



# Drama Festival



Middle School groups (6<sup>th</sup> through 8<sup>th</sup> grade) perform One Act Plays  
High School teams (9<sup>th</sup> through 12<sup>th</sup> grade) perform Monologues & Duologues

The Drama Festival is designed to give middle and high school students a positive theatre experience that fosters participation in, commitment to, and appreciation of quality theatre. Theatre is a collaborative art form in which each student can recognize the value of an individual's contribution to the ensemble. The students should be willing to constructively utilize the information provided by the critic judge.

## General Contest Rules

(Revised August 2018)

### RESPONSIBILITIES OF DIRECTOR:

It is recommended that the director be the theatre teacher. However, any willing middle school teacher or parent approved by the school may direct for this festival. See specific guidelines for the Director of either One Act Play or Dramatic Interpretations.

The Director must:

1. Communicate goals and behavior expectations of the festival to students and others involved.
2. Remind parents that their role at the festival site is audience ONLY.
3. See that students should use proper care of all stage equipment and facilities.
4. Always oversee the well-being and conduct of students, while rehearsing, performing, or watching another group.
5. Directors should anticipate transportation needs and accompany their students at all times.
6. **Bring signed Code of Conduct** for group to rehearsal.
7. **Bring signed releases for each student.** Release form is available on the Drama Festival page.
8. Make parents and other visitors associated with your group aware of policies regarding recordings and photography. Law strictly prohibits videotaping or otherwise recording copyrighted material. Flash photography is not permitted during performances as it may be distracting to audience members and presents a hazard to the performers.

### DRAMA FESTIVAL MANAGER

The role of the festival manager is one of an impartial and objective administrator and enforcer of all rules at the festival site. Academic Rodeo will supply the Festival Manager for the event.

The Festival Manager will:

1. Start the festival on time and keep groups performing according to the schedule.
2. Make necessary announcements to the house, including non-use of recording devices. Law strictly prohibits videotaping or otherwise recording copyrighted material
3. Stop performance if audience behavior or technical difficulties (not under the control of company's performance) interfere with judge's ability to see, hear, and critique the play.
4. See that all set and strike times are recorded with an approved stopwatch in addition to running times. The festival manager may have an impartial adult assistant(s) with no connections to any participating school to time the set and strike periods.
5. Notify Academic Rodeo Director if any participant has violated rules and may be disqualified.
6. Hear any protest from a participating director and relay to Academic Rodeo Director as needed or take necessary steps in accordance with policy.
7. Provide the critic judge an area with writing table and small light where the view is unobstructed, and no one can approach or speak to the judge. Insure that the judge has privacy for decisions.
8. May introduce critic judge to company for critique, which is open to all interested individuals, who must adhere to appropriate behavior during critique.

## JUDGES

A judge certified for One Act plays and/or Monologues & Duologues will be selected for the event.

### Responsibilities of the Critic Judge(s)

One or two judges will be available for the critiques. These judges must be certified judges selected by Academic Rodeo. The function of the critic/judge is to serve as an educator who provides a carefully prepared critique according to the judging standards agreed upon by the festival committee. The critique will provide valuable information to allow for qualitative improvement by the participants.

The critic judge must:

1. Read and become familiar with judging standards set for the festival.
2. Provide sound feedback to directors and students in a kind and tactful manner, which justifies the ranking and give participants a focus to improve future performances. Specific examples should be given in terms of judging standards to support decision or criticism of the performance.
3. Include positive comments on something executed well and identify elements or aspects of the production, which interfere with full understanding, and communication of the essence of the play.
4. **NOT** evaluate the choice of play, nor compare to other productions, seen or directed.
5. **NOT** give directors initial notes made during performances. A written critique may be provided, but only after reviewing and revising commentary to a format acceptable to directors and students.
6. Determine the award for each performance and any special honors to give to Academic Rodeo Director for announcement.
7. **NOT, at any time, stop the performance** and attempt to “critique” performances. All critiques should occur at the end of each performance.
8. Should notify the Festival Manager if something is preventing a clear view of the stage or difficulties in hearing the performances, other than the actual presentation by the performers.

### Critique Process

The oral critique will be given immediately following each performance. The oral critique should not be more than 10 minutes.

