes, **sketch out rough ideas for your poster with a pencil** before using markers or crayons.
  - **Keep it simple:** Pick only a few elements to illustrate. You don't have to show every single character or place to get people interested in your story.
  - **Use colors!** Color grabs attention, and can even make the viewer feel certain emotions.
  - Don't be afraid to use the entire space. **Be bold, be big.** It's your story, and it deserves to be seen.
  - Make sure you leave room for the **TITLE**, the **TAGLINE**, and your **NAME!** The title and tagline are super important for telling people what your story is about.
  - **The way you write/draw words can be very descriptive.** Big block letters, cursive letters, tiny thin letters, letters that look like they're dripping, letters made out of candy—they all tell a different story.
  - Look at real movie posters for inspiration. Notice the ways they use color, size and style of font (words), and characters. How do the posters make you feel?
  - Try a few different options for where to place words and images. **If you try something and you don't like it, don't worry—try something else!**

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## WHAT'S YOUR NEXT STORY?

### That's it? It's over? It doesn't have to be...

There are several resources online that will let you use screenplay format to keep writing your stories and scripts.

**Writerduet.com** is a wonderful free software you can use to keep writing stories in script format.

**Celtx.com** is also great. You can sign up and use their script software for free too. Click on the "individual" tab and select the Basic Screenwriting option.

**Pixar** has free storytelling classes online at Khanacademy.org ("The Art of Storytelling" is our favorite).

### Want to go through our writing process again?

The following pages include blank divide a stories, loglines, outlines, and pages for writing. To get started, use the divide a story to brainstorm new ideas to create a brand new logline. Then turn it into an outline and get to work!

Here are a few questions that might get you started on your next idea:

- What's the sequel to your story?
- What happens to your protagonist now that their first journey is complete?
- What more do they want?
- What new obstacles may arise for them?
- Is there another character in your story who's journey you'd like to explore?
- Or is there an entirely new character you've thought up that you could tell a story about?

[www.youngstorytellers.com](http://www.youngstorytellers.com)  
[writeus@youngstorytellers.com](mailto:writeus@youngstorytellers.com)

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## DIVIDE A STORY

A brainstorming exercise!

jot down the first ideas that pop in your mind. Real or Imaginary. Fill in at least one idea per box. Then fill in as many more as you like.

SETTING:	CHARACTER:
GOAL:	OBSTACLE:
CLIMAX:	LESSON:

### LOGLINE

A one sentence summary of your story!

Fill in the blanks with the ideas you brainstormed in the Divide a Story exercise or new ideas if you want to go with something different.

Write at least one log line. Then, as many as you like.

Practice reading one out loud in your best movie trailer voice!

In a \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_  
(setting) (protagonist)

wants \_\_\_\_\_  
(goal)

but \_\_\_\_\_ stands in their way,  
(obstacle/antagonist)

so they \_\_\_\_\_  
(climax)

learning \_\_\_\_\_.  
(lesson)

In a \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_  
(setting) (protagonist)

wants \_\_\_\_\_  
(goal)

but \_\_\_\_\_ stands in their way,  
(obstacle/antagonist)

so they \_\_\_\_\_  
(climax)

learning \_\_\_\_\_.  
(lesson)

### A LOGLINE IS A ONE SENTENCE SUMMARY OF YOUR STORY!

In a \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_  
(setting) (protagonist)

wants \_\_\_\_\_  
(goal)

but \_\_\_\_\_ stands in their way,  
(obstacle/antagonist)

so they \_\_\_\_\_  
(climax)

learning \_\_\_\_\_.  
(lesson)

In a \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_  
(setting) (protagonist)

wants \_\_\_\_\_  
(goal)

but \_\_\_\_\_ stands in their way,  
(obstacle/antagonist)

so they \_\_\_\_\_  
(climax)

learning \_\_\_\_\_.  
(lesson)

### OUTLINE

Your map to follow as you write your script

Opening Setting:

Character/Protagonist:

Big Thing That Happens Right Away:

Goal (Why do they want their goal?):

Antagonist (Why is the antagonist against the protagonist?):

Obstacle #1 to overcome:

Obstacle #2 to overcome:

The Final Obstacle—**THE CLIMAX** (Does your protagonist succeed or fail at achieving their goal?):

Lesson:

Resolution:

# Appendix A:

## Games & Exercises

### BORING MCDONALD'S SCENE

**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. Pick fun and expressive mentors with acting experience if possible, since they're going to have to take direction on the spot! 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.

