
Graduate Certificate in Expressive Arts Writing

Writing for Performance

Writing for Performance is a specialized form of writing that focuses on creating scripts or texts that are meant to be performed live on stage, in film, or in other performance settings. This type of writing is unique because it is not only about creating compelling stories or characters but also about considering how these elements will come to life through performance. In this course, Graduate Certificate in Expressive Arts Writing, students will learn about the key terms and vocabulary associated with Writing for Performance to enhance their understanding and skills in this area.

Let's delve into the key terms and concepts that students will encounter in this course:

- 1. Dramatic Structure:** This refers to the organization of a play or performance text. It includes the beginning, middle, and end of the story, as well as the development of characters and conflicts. Understanding dramatic structure is crucial for creating a cohesive and engaging script.
- 2. Character Development:** This involves creating well-rounded and believable characters that audiences can connect with. Writers must consider the motivations, flaws, and relationships of their characters to make them come alive on stage.
- 3. Dialogue:** Dialogue is the spoken communication between characters in a play or performance. It is essential for conveying information, revealing character traits, and advancing the plot. Effective dialogue should sound natural and authentic.
- 4. Monologue:** A monologue is a long speech delivered by one character in a play or performance. It is typically used to convey a character's thoughts, feelings, or backstory. Monologues can be powerful tools for showcasing a character's inner life.
- 5. Stage Directions:** These are instructions in a script that describe how the actors should move, speak, and interact with the set. Stage directions help guide the director, actors, and production team in bringing the script to life on stage.
- 6. Setting:** The setting of a play or performance refers to the time and place in which the story takes place. The setting can greatly impact the mood, tone, and themes of a performance.
- 7. Conflict:** Conflict is essential for creating drama and tension in a performance. There are different types of conflict, including internal (within a character) and external (between characters or forces). Resolving conflict is often a central focus of a performance.
- 8. Theme:** The theme of a performance is the central idea or message that the writer wants to convey. Themes can be universal (such as love or betrayal) or specific to the context of the performance. Exploring themes can add depth and meaning to a script.

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9. **Plot:** The plot of a performance is the sequence of events that unfold throughout the story. It includes the exposition (introduction), rising action, climax, falling action, and resolution. A well-crafted plot keeps audiences engaged and invested in the story.
10. **Rehearsal:** Rehearsals are essential for bringing a script to life on stage. During rehearsals, actors work with the director to block scenes, develop characters, and refine their performances. Rehearsals help ensure that the performance is polished and ready for an audience.
11. **Blocking:** Blocking refers to the positioning and movement of actors on stage. Directors use blocking to create visual interest, convey relationships between characters, and guide the audience's focus. Effective blocking enhances the overall impact of a performance.
12. **Feedback:** Feedback is essential for writers and performers to improve their work. Receiving feedback from peers, instructors, and audiences can help identify strengths and areas for growth. Constructive feedback is valuable for refining scripts and performances.
13. **Collaboration:** Collaboration is key in Writing for Performance, as it involves working closely with directors, actors, designers, and other creatives to bring a script to life. Effective collaboration requires communication, compromise, and a shared vision for the performance.
14. **Audience Engagement:** Engaging the audience is a crucial aspect of Writing for Performance. Writers must consider how to captivate and connect with the audience through storytelling, characters, and themes. Understanding audience expectations and reactions can enhance the impact of a performance.
15. **Character Arc:** A character arc refers to the transformation or development of a character throughout a performance. Characters should experience growth, change, or realization over the course of the story. A compelling character arc adds depth and complexity to a performance.
16. **Metatheatricality:** Metatheatricality refers to the self-referential nature of theater, where plays or performances draw attention to their own theatricality. This can include breaking the fourth wall, using theatrical devices, or commenting on the act of performance itself.
17. **Subtext:** Subtext refers to the underlying meaning or emotions that are not explicitly stated in dialogue or actions. Writers can use subtext to add depth, tension, and complexity to scenes. Audiences must infer subtext based on context and character motivations.
18. **Verbal and Nonverbal Communication:** Verbal communication involves spoken words, while nonverbal communication includes gestures, facial expressions, and body language. Both forms of communication are essential for conveying character traits, emotions, and relationships in a performance.
19. **Genre:** Genre refers to the category or style of a performance, such as comedy, drama, tragedy, or musical. Understanding genre conventions can help writers craft scripts that resonate with audience expectations and preferences.
20. **Imagination and Creativity:** Imagination and creativity are essential for Writing for Performance. Writers must be able to think outside the box, generate unique ideas, and create vivid worlds and characters.
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Cultivating imagination and creativity can lead to innovative and impactful performances.

By familiarizing themselves with these key terms and concepts, students in the Graduate Certificate in Expressive Arts Writing course can deepen their understanding of Writing for Performance and enhance their skills as writers and creators. Through practical applications, exercises, and challenges, students can apply these concepts to their own writing projects and develop scripts that are engaging, compelling, and ready for the stage.