

**Annual Young  
Playwrights Festival**

all for One productions, inc



young playwrights  
FESTIVAL

CONTEST & FORMATTING  
GUIDELINES

# young playwrights FESTIVAL

## Official Guidelines



### Eligibility:

Any Northeast Indiana public, private or home-school kindergartner to high school senior enrolled by September 15 of the current school year.

Single playwright plays only (Plays written in collaboration with another writer will not be accepted).

### Length of plays:

No less than one page, no more than 15 single-sided pages.

### Formatting:

See attached Style Sheet for **required** page format

Submit all files in .doc or .docx format

Plays not in .doc or .docx format will not be read

### Cover Page: (See attached Cover Page)

Submit a completely filled in Official Cover Page with play. Plays without the properly filled out cover page will not be read.

### Play theme:

Use your imagination.

For additional ideas to pique your imagination refer to the "Seeds of a Play" included in this packet.

### Content guidelines:

Plays should not include foul or gang-oriented language or gratuitous violence. Remember that *afO* is a family-friendly organization and there will be small children present for the performances. Please choose your topics accordingly.

### Parental involvement:

Parents are encouraged to type plays for young children, but parents are **not** to influence the grammar, context or writing of any play.

Plays will be treated with respect and the script will be followed to the best of the director's ability.

*Words and grammar will not be altered extensively for production.*

### Early Submission:

If you choose, you may submit your script for critique by **11:59 PM November 20**. This early submission is optional, and completely separate from the final judging. This submission will be viewed anonymously and the playwright will be provided with feedback that could prove quite helpful to the final submission.

### Submission:

Email your cover page and play as .doc or .docx files to **afOeducation@allforonefw.org** by **11:59 PM, December 21**. Plays submitted after this time will not be read. If you do not have access to a computer, please contact Tricia Marshall at 260.310.7492

**Questions? Need help? Don't have access to referenced forms? Call 260.310.7492**

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## Judging Criteria



Professionals from the fields of education and theatre will read each play.  
Readers will judge play submissions based on the following criteria.

### **Plot:**

How is the story structured? Is it well developed? Does the action build?

### **Dialogue:**

Are the characters distinct? Do they come to life? Is the dialogue consistent with the characters?

### **Characters:**

Are they engaging? Have depth? Do they grow or change? Do they have a strong want/need that propels the action of the play?

### **Conflict:**

Does it drive the play? Does it challenge the characters? Does the playwright keep the tension building?

### **Dramatic Premise:**

What is at the core of this play? Does it motivate the characters? What is the playwright trying to say?

### **Originality:**

Does the play deviate from television/movie structure? Is the story fresh? Is the style different?

### **Ability to be Staged:**

Are the scenery and props feasible to use on stage? Are there any scene or costume changes that are impossible for actors and crew to accomplish?

#### **CRITICAL ELEMENTS FOR PLAYS:**

Avoid using too many characters; we suggest 6 maximum.

Do not use a narrator. Plays are told through speech and action rather than description.

Limit your settings. Unlike television or movies, live theatre does not easily accommodate multiple switches of settings.

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## Style Sheet Standard American Format

Please use the following guide to be sure your scripts are in Standard American Format before submitting them. Thank you. Questions? Call Tricia Marshall at 260.310.7492; email [tricia@allforonefw.org](mailto:tricia@allforonefw.org)