Before adding details during the last two performances of the scene, take suggestions from your writers.

Second time: Give the customer and cashier a goal, motivation, and/or obstacle.

Third time: Give them both character traits and descriptions.

#### Why?

It's important for writers to be 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.

## 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.

**Alternative:** 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. Then, in the third round, encourage each person to try their own inflection or hand gesture.

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 and celebrate the value of unique storytelling.

### Helpful Tips:

- 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:** 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.

## I AM A TREE

**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. After the third person has added their element, ask the first two 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 goes 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.

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## I LOVE

**Purpose:** To model a type of brainstorming process while providing time for mentors and writers to connect with each other.

**Instructions:** Have your writers and mentors pair up with each other for this game. First, the mentor and writer will each spend 60 seconds verbally listing all the things they love. The mentor should go first, modeling speaking off the cuff for their writer. During the writers' round, have the mentors write down all of the things their writer loved. Then, the mentors will show the writer their list and work with them to pick the one thing that means the most to them. It's ok if they decide on another word connected to things they love. For example, if a writer brings up multiple family members in the game, they might decide that family is the most important thing to them.

### Helpful Tips:

Connect this game to the day by telling the group that they just went through a process that helped them brainstorm around an idea and select one main idea. During the writing process, they will need to come up with various ideas and then eventually decide on one idea. If this process worked for them, they can use it while writing.

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## THE LINE-UP GAME

**Purpose:** To help writers understand basic story structure through various modes of learning (auditory, visual, and kinesthetic).

**Instructions:** After the group conversation in Session Two about story elements, have the mentors line up holding the elements in a random order. Then, ask those mentors to hold up their signs. Ask the writers if they are in the correct order, and if not, have one or two writers move them into the correct order still holding their cards up. 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: Setting, Character, Goal, Obstacles, Climax, Resolution, and Lesson

(Writers may put character first and then setting. They may also place lesson last with resolution as the second to last element. That's okay!)

### 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 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.

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## NAME GAME

**Purpose:** To get to know the group.

**Instructions:** Have each writer pair up with the mentor next to them so 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 and a gesture that fits their adjective. Go around the circle and, one at a time, have each person say their name and adjective while doing their gesture (“Hi, I’m Laughing Lexi”). After each person shares, the entire group should repeat their intro and gesture (“Hi, Laughing Lexi”).

**Helpful Tips:** It’s ok if writers struggle a bit with this. Struggling a little can be part of the learning process and it’s ok 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!”)

Some Head Mentors choose to play a different kind of name game, called **Pass The Name Clap**. While standing in a circle, the Head Mentor begins by passing their name and a clap with the person on their left. They should say their name and clap at the same time as the person to their left (go as slow as needed the first time around). On it goes around the circle with each new person passing their name to the person on their left. Then you can switch directions and see who has been paying attention.

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## 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 and boring, right? Now, have the writers come up with an imaginary obstacle for them to get over, under, or through. Have a mentor physically represent that obstacle, and have the first mentor 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 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 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.

If you have an especially excitable class that might get overly stimulated by too much action, have one mentor play the protagonist and mime the obstacles.

## PARENTHETICAL GAME

**Purpose:** To illustrate how and when to use specific instructions for the actors.

**Instructions:** After you have taught screenplay format by adapting the paragraph about Madison into this format, you may excuse mentors and writers to break into pairs and play the parenthetical game. Have the mentor and writer act out the Madison scene with absolutely no emotion.

