

ARHS Student Written Play Festival

Submission Guidelines

Please read the following carefully. Submissions that don't follow these guidelines may be removed from consideration. Questions? See Mr. Bechtold.

What exactly *is* the Student Written Play Festival?

For 40 years, the Theater Company has solicited short scripts from students to be put up for performance on the ARHS stage. Writers submit their scripts to a student jury, who select an evening's worth of these works to be staged at ARHS.

How are scripts selected?

A student jury of 4-6 ARHS students, led by Mr. Bechtold, reads all submissions with author names removed (jurors will apply for that role separately; see Bech if you're interested). We discuss each play before selecting the final slate. Plays are selected based on their individual merits (originality, strong writing, engaging characters/situations) and their ability to be practically staged at ARHS. On occasion, a playwright might get more than one script into the Festival.

What can I submit?

There are two categories of plays to submit: **10-minute plays** and **2-minute plays**. These are maximum performance time lengths for each category.

You may submit as many scripts as you like to either category. We will accept scripts from any genre or style. Plays and musicals are both acceptable. Co-written plays are also acceptable.

Any advice on content?

- Here's what we see a lot of. This isn't forbidden material, but you'll want to have a fresh take on this content if you use it:
 - plays in cafes
 - a couple of characters having a philosophical debate
 - the play resolves because someone dies
 - plays with God, devils, ghosts, etc
 - a weird dream situation
- Avoid writing into stereotypes – especially ones relating to gender, race, ethnicity and sexuality; not only are these usually less interesting theatrically, but they often reinforce cultural norms we'd like to challenge, not reinforce. Try flipping expectations on characters and roles (e.g. - why are there so many male doctors on stage?) to create more appealing work.
- Consider writing parts *for* specific races, gender identities, sexualities, or other groups not always well-represented on stage (keeping in mind your own background and how that might matter as you represent your characters' backgrounds). Please specify any casting needs in terms of identity clearly in the script in the first pages.
- Remember that plays are live events. Consider the importance of writing good stage directions, physical actions and visual moments into your plays.
- Many playwrights start with a plot idea, then find characters to fill it out. Maybe try the opposite by focusing on the characters first; then drop them into a plot you devise.

- What role do props, costumes, light, and sound have in your play? Feel free to add notes on essential tech elements in the script as appropriate
- Since this will be part of a larger Festival of plays, please develop pieces with minimal set and prop requirements. If your play has too many technical needs, we might not be able to accept it.
- Read some short plays to get some ideas going! See Bech if you'd like some example scripts to examine.

My play is a little risqué. Should I submit it?

We can accept challenging material (plays with more “adult” language or content) to a certain degree. *Playwrights should limit the need for crass language and actions to only those instances that directly benefit the quality of the play.* In situations where it's unclear if the material is acceptable or not, Mr. Bechtold – in consultation with the administration – will make the final decision. It is always helpful to have several plays that are suitable for younger audiences in terms of language and content.

I've never written a play before. Can I see you for advice?

Yes. You are welcome to make an appointment with me to discuss your ideas and your writing, probably during a Flex block. Be sure to schedule with me well in advance of the deadline. I love speaking with new writers in particular!

Can I direct my own play?

Yes! In fact, this is common. You are also welcome to seek out a co-director or ask another student to direct it for you.

FORMATTING AND SUBMITTING YOUR PLAY (READ CAREFULLY)

- **All plays should be submitted via this [Google Form](#)**
- If you're submitting multiple plays, you'll need to do a new form for each
- **Titles** in the subject line with either the phrase “1min” or “10min” at the end of the title. (Example: “The Last Straw 10min”). Be sure to include the author name(s) in the message accompanying the script, but not on the script pages themselves.
YOUR NAME SHOULD NOT APPEAR ANYWHERE IN THE SCRIPT.
- Provide page numbers at the bottom of your script.
- Plays should be written in 12-point Times New Roman (or similar) font; no weird margin and font sizes should be used to make long plays fit page limits.
- Page limits: scripts are limited to 2 pages for one-minute plays and 10 pages for ten-minute plays.
- Read your play out loud and see if it goes over the allotted time. If it runs over, we will have you trim your play to the required length should it be produced.
- Format: if possible, follow either Samuel French guidelines or conventional screenplay format for your submission (descriptions are available online).

Submission Deadline

This year, the submission deadline for all plays is **Saturday, April 5th at 11:59pm.**