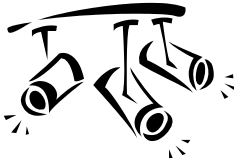


# NCOM Eastern Region Technical Skills Fair



## From Script to Stage: Turning ideas into a performance!

### Ideas to a script: some storytelling hints from Pixar

- ✍ 1. Keep in mind what's interesting to you as an audience.
- ✍ 2. Come up with your ending before you figure out your middle. Seriously. Endings are hard. Get yours working up front.
- ✍ 3. When you're stuck, make a list of what wouldn't happen next. More often than not, the material that gets you unstuck appears.
- ✍ 4. Discount the 1<sup>st</sup> thing that comes to mind. And the 2<sup>nd</sup>, 3<sup>rd</sup>, 4<sup>th</sup>, 5<sup>th</sup> – get the obvious out of the way. Surprise yourself.
- ✍ 5. Putting it on paper only allows you to start fixing it. If a perfect idea stays in your head, you'll never share it with anyone.
- ✍ Once upon a time there was \_\_\_\_\_. Every day, \_\_\_\_\_. One day \_\_\_\_\_. Because of that, \_\_\_\_\_. Because of that, \_\_\_\_\_. Until finally \_\_\_\_\_.

### Script-Writing

*Writing a script for a play means answering all those questions we learned in school: who, what, when, where, why and how!*

**The Who: Characters.** The audience needs to “see” the characters. Develop who they are, what they look like, and how they behave so your audience can understand them and respond to them. Remember to include what your problem is asking of the character too. Use some of these other *character creation* factors to help develop your cast:

- \* Name, age, gender, and cultural/ethnic/geographic background
- \* Physical description
- \* Mannerisms, typical gestures, expressions
- \* Voice (inflection, tone, volume, etc.)
- \* Education/ occupation
- \* Strengths & weaknesses
- \* Likes & dislikes

**The Where and When: Setting.** Remember that the setting of a play is *both* the time and the place of the story. The setting may change throughout the play depending on the plot. Setting can be established by scenery, props, and costumes as well as script and dialogue. Again, thoroughly read your problem to make sure you have a required setting in the performance.

**The What: Situations/Conflict.** Characters need to have reasons for acting as they do in the play's setting. Many plays have characters struggling against each other or dealing with outside forces. What does your problem ask? What is “the Spirit of the Problem?”

**The Why: Motivation.** Motivation is what makes us feel and act the way we do. Universal motivators include love, hate, jealousy, trust, ambition, envy, and greed. Make sure your characters' motivations line up

with the characteristics and behaviors you gave them such as their strengths, weaknesses, likes, dislikes, fears, or ambitions.

**The How: Plot.** The plot of a play is the sequence of events – what happens first, second, third, etc. – and involves the characters, situation(s), setting, conflict or cause & effect, and a resolution. Again, reread your problem and remember to shape the plot based on what needs to happen and other requirements.

*Now, it's time to write the script! The story's action may take place through a series of scenes and acts. The actors must make their characters' thoughts and feelings visible through spoken dialogue, facial expressions, gestures, and physical movements. So, your script needs to include stage directions and dialogue for your characters.*

**Dialogue:** A play is developed mainly through dialogue, the speech of the characters whether it is verbal or non-verbal physical movement. Dialogue must add something to the play by helping the audience's understanding of the characters and their relationships, revealing conflicts, or moving the plot along.

**Stage directions:** Instructions to the actor on how the character should behave through expression, attitude, voice, gesture, and movement. Directions not only tell the actors what to do and how to act, they also give details about the set and props. Directions should be short and clear. For example:

Jason (walking out the door, laughing): No way that could happen...

Quentin (breaking in and shouting): Watch out for that broken step!

Jason (yell): AAAAhhhh!

## **Props, Sets, Costumes, and Rehearsal!**

*To make your script come alive you need costumes, props and set. These help to highlight the setting and the actors' actions.*

**Prop** – anything that an actor uses on stage in the performance.

- It can be a large stage prop like a sofa or chair where a character sits
- It can be a hand prop like a watering can, telephone or book picked up by a performer.
- It can be part of a costume like a cape being waved around by an actor.
- Remember that in Odyssey problems “props do not include required vehicles, structures, or devices that only operate and/or perform a function for required score.”

**Stage Set** – team created materials that are used at the competition site to create the environment/setting of a scene. Backdrops, walls, doorways, furniture are usually considered part of the stage set. Anything picked up and used by a character during a performance is considered a prop and not part of the stage set.

### **There is a difference between a set and a scene!**

The **set** physically establishes the setting – time and place.

The **scene** is a sequence where a character or characters engage in some sort of action and/or dialogue in that setting.

**Costumes** – body coverings that help convey a character to the audience. Fairy wings for Tinkerbell, black mask for Darth Vader, white sheet for a Roman toga, ginormous feathers for Big Bird, etc. Consider make-up and hair styles as part of a costume too. Many problems have style choices for creative costumes.

## Enter downstage right...

*To perform in front of an audience is a sometimes scary thing! With these reminders about using your voice, body, and action you'll calm your butterflies and let the audience "see" your character.*

### Voice

**Expression** – How you *say* the words can give the same words different meaning

**Volume/Projection** – Focus on the people in the back of the room hearing you

**Clarity** – Clear speech uses the whole mouth especially the tongue tip and teeth.

**Tempo** – Vary the speed at which you speak and you vary the mood and meaning.

**Pitch** – Highness or lowness of your voice also conveys meaning and emotion.

### Body

**Facial expressions** – Put expression your voice and the right facial expression will usually follow. Go for BIG so that the judges and audience can "see"

**Gestures** - Use exaggerated gestures to convey character and action, but avoid uncharacteristic nervous movements

**Character** – Body and voice together make the character the audience to sees.

### Stage Presence, movement, and acting tips

- Fill the stage (use all your performance space)
- Don't be upstaged (keep characters interacting not overacting)
- Face front (or at ¼ turn)
- Project to the audience (we need to hear you)
- Keep your character (don't throw away your lines)
- Learn your lines (memorize & practice a lot)
- Don't panic when you forget them (stay in character)
- Rehearse (perfect practice makes perfect)
- Warm-up and then enter stage right for an outstanding performance.
- Smile and have fun!
- Good Luck - Break a leg!