## VOLUNTEERS

Representatives from support partner organizations may serve as volunteers as needed. Volunteer responsibilities could be:

- Assist directors in on-site control of students.
- Distribute playbills for each production.
- When possible, a volunteer will be assigned to each group. These volunteers are to escort each cast and crew from the staging area to the performance theatre. When volunteers are not available, the Festival Manager will escort groups to their performance.

**DRESSING ROOMS** - Space for preparations for your production or performances will be provided. All costumes should be stored in this designated room when not in use. **This is not a secure and monitored facility** and will be used by all groups participating in the Drama Festival.

### REHEARSAL TIME AND SPACE

Thirty minutes rehearsal time will be scheduled for each One Act Play production and 15 minutes will be scheduled for each Monologue or Duologue. These will be listed on the performance schedule.

## PLAYBILLS

When possible, a Playbill will be created listing all performing groups, each play performed, the playwright and the play director. Additional information will be included when possible. The group should provide a playbill that lists the school, play performed, when published, cast of characters, crew, alternates, and director. Do **NOT** provide a Playbill as the Student Registration. There is a special form for registering students and **MUST** be completed and submitted by the deadline.

## **PROCESS OF DISQUALIFICATION**

Disqualification decision is to be made by the Academic Rodeo Director only. Schools will be disqualified for major violations of the rules of the festival.

## **AUDIENCE BEHAVIOR EXPECTATIONS**

1. Everyone is expected to behave in a manner that does not interfere with the performance or distracts the audience or critic judge from the performance.
2. Applause, vigorous or polite, is the only acceptable form of appreciation to be used.
3. Photography and video recording devices are not permitted during a performance.
4. It is recommended that audience members arrive approximately 30 minutes prior to the scheduled performance time as the schedule may move on to the next play when one is completed. Enter quietly if another play is in progress.
5. **Please, no food, drinks and gum in the theatre.**
6. The use of tobacco, drugs and alcohol in any manner is not allowed in the theatre.

## **AWARDS**

Middle School:

- Each Middle School group receives a rating based on judging criteria. The group receives a trophy with the Rating inscribed on the award plate.
- One Outstanding Female Performer and one Outstanding Male Performer is selected from the entire group of Middle School presentations. These individuals are eligible to apply for Middle School Academic Rodeo Scholarships announced at the Awards Celebration. See the Academic Rodeo Scholarship page for details and forms.
- Up to 10 All Star Cast Members are selected from the groups.
- All Cast, Crew and Understudies receive a Certificate of Participation for their participation.

High School:

- 1st, 2nd, and 3rd places will be awarded in Monologues and in Duologues. Students placing may apply for High School Academic Rodeo Scholarships announced at the Awards Celebration. See the Academic Rodeo Scholarship page for details and forms.;
- An overall Outstanding Female Performer and an overall Outstanding Male Performer from both Monologues and Duologues will be selected.

# Specific Rules for Middle School One Act Plays

Each registered group may present 1 One Act Play in the Middle School Level.

## THE DIRECTOR

**The Director for One Act Plays must:**

1. Select a play appropriate for the age group and challenging to the abilities of director and students.
2. Direct the play in a way which gives credit to educational theatre. Communicate to all students and their families the goals of the festival, rules, restrictions regarding flash photography and videotaping copyrighted material.
3. Students should use of proper care of all stage equipment and facilities.
4. The principal should be familiar with the content of the play and give approval for its presentation on the Fine Arts Form to be submitted by the deadline in the contest Timeline & Checklist.
5. **Send a copy of the script with lighting and sound notes** by the designated deadline.
6. **Register all cast and crew, giving their roles** by the designated deadline.

## PLAY SELECTION

Any play selected for entry in the One Act play festival must:

- Challenge the abilities of the actors and promote growth.
- Not offend the standards of the community through theme or language.
- Be written for children - Oftentimes, elementary groups attend the festival as a field trip.
- May be a production performed within the last 12 months.

## PARTICIPATION NUMBERS

**15 cast members, 4 crew members and 5 Understudies** from 6<sup>th</sup>-8<sup>th</sup> grade students may participate. The 5 registered Understudies give the group flexibility in the event of a significant event (large number of students with influenza, ineligibility of cast members, etc.) which could affect several cast members and make it impossible for the cast to perform. Understudies may assist with backstage activities. One director, plus 2 other adults, if needed, may participate in the production. A recorded voice-over is a sound effect and does not constitute a cast/character slot.

