

Big Before Broadway Creative Challenge: Calling New Musicals

<https://thenationaldcprebroadway.org>



Activity Overview

Grade Level: High School (9th – 12th) **Materials Needed:** Pen or pencil, paper
Subjects: ELA/Literacy, Playwriting **Activity Format:** Individual
Estimated Time: 20-30 min

Summary: Students will bring back the Pre-Broadway Tryout experience to The National Theatre. If students had a chance to bring an original musical to the stage, what would it be? It's time for their ideas to be considered.

Activity Guide

- Ask students to review the history of past shows that were successful and shows that struggled on the *Big Before Broadway* website. This will give them an idea of what audiences wanted to see and hear during those time periods. Direct students to think about their audience, their generation, and come up with a musical theatre concept. Ask students to put on their director's hat and develop a musical theatre concept that could be tried out at The National Theatre before moving on to other theatre spaces.
- Students will write a paper using clear examples of figurative language in the form of a letter to The National Theatre's Executive Director, proposing that their new musical be performed at The National. The letter should explain why the student wants the show to be housed at The National Theatre.
- Use the following questions to guide students through the writing process: What is the show about? This is the heart of the assignment! What issues does the musical explore? What is there about this topic/theme that makes it interesting to your generation? Different? Exciting? What is the genre of the musical? Who will the audience be? Who might the performers be? Think about present day stars that might fit the roles.

Big Before Broadway Creative Challenge: Ten Minute Play

<https://thenationaldcprebroadway.org>



Activity Overview

Grade Level: High School (9th – 12th)

Subjects: ELA/Literacy, Playwriting

Estimated Time: 45-60min

Materials Needed: Pen or pencil, notebook paper, brainstorming worksheet (see below), Post-It-Notes

Activity Format: Individual

Summary: Students will develop writing skills and exercise creativity by writing their own original play in ten minutes.

Activity Guide

1. Instruct students to brainstorm a list of words, phrases, and ideas that come to mind when they hear the phrase "Ten-Minute Play." Have students come up with one word or phrase for each letter of the alphabet using the worksheet included below.
2. Review the words, phrases, and ideas on the worksheets with the students and ask them, "How would you define a 'Ten-Minute Play'?" Then tell them that they will each have the opportunity to write their own "Ten-Minute Play."
3. Give students Post-Its and ask them to write the biggest challenge they perceive to writing a "Ten-Minute Play" on one side. On the other side of the Post-It, instruct students to write what they perceive as the biggest advantages to writing an original story.
4. Set a timer for ten minutes and instruct students to write continuously, taking into consideration the following guidelines: The goal is quantity, not quality of writing. Students should write as quickly as they can without limitations and should not stop to edit or revise anything. Students should not attempt to analyze, think logically about, or understand what they are writing. Students should not pay attention to grammar, spelling, or punctuation. Additionally, students do not need to take into consideration margins or lines on the page; they should write everywhere. The goal is for students to write. Remind them if they cannot think of something to write, they can write about that. Tell them to try to not cross out anything they write. Encourage students to write about whatever emotions come up during the exercise, even if they are embarrassing, painful, or frightening, because strong emotions spark strong writing.



THE NATIONAL THEATRE
WASHINGTON, D.C.

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A to Z Brainstorming Worksheet



A _____

J _____

S _____

B _____

K _____

T _____

C _____

L _____

U _____

D _____

M _____

V _____

E _____

N _____

W _____

F _____

O _____

X _____

G _____

P _____

Y _____

H _____

Q _____

Z _____

I _____

R _____



Big Before Broadway Creative Challenge: The One Minute Story

<https://thenationaldcprebroadway.org>



Activity Overview

Grade Level: High School (9th – 12th)

Subjects: ELA/Literacy, Playwriting

Estimated Time: 15 - 20min

Materials Needed: Timer, toy microphone (optional), director slate (optional)

Activity Format: Group

Summary: This learning activity will help students develop communication skills and verbally free their expressions from self-censorship.

Activity Guide

1. Invite one student to the front of the classroom to be the Star.
2. Assign one student to be the Director and one student to be the Timekeeper. The Director will be responsible for telling the Star when to start speaking. The Timekeeper will time the Star for one minute.
3. Ask the class for a topic that they think the Star knows absolutely nothing about.
4. Explain to the Star that they have one minute to teach the class or talk in-depth about the topic. The Star will have to use their imagination to discuss all aspects of the topic.
5. Tell the Star there are no restrictions, except classroom rules. They may not stop talking until “time” is called. (You may need to encourage the student to keep talking if they get stuck. For example, remind the Star to stay on topic or keep speaking about an aspect of the topic they might be ignoring.)
6. Ask each Timekeeper to set the timer for one minute, and announce that time starts when the Director says “action”. Invite as many students to be the Star as time allows.



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