Give your play a title, centered and in all caps	THE FORMAT	Number the pages in the right hand corner, to make certain that your pages don't get mixed up or lost.
List ALL your characters at the beginning of your script. Center and underline the word "Characters." Offer some description of each character. The character's names should be in <b>bold</b> face type.	<p style="text-align: center;"><u>Characters</u></p> <p><b>John</b>, a friendly 8th grade budding playwright.  <b>Laura</b>, John's friend, who also likes to write plays, but doesn't know Standard American Format.  <b>Mrs. Davis</b>, their teacher, who got them involved in the Young Playwrights school workshops and wants them to enter the contest.</p>	
Under the character list, describe the setting of the play in as much detail as possible.	<p>Setting: The play takes place in a classroom. Upstage is the door. Through it we can see into the hall. Desks are arranged in neat rows.</p>	
Center and underline the beginning of each Act and Scene. Use Roman numerals for the Act and Arabic numerals for the Scene.	<p style="text-align: center;"><u>Act I, Scene 1</u></p> <p>It is after school. Laura is alone. She sits at a desk, working intently on her play. John runs in from the hall.</p>	Give a brief description of anything a reader needs to know, as your scene begins. This will help picture the scene in his mind.
Make it easy for your reader to read. Make sure to double-space between one character's dialogue and the next, and after the character list and the Act/scene headings (or the scene description that follows the Act/scene heading.	<p style="text-align: center;">JOHN</p> <p>(Hopping on the desk beside Laura's.)          It was a great idea to work on our plays together after school. The deadline for the Young Playwrights Contest is coming up soon.          (He takes out his play from his backpack.)</p>	
Dialogue should be aligned with the left margin and single spaced.	<p style="text-align: center;">LAURA</p> <p>(Frowning, perplexed by her work.)          John, do you know how to format a play in Standard American Format?</p>	Always list the name of the speaker above his/her dialogue. Center on the page and type in all caps.
Stage directions should be indented with parentheses. If stage directions continue for more than one line, indent the entire stage direction.	<p style="text-align: center;">JOHN</p> <p>Mrs. Davis gave me a style sheet we can follow.          (Takes out the style sheet from his backpack.)          It's a guide on how to set up your script before you send it to <i>all for One</i>.</p>	
	<p style="text-align: center;">LAURA</p> <p>(Her mood brightens)          Great! I really want to enter my play in the contest. Imagine how exciting</p>	

**NOTES:** Use 8.5 x 11 paper. Leave margins of 1 inch around all sides. Type on one side of the paper only, using Times or Times New Roman, 12 point type

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## Required Official Cover Page



Please fill out this form electronically and e-mail it to [afoeducation@allforonefw.org](mailto:afoeducation@allforonefw.org) along with your play **saved as a Microsoft Word document by 11:59, PM December 21**. *In the case that you do not have access to a computer, please contact Tricia Marshall at (260) 310-7492.*

### PLEASE COMPLETE ALL SECTIONS OF THE COVER PAGE.

Title of your play:		
Your name:		
Home address:		
City:	State:	Zip code:
Phone:	Email:	
Date of birth:	Grade:	
School Name:		
Parent or Guardians' Name(s):		

### **PLAY DESCRIPTION:** Use this area to tell briefly (30 words or less) what your play is about.

List of Characters*: <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/>	Time Period of Play:	Setting of Play:
<b>*Any use of a narrator is prohibited.</b>		

By submitting your play to the Young Playwrights Festival, you are giving *all for One productions, inc.*, a non profit organization, permission to produce your play, or to use your play, now or in the future, for other purposes such as play readings and in published anthologies of winning plays, without money being paid to you.

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## The Seeds of a Play Worksheet



Sources of inspiration for your plays...

A QUOTATION

A DREAM

A MEMORY

A PIECE OF MUSIC

A PHOTOGRAPH

A PLACE

A FAVORITE PERSON

The Best Thing That Ever Happened to You

The Worst Thing That Ever Happened to You

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## Basic Play Elements



**BALANCED SITUATION:** The way things are/were at the beginning of your story. It should hint at potential conflict or disturbances.

**DISTURBANCE:** An event that upsets the balanced situation and affects the protagonist. The disturbance starts the action and poses the dramatic question.

**DRAMATIC QUESTION:** The primary question the audience needs answered in order to feel satisfied concerning the major conflict. This question is answered at the climax.

**CONFLICT/COMPLICATIONS:** When characters have a disagreement, dispute or a collision. Who wants what and how does it pit characters against each other or put the parties on opposite sides? Also referred to as rising action.

**CLIMAX:** When the disturbance and conflicts are settled. One of the two forces in conflict during the action wins, and the dramatic question is answered. Balance or order is re-established.

**RESOLUTION:** How everything ends; the final result. This is when we find out how the play is resolved - whether the protagonist succeeds or fails and how the protagonist (as well as other characters) is affected.