



WORKSHEETS

SCRIPTING

This worksheet contains pointers to help with writing a first draft of the script. At this stage in the process there should be a detailed storyline and storyboard, and some bits of script or dialogue created by the children.

In our experience we found that at this stage there was quite a bit of work to do - taking the fragments written by the children and stitching it all together into a full and workable script.

Don't panic – nobody is asking you to write Hamlet, just a short audio drama of around 10 minutes. The final script will be 1-15 pages long and contain up to about 10 scenes.

The dramatist's tools are what characters say and do. In audio drama we depend even more on dialogue than in theatre, film, or TV. This worksheet will focus on how dialogue works to serve the story and the characters.

We'll also look at some specific narrative devices that might be useful, and some top tips for script writing.

STORY.

Referring to your Storyline / Storyboard, consider how the drama is structured.

Can you clearly see a beginning, middle and end?

- How do your scenes fit under these headings? This may not be equally distributed; for example, you might have 2 scenes that make the beginning, 4 scenes for the middle, and 1 scene for the end. That's ok.
- A useful way to think of this:
 - **Beginning** (SET IT UP)
 - **Middle** (SHAKE IT UP)
 - **End** (SORT IT OUT)

Dialogue serves different functions across this three-part structure.



Beginning (SET IT UP)

It's important that the characters are introduced, and the situation understood. Use names, instructions, and shared information to establish the characters and what environment they are in. This works best when it's naturally part of what people say.

Example (from A CHRISTMAS TAIL)

GIRL: (Calls over) Hey, Lily! We're going to get some chips. Wanna come?
 LILY: Can't. Got detention.
 GIRL: What? It's Christmas!
 LILY: Tell me about it!

Golden Rule: Information should always come out as part of the context. Avoid including information for its own sake.

Middle (SHAKE IT UP)

You should have now set up the characters, situation, and main 'problem' of the story, so your dialogue doesn't need to be information heavy. The most important element now is action, and what is driving a character.

Example (from A CHRISTMAS TAIL)

MUM: (Little shriek) Lily! Your rucksack just moved.
 LILY: No it didn't.
 MUM: Look! Look! It did it again. It's alive. Is there something in there?
 LILY: No Mum. Mum, don't...

Mum unzips the rucksack.

PUPPY: Woof!
 MUM: What's this?
 LILY: It's not what it looks like.
 MUM: It looks like a puppy.

Golden Rule: In every scene ask yourself, what do the characters want? Particularly your main characters should have an imperative that drives their action, something they want: an object, some information, to make a connection with another character, or to hide something... What characters want is what drives the action.



End (SORT IT OUT)

You are now bringing some resolution to your story: a reversal of fortune for the main character, a big reveal, the end of a journey, or assertion of a new status quo. Most of the info is known by now, but you may still need some help inside the dialogue to establish setting or situation

Example (from A CHRISTMAS TAIL)

Puppy runs to Lily. She fusses him, laughing.

MUM: Don't let him lick your face Lily. It's not hygienic.

PUPPY: I wish I could stay with you.

LILY: You belong with your pack in the forest.

PUPPY: But I feel at home with you. You're my friend.

WOLF: Do you really want to stay with the humans?

PUPPY: I do.

Golden Rule: Avoid sudden clunky plot twists that come out of nowhere. Your resolution should feel natural and inevitable, even if it's a surprise (this is actually really hard to do, so don't beat yourself up about it).

CHARACTER.

While your dialogue is pushing the action, it also needs to reveal the characters.

Different characters have different voices – how they sound, what they say and how they say it. Characters also have different kinds of dialogue between them. In A CHRISTMAS TAIL the teenager Lily doesn't speak the same way to her mum as she does to her school friend.

This is often something that can be refined during redrafting once you've got a basic shape to the drama and each scene within the story.

The basic intention and meaning of a line can stay the same, but it can be crafted to carry more characterisation and context. When considering the characterisation in a line of dialogue here are a few things to consider:

- Who is speaking?
 - How would this character speak in general?
- To whom are they speaking?
 - What is their relationship with / attitude towards that person?
- Where are they?
 - What are the circumstances or situation?
- Are there any pressures on the character?
 - Are they afraid, or in a hurry, or hiding something?

There will be other considerations specific to your drama, but these are some good basic pointers.



NARRATIVE DEVICES.

In Audio Drama it's sometimes useful to have a narrator or narrators. This can be 1st person or 3rd person, single or multiple voices. We have some different examples in the dramas on our webpage.

In THE VOICES WITHIN we use multiple 3rd person narrators to show what the main character is thinking and feeling. These voices are narrative only and not part of the action.

In A CHRISTMAS TAIL the inner thoughts of the puppy are voiced as he sniffs around the forest and tries to find his way home.

In SINK OR SWIM we have a 1st person narrator in the character of OAKLEY. Interestingly, the children at Smallthorne Primary wanted this narrator to be the antagonist of the story, rather than the hero, which makes a strong journey for the character.

This kind of narration can happen in the present tense or the past, depending on the needs of the story and who is narrating.

FURTHER TIPS FOR SCRIPTING.

Don't panic. Get something down on the page – it doesn't have to be perfect first time.

If you're stuck, ask the following questions:

- o What do the characters in this scene want?
- o What is the problem or conflict that drives the action?
- o Where is the power or status in the scene?
- o Is the power or status changing? If so, how?

If you're still stuck, make a cup of tea.

And finally – if you've finished your first draft – try cutting the first line (or maybe more) of the scene.

Most of the time you'll find that the scene is more dynamic once you've got rid of your 'settling in' lines.

GOOD LUCK!

