

Theatre People: Playwright

Playwrights write scripts for plays which are staged in theatrical productions. Writing a play consists of two main elements: dialogue and stage directions. Playwrights create dramatic stories that are intended to truly blossom in live performance. They also do research, gather data and work under tight deadlines at times. They must also write the synopsis and character list for their play.

Once a playwright has completed their script, they may submit it to theatre companies, producers or directors in order to generate interest towards a production. Some playwrights direct and produce their own writing. Sometimes, a playwright will work with a dramaturge in order to further develop their play. Playwrights will participate in workshops of their play, where actors read the parts and where playwrights get feedback on their writing. In some cases, the playwright's role ends as soon as they turn the script over to be produced. In others, they remain involved in the rehearsal process.

Tasks and activities in a typical day

- Researching
- Creating an outline
- Writing dialogue
- Getting notes on their writing
- Rewriting
- Writing the synopsis
- Writing the character breakdowns
- Doing writing exercises
- Jotting ideas down, developing ideas, characters and storylines

10 skills that a Playwright uses:

- Creativity
- Plot and Character Development
- Researching skills
- Observational Skills
- Editing and Revision Skills
- Interpersonal Skills
- Time Management
- Passion
- Self-Motivation
- Organization

Building Abilities

There are probably lots of things you are already doing, and things you can start to do, that will serve you in a career in Playwriting. Some of these are:

- Read plays: study and examine different genres and styles of plays.
- Watch plays: see as much as you can and wherever you can.
- Read about history and biographies of people.
- Observe people and how they behave with a goal of understanding the human condition.
- Learn the roles and responsibilities of other people in the theatre.
- Listen to how people speak in the real world, and be attentive to what they say and how they say it.
- Find ways to effectively research and organize your thoughts on paper.
- Learn how to organize your drafts in a way that are easy to find and share.
- Try some writing exercises! For example: choose two people from different time periods in history. Do some research on them. Have them speak to one another at a bus stop while they wait for the bus to arrive. What do they want from each other? Create dialogue that suits them and see where the scene goes.