## LENGTH OF PLAY/TIMING PROCEDURES

The play shall run for no more than **40 minutes**. Timing begins with the first sound or light cue and ends with the last sound or light cue. A professional stopwatch will be used. **Remind students that they are being judged from set-up through teardown.** They should indicate they are finished by stating **“Clear.”**

When possible in scheduling, plays will begin every hour and 10 minutes or be scheduled based on indicated time from the Fine Arts form. However, when many schools are participating, the schedule may be tightened with a minimal amount of time between plays to move the schedule along. Following the presentation of the play the cast will have a strictly enforced time limit of 10 minutes to strike the set. The cast will immediately assemble at the stage for cast photo, followed by judge’s critique. Then, the next performing play will have a strictly enforced 10 minutes to set up and the next play will perform. **NO** prompting of the actors during the performance of the play should occur.

Director and assisting adults may oversee set-up and tear-down in a supervisory role and assist with extremely heavy objects that could present safety concerns. However, the primary set-up and tear-down should be done by the ensemble of students.

## ORDER OF PERFORMANCE

A random draw for the order of performance will be conducted as soon as the Academic Rodeo office receives the School/Group Registration form indicating the school plans to participate in the Drama Festival. Scheduling will consider the distance to be traveled when appropriate. Special scheduling requests

should be made to the Academic Rodeo Director. The schedule of performance date and time will be posted online after confirmation of the school's participation.

## **FACILITIES AND SET**

**Theatre** – Location of the productions will be indicated in the Drama Festival Timeline and Checklist. Each participating school will be allotted a 30-minute rehearsal time during the festival schedule for the cast and crew to become familiar with the logistics of the stage, lighting and sound. Local schools may be asked or given the opportunity to rehearse on a day other than performance day, depending on schedule needs. A floor plan of the stage area is available on the Drama Festival page.

A layout of the building and stage area is provided on the Drama Festival page. It may NOT show every detail, so please be aware and make students aware of areas where they could easily fall off the stage.

There are NO UIL set pieces available for your use. You must provide all set pieces and scenery that you will use for the performance.

**Scenery** - Minimal scenery should be used for quick set up and striking. Temporary space will be available to store the scenery prior to the production. Academic Rodeo will secure the props and scenery in the locked building, but no group should include expensive and valuable items as they can be misplaced or damaged. Academic Rodeo is not responsible for the safety and security of these items. Each group should have an adult responsible for the safety of the scenery and props during the Festival hours.

Please consider carefully the use of “weapons” in the presentation of the play. These items should not be so realistic as to cause concern by audience members or others onsite. Even though merely props, these should be handled with care and any “fighting” scenes should be safely performed on the stage ONLY.

**Lighting** - A lighting system will be available. The Lighting Techs will be given instruction during rehearsal.

**Sound** - A sound system will be available. The school should furnish any unusual sound effects. The Sound Tech will be given instruction during rehearsal.

## **IF YOU ARE PERFORMING NEXT ON THE SCHEDULE**

When cued by the festival manager, take your cast to the room designated to make final preparations for your production. Limited makeup is encouraged, and each school is expected to furnish its own make-up. This room will **not** be locked and there is no security in the building; any valuables should be left at home. Cast and designated crew **ONLY** are allowed in this area. **No parents are allowed unless they have a specific assignment and have been registered with the Director.**

## **PRE-SHOW SET UP PROCEDURES (10 MINUTES ALLOWED BEFORE PLAY)**

When cued by the festival manager, **cast and crew** will be allowed 10 minutes to set up the play. Cast and designated crew **ONLY** are allowed in the backstage areas, including dressing rooms. **Parents should remain seated in the audience during this time and refrain from attempted conversation with students.** No props or scenery may be placed on stage prior to set-up time.

## **POST SHOW STRIKE (10 MINUTES ALLOWED AFTER PLAY ENDS)**

Immediately after the performance, each school will have up to 10 minutes to clear the stage of set pieces and properties. These items should be neatly stored in the designated area. It is highly recommended that directors should rehearse pre-show set up and post-show strike with their companies. **Parents should remain seated in the audience during this time and refrain from attempted conversation with students.**

# Specific Rules for High School Dramatic Interpretations

Dramatic interpretation enables students to develop skills common in other speech competitions, but also to select and condense literature suitable to the participant's personality and maturity and convey through characterization and narration the meaning of the literature selection.

Each registered group may register 3 Monologues and 3 Duologues for the Dramatic Interpretation portion of the Festival.

