

Theatr
Iolo

The logo for Theatr Iolo, featuring the organization's name in white text inside a red circle.

Calling all

YOUNG PLAYWRRIGHTS





Welcome

There are stories everywhere.

Stories you read in a book or see on television.

Stories on the news or that happen to people you know.

Or stories that you make up in the classroom or when you are out playing.

We will introduce you to 3 topics to consider when writing for the stage.

Topic One

Telling Stories

Theatr
Iolo



1. Story in a book

Theatr
Iolo



When writing for a book, the writer describes everything that is happening

Here's an example:

Amir was so excited for his birthday that he woke up at five o'clock in the morning. He looked out of the window to see what the weather was like and as it was June, there was already some sun peeking out of the clouds.

Kevin smiled. And then he gasped. Because on the front lawn was a huge golden peacock strutting along the grass.

The peacock looked up at Amir and winked before calling out
“Amir!”

Amir gasped again.

“Oy! Amir?” Said the peacock, sounding a little impatient now.
“You *are* Amir Harrison, aren't you? Of 36 Church Close?”

Amir nodded. He didn't seem to be able to talk anymore.

“ Well. Hop on my back then. Let's go!”



2. Story in a newspaper



For newspapers, we concentrate on the facts

Here's an example:

Eight-year-old schoolboy Amir Harrison faced an amazing sight yesterday morning when he was confronted by a giant golden peacock offering him a ride on his back.



3. Story in a film



For films, we would see the action as the story unfolds

Here's an example:

We would see the peacock and the bedroom and Amir being excited.

The camera can move backwards and forwards from the bedroom to the lawn.



4. Story on the stage

Here's an example:

Amir throws open his curtains excitedly. He looks down and sees a huge golden peacock on the lawn beneath. Amir gasps. The peacock winks

PEACOCK: Kevin!

Beat

PEACOCK: Oy! Kevin? You *are* Amir Harrison, aren't you?

AMIR : Y..y... y

PEACOCK: Of 36 Church Close? Who has his birthday today?

Amir nods

PEACOCK: What's wrong? Cat got your tongue? Oh, that's a point? Haven't got any cats, have you? I hate the little balls of fur!

AMIR : Who...who are you?

PEACOCK: Well, obviously I'm a peacock. Doh! I'm Martin. Pleased to meet you

He extends a claw towards the bedroom window.

AMIR : Martin?

PEACOCK: Rubbish name isn't it? My mum liked some singer or something, I dunno. Are you coming or what?

AMIR : What d'you mean?

Martin lets out a dramatic sigh

PEACOCK: Did you or did you not express a wish to see the world. On the night of June, the third? Last night in fact

AMIR: Yes, but ...

PEACOCK: Stop it with your But's...Hop on my back. Let's go! Come on. Out the window. Ain't got all day

Cautiously, Amir crawls out of the window. Martin views him impatiently before taking flight up to the window and grabbing Amir's collar in his beak and flipping him onto his back before flying off.



For stage plays we find out the story by Amir and the peacock talking to each other



Theatr
Iolo



Writing a Play

In the theatre we usually find out the story by people talking and doing things together.

We call the talk between characters **dialogue** and it's really important when you are writing for the stage.

Why? Because it helps us understand things about the characters and the world, and the situation.

When we watch shows on a stage, it's a little bit like being a detective. Conversations between characters are like clues we need to pick up on.

From the stage version example on the previous page, we find out a lot more about both Amir and the peacock in this scene than we do in the film, and even in the book.



Theatr
Iolo



Using the stage story as an example let's write down all the things that we know at the end of this conversation.

- We know that the peacock is called Martin.
- We know that he is responding to Amir's wish.
- We know that Amir wants to see the world.
- We know that it is Amir's birthday.



How many other facts can you find?

If you were going to write the next part of the story or scene as it's called in a play, what would it be?

