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## Scriptwriting With a Wiki



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### Subjects

- Arts & Humanities
  - Language Arts
  - Visual Arts

### Grade

- 6-8
- 9-12
- Advanced

### Brief Description

Students use a wiki -- a Web site that allows users to add and edit content collectively -- to write a one-act play.

### Objectives

Students will:

- identify key elements of scripts and scene development.
- write scenes collaboratively.
- use their time wisely
- respect the work of others and edit work with care.

### Keywords

scriptwriting, wikis, plays, theatre

### Materials Needed

- computer with Internet access
- projector or TV monitor to display teacher work

### Lesson Plan

What's a wiki? It's a Web page on which all users can add, change, or delete text and other content as they wish. You don't need any special software to use a wiki; just your browser (Internet Explorer, Safari, Firefox).

If you already have a basic understanding of Wikis, keep reading. If you need more practice and help with wikis (or if you're a first time user!), see Education World's Sites to See article [Get Wild about Wikis](#) and [Working](#)

With Wikis techtorial.

Prior to the lesson, students should have some exposure to scriptwriting or the elements of a script (characters, scene development, dialogue). They do not need extensive work in scriptwriting, however, because they can use an existing one-act play as a model.

Before beginning the lesson, you'll need to create a classroom wiki:

- Go to [Writing Wiki](#).
- Click: Create Your Own Site at Writing Wiki.
- Complete the short registration form. You might want to name the wiki something like "CHSdramaclass." (Note that you cannot use spaces in the wiki name.) Make sure the name is unique and one you and your students will remember.
- A small blue note will appear on the form saying that your page has been created. Click the name of your Web site inside the blue confirmation note.
- You now should see your personal wiki! (Again, if you need practice with editing/saving/and using versions, be sure to see the [Working With Wikis](#) techtorial.

Begin the lesson by asking students to list the parts of a script. Write their responses on the chalkboard or type them on a computer connected to a projector or TV monitor. If students have been studying a particular play, they might use that script as a reference. Tell students that starting today, they will be writing their own one-act play.

Depending on the class, you might want to provide a scenario or a title ("Mystery in the Lunch Room," for example). Or, if time permits, you can ask students for suggestions.

Click Edit and type the play's title (don't worry about formatting yet). Brainstorm with students the names of 5-8 characters and list them on the wiki as well.

Go on to scene one. To save time, you might want to set up the first scene yourself. For example, you might type: "Two teenagers are at a dark bus stop. One is listening to her MP3 player. The other, who is clutching a small book, seems nervous." Then ask students: "What happens first?" Type the stage directions and dialogue as students suggest.

Click Save and show students how the wiki looks. If time permits, click Edit and Formatting tips and show students how to make the Title a heading (bigger font and in bold) or how to make the list of characters a real list.

Now, tell students it is their turn to add to the wiki. You might want to arrange them into groups and assign each group a scene to write as well as the opportunity to edit the previous scene. For example, you might follow the procedure below.

- Scene 2: Group A writes; Group B edits.
- Scene 3: Group B writes; Group C edits.
- Scene 4: Group C writes; Group D edits.
- Scene 5: Group D writes; Group E edits.
- Scene 6: Group E writes; Group F edits.
- Scene 7: Group F writes; Group G edits.
- Scene 8: Group G writes; Group A edits.

Give each group a chance to brainstorm before started to type at the computer. Also, discuss to what extent you want to allow students to edit their classmates' work. Can they actually erase everything and start again? Can they change whole sections of dialogue or just minor wording? (Remember, you or they can go back and retrieve a previous version, so even if a group gets silly or malicious, you can get the previous work back.)

This project will take about ten class periods, so you might want to schedule another quiet project for the days when students will be working on it. Perhaps students also can be practicing an in-class play while groups work on the script. That will keep the rest of the students on task while small groups use the computer. Make it very clear exactly how much time each group has to write and edit. ("You have 30 minutes to write, and then the next group has 15 minutes to edit your work.")

Throughout the process, be sure to monitor the wiki for inappropriate language or vandalism (malicious deletion or editing of a wiki). Be prepared to discipline students who do not conduct themselves respectfully throughout this project.

Finally, consider how you want to display the final project. Will students perform the play or take home printed copies? Or, is this something that you'd like your next class to pick up and continue -- a forever evolving play?

## Assessment

Students will be assessed on their ability to

- manage time and work in groups.
- identify and use major elements of scripts.
- apply what they've learned about plot and scene development.
- respect the work of others and edit in a professional yet kind manner.

## Lesson Plan Source

Education World

## Submitted By

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## National Standards

### **FINE ARTS: Theatre**

#### **GRADES 5 - 8**

[NA-T.5-8.1](#) Script Writing by Planning and Recording Improvisations Based on Personal Experience and Heritage, Imagination, Literature, and History

#### **GRADES 9 - 12**

[NA-T.9-12.1](#) Script Writing by Planning and Recording Improvisations Based on Personal Experience and Heritage, Imagination, Literature, and History

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