The Monologues or Duologues may be Dramatic or Humorous.

The script for each must be provided to Academic Rodeo by the deadline in the Contest Timeline and Checklist.

## THE DIRECTOR/COACH

The Director/Coach must:

- Encourage students to select literary works appropriate for the age group and challenging to the abilities of director and students.
- Coach the Dramatic Interpretations in a way which gives credit to educational theatre. Communicate to all students and their families the goals of the festival, rules, restrictions regarding flash photography and videotaping copyrighted material.
- The principal should be familiar with the content of the literary work and give approval for its presentation on the Fine Arts Form to be submitted by the deadline in the contest Timeline & Checklist.
- **Send a copy of the script** by the designated deadline.
- **Register participants, giving their roles** by the designated deadline.

## SELECTIONS

1. Selections shall be cuttings from published novels, short stories, plays, poetry, or other printed materials. Bibliographic documentation is required for the selection.
2. The presentation must be from memory, without physical objects (props, hand props, or scenery). One or two chairs will be provided off stage to be carried on stage and used, if desired.
3. Appropriate costuming may be used, or the presenter(s) may dress in black. Whatever the attire, it should not overshadow the interpretation itself.
4. The participant(s) should present a memorized introduction to set the scene and mood. The introduction must include the author and title of the selection. The introduction must not dominate the presentation. It should be obvious, for timing, when the presentation begins and ends.
5. The selection may NOT include any verbal or nonverbal communication that is offensive or in poor taste, in accordance with the standards set for the Drama Festival.
6. Coaches should discourage student from choosing literature that has no literary merit or is in poor taste.

### Monologues:

Maximum time for introduction and presentation of the selection is 10 minutes, with a 30-second grace period. Exceeding the grace period will result in point deductions and may affect placing.

### Duologues:

The presentation time including the introduction should not be less than 8 minutes or more than 15 minutes, with a 30-second grace period. Exceeding the grace period will result in point deductions and may affect placing.

## Tips for Working with Your Group Middle School or High School

### REMEMBER . . .

Primary communication with Coaches and Sponsors is done through e-mail provided with the School/Group Registration done online. If a coach or sponsor is not receiving e-mail information about the contest, he or she should check Spam/Junk folders on the computer and contact Academic Rodeo for assistance with getting the current information.

Deadlines exist for a reason. Please be aware of them and follow them. There is an **Academic Rodeo Calendar** in a true calendar format on the Getting Started and General Info pages. The **Drama Festival Timeline & Checklist** is on the Drama Festival page. If you have a problem with a date or deadline, please contact Academic Rodeo, realizing that usually it is not possible to make a change or give “grace” for deadlines. To be sure your students get to participate, follow the deadlines.

One other item related to deadlines . . .

Each year groups register, a schedule is set, and trophies are ordered based on the group registrations. It is only after numerous attempts to get Student Registrations when the deadline has passed, that a group may suddenly announce that it will not participate. Emergencies and unavoidable situations may occur that prevent the group from performing, and these are certainly understandable. However, groups which decide they will not perform, but do not take the necessary steps to drop from the Festival create problems in the schedule and ordering of unnecessary awards.

PLEASE drop, if you must, by the Drop Deadline. Otherwise, we will be expecting your student registrations to come in by the deadline and to see you perform at your scheduled time.

Please read the General Instructions for all Coaches and Sponsors.

Please provide scripts by the deadline posted, to allow the Judge ample time to become familiar with the work.

### Other things to note:

- Take advantage of, but do not exceed, the allowed number of cast members and understudies that may be registered for the One Act Play portion of the Festival and/or the number of entries allowed in the Dramatic Interpretation portion of the Festival.
- Be sure your students understand the format of their performances, and that they are competing from the moment they walk in to begin set-up until the last item has been removed from the stage and “Clear” has been called.
- When possible, take advantage of the opportunity to watch performances of other schools.
- The Drama Festival brings high energy and enthusiasm to Academic Rodeo. Help students channel this energy appropriately and maintain respect for facilities and other performing groups.
- Often a Back-Stage Award is voted on by Festival Volunteers and presented to recognize those groups which are exceptional to work with in rehearsal time and in dressing room areas.
- Remember that your entire cast is invited to attend the Awards Celebration to accept the award for your group. Please RSVP with the names of those who will attend when requested to be sure that a seat is reserved for each of them.