**Try writing ten lines of new dialogue for the next scene
Maybe you could write about;**

- The first part of Amir and Martin's adventure
- Amir's Mam and Dad finding him gone



Tip: If you get stuck: Try with a family member or friend pretending to be "Amir's" Mum and Dad finding him gone and improvise the scene and use this to base your writing on.



Topic Two

Location, Location, Location



Theatr
Iolo

Location

Locations are the places where the story happens, this could be on the moon, on a beach, or even in your kitchen.

In a film, it is easy to show a location because we show the place where it happens, but on a stage we have to ask the audience to use their imagination.

- **What if Martin takes Amir on his back to New York in America?**
- **How would we know that?**

In television or film, maybe the camera would show us big skyscrapers, yellow taxis and an American flag. No-one would need to mention New York at all.

If you were going to write that scene for the stage, then it would need to be written a little differently. It's harder to show that location realistically without a camera, so that we believe Amir and Martin are actually there.

What could we do instead?

- Someone could bring an American flag and/or a toy yellow taxi on stage.
- Martin and Amir could mention New York in their chat, so that the audience know where they are
- Martin or the peacock could just say to the audience "New York" and we would believe that is where they were.
- Use sound effects of taxis beeping and American voices shouting.



Can you think of any other ways of showing where the scene is happening?



Theatr
Iolo



Topic Three

Images, Symbols & Sounds



Theatr
Iolo

Images & Symbols

Stories for the stage are told through our eyes as well as our ears.

We can see characters doing things or acting in a certain way, laughing, crying, shouting etc. Sometimes what we see is just as important as what the characters say.

We often use images on the stage as well. We use objects or things that help us to think of something else. For example; using the toy yellow taxi might make us think of New York. We connect two things together when we see them together.

For another example; Your Nan might always sit in the same chair. Every time you go to see her, she is sat in that same chair. That chair will probably always remind you of your Nan. That chair becomes a symbol of your Nan.

Lots of theatre uses images and symbols to help us think of something else.

What does this image make you think of?

- A baby?
- Bedtime?
- A Mam cwtching her baby?
- Packing baby things away in an attic?



If the lights come up on the stage and the first thing you see is a baby blanket and a teddy, you might think that this is a play about a baby, or that a baby is an important part of what is about to happen.

So without even seeing a baby, the blanket we see on stage allows us to know what is important in this play.

Theatr
Iolo





What about this image?



- What would it make you think of?
- Who would you expect to see coming onto the stage?
- What could the play be about?



What about this image?



- Where might we be now?
- What would you expect to hear and see?



What about this image?



- What would it make you think of?
- Where and when might the play be happening?

Sound

Images and symbols can make us think of a set time or location, even before we see a person.

You can also use sound to help an audience understand the story and use their imagination.

Let's imagine the sound of the wind blowing really loudly on a winter's night.

- Which picture might that sound go well with?
- What if we put that sound with the school desk? or the baby blanket?

Sometimes it is fun to put two things together that we wouldn't usually think of.



When something is unusual or different, it surprises us and can spark our imagination.





Try different pictures and sounds together

Here's a list for you to try from:

PICTURES	SOUNDS
A flickering candle	An ice cream van
White shirts on the line	Wood being chopped up
A woman in a long white dress and veil	Rain pattering down on the window
A ball of red wool	Children playing
A row of children's toys	An aeroplane taking off
Lots of big jungle plants	A lawnmower cutting the grass
A large brown leather case	A church bell ringing
Piles of money	A dog growling

- What do they make you think of?
- Can you imagine a possible world and characters?
- Maybe even what could happen in a play that has these images in?

Images, symbols and sounds can give us a very clear and powerful sense of place and time

To sum up:

Writing for the stage is **different** to writing stories for radio, television and film.

It's important that we ask audiences to use their **imagination** when we show different places and times.

Dialogue and Monologues, or the talking between the characters or to an audience, is particularly important in theatre as it helps us come to understand the characters, what they want and the situation that they are in.

Images, symbols and sound can give us a very clear and powerful sense of place and time.

