One Act Play Festival

Drama groups of Middle School (6th through 8th grade) or High School (9th through 12th grade) students perform one act plays.

The One Act Play Festival is designed to give middle school age students a positive theatre experience that fosters participation in, commitment to, and appreciation of quality theatre. The students should appreciate that 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 demonstrate a willingness to constructively utilize the information provided by the critic judge.

Contest Rules
(Revised August 2017)

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.

The director must:

1. Communicate goals and behavior expectations of the festival to students and others involved.
2. Select a play appropriate for the age group which challenges the abilities and the talents of the director and students.
3. Direct the play in a manner which gives credit to educational theatre. Communicate to all students and their families the goals of the festival, especially rules prohibiting flash photography and videotaping copyrighted material, as well as those, prohibition of parents participating in any way at the festival site other than as audience members. Students should be advised of proper care of all stage equipment and facilities.
4. Oversee the well-being and conduct of students at all times. Directors should anticipate transportation needs and accompany their students at all times.
5. The principal should be familiar with the content of the play. Obtain the signature of the school principal for the production of any play in the space provided on the Fine Arts Registration Form.
6. Send a copy of the script with lighting and sound notes by the designated deadline.
7. Furnish a list of cast and crew by the designated deadline.
8. Bring signed releases for each participating student. Release form is available on the One Act Play page.
9. 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.

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
A total of 15 cast members, plus crew of 4 from 6th-8th grade or 9th-12th grade students may participate. Additionally, 5 Understudies may be registered to give the group flexibility in performing 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 on the hour and may run up to 40 minutes. However, when a large number of 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. There shall be no prompting of the actors during the performance of the play.

**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 One Act Play Festival. Scheduling will consider the distance to be traveled when appropriate. Special scheduling requests should be made to the Academic Rodeo Coordinator. 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 Academic Rodeo Timeline or Academic Rodeo Schedule. 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. A floor plan of the stage area is available on the One Act Play Festival page.

**Scenery** - Minimum 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.

**Sound** - A sound system will be available. The school should furnish any unusual sound effects

**Dressing Rooms** - Space for preparations for your production will be provided. All costumes should be stored in this designated room when not in use. This is not a secure facility and will be used by all groups participating in One Act Play. Remember, leave all valuables at home.

**REHEARSAL TIME AND SPACE**

Thirty minutes rehearsal time will be scheduled for each production and 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.

JUDGES
A certified One Act play judge will be selected for the event.

ONE ACT PLAY 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.
2. Make necessary announcements to the house, including non-use of recording devices. 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.
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. Disqualify any participant for violation of rules.
6. Hear any protest from a participating director and 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. Introduce critic judge to company for critique, which is open to all interested individuals, who must adhere to appropriate behavior during critique.

RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE CRITIC JUDGE
One or two judges will be available for the critiques. These judges must be certified One Act play 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 as put forth by the festival committee.
2. Provide sound feedback to directors and students in a kind and tactful manner, which serves to justify 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. Select the award recipients and give this information to Academic Rodeo for announcement.

At no time should a judge stop the performance and attempt to “critique” performances. All critiques should occur at the conclusion of the performance.
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 school. 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.

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.

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. (No parents are allowed.) 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.

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

PROCESS OF DISQUALIFICATION
Disqualification decision is to be made by the Festival Manager only. Schools will be disqualified for not following all 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.
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.

Tips for Working with Your Group

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 a General Calendar in a true calendar format and a Timeline in a list format organized by contest. These are on the main Academic Rodeo 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. Often judging or other timings are scheduled close to the due date. To be sure your students get to participate, follow the deadlines.

Read the General Information for Coaches/Sponsors on page 11 of the Complete Contest Manual.

- Take advantage of, but do not exceed, the allowed number of cast members and understudies that may be registered for the Festival.
- Be sure your students understand the format of their performance 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.
- One Act Play 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.