Ask the writer if that was interesting and what would have made the scene more engaging to watch. Have mentors introduce and explain parentheticals (we use them to direct actors how to read certain lines). They can be emotions, attitudes, or even silly accents. We place them in between parentheses, below the character name and above the dialogue.

Come up with a list of potential parentheticals. Perform the scene one or two more times using parentheticals the students wrote on the page. Each time they do it, encourage picking parentheticals that will change the scene to show the impact they can have. Have mentors let the writers know that they don't need to use parentheticals all the time, just when they want to make something especially clear to the actor or the audience.

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## TAGLINE OFF!

**Purpose:** To 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 taglines 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
- .....

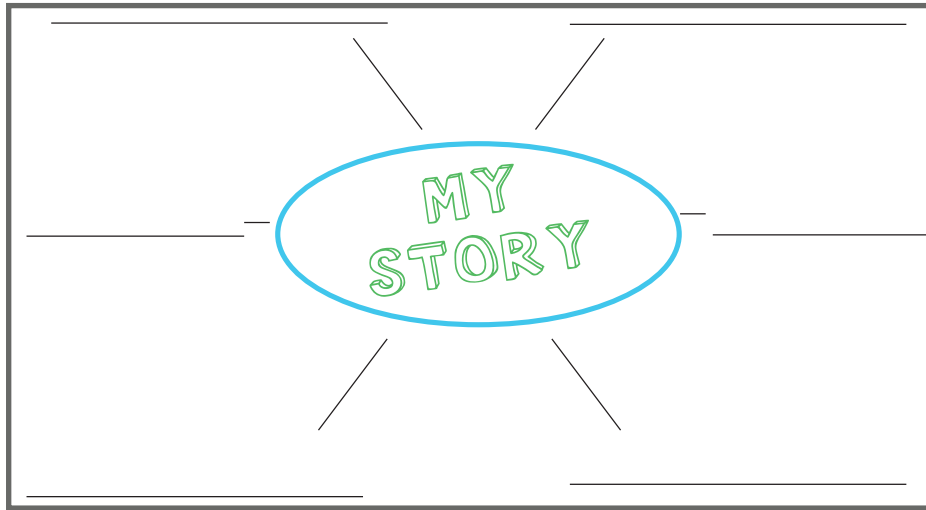
## TAGLINE WORD WEB

**Purpose:** To brainstorm titles and taglines.

**Instructions:** In the group, after the Boring McDonald's scene, talk about how details and story elements feed into the tone and themes of a movie or script. Ask the writers to list words or ideas related to the theme of the Boring McDonald's Scene and things the scene reminded them of. Using those, brainstorm some titles and taglines that could

tease the McDonald's scene the way it was with the details.

Break everyone off into their mentor/writer pairs. Writers will now list words or ideas related to their own scripts or story ideas. Using those, they'll brainstorm some working titles and taglines for their script. Let the writers know they can revisit and change these next week.



## 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 loves chocolate must switch places with someone else who is also loves chocolate. Whoever is left out takes the middle place.

**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.

# Appendix B:

## WARM UP GAMES

### BIPPITY BIPPITY BOP

**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 Tips:

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 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.

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### 8’S

**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 Tips:** The game leader can encourage the group to get louder and faster with each round to build energy.

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### NASA SHAKEOUT

**Purpose:** To loosen up and energize.

**Instructions:** A Young Storytellers classic. This activity makes the space and time special, ultra-creative, and different

from everywhere else they go during the day. Everyone stands in a circle and puts their hands in the air, stretches up, counts from 3, bends over, yells, and shakes their hands out.

### **Helpful Tips:**

- Before doing the NASA Shake Out, introduce it by emphasizing its importance. The more serious you take the intro, the more fun the exercise. Something like—“This is a special activity developed by NASA for astronauts when their heads were too clogged with science and information. You all have been in school all morning and your brains are filled with smart stuff, so we use what NASA developed to clear out the brain fog and make room for fun and imagination”.
  - If your group or you like how 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 shake out.
  - 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.
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## **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.).
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## **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 and encourage mentors beforehand to send energy to students who may not have received it yet.
- 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.









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