

YPF Frequently Asked Questions

What is The Young Playwrights Festival?

The Young Playwrights Festival (YPF) is the O'Neill's program for middle school and high school students. The festival's mission is to provide young artists an opportunity to improve their writing and give them experience with playwriting as a craft and discipline. The festival begins with two days of rehearsal and culminates with a script-in-hand reading.

Who can submit a play to YPF?

Anybody between the ages of 12 and 18 who is enrolled in school or is home-schooled.

How do I submit a play to YPF?

After you've written your 10-15 page play and made sure it is properly formatted (see script format), download an application, fill out the checklist, and then mail your application and two copies of your script to the O'Neill by the deadline.

What kind of plays does YPF want?

YPF is looking for all sorts of plays. They can be serious, they can be funny. They can be about real situations or imagined ones. Most of all, YPF is looking for original plays that come from you!

What does the Young Playwrights Festival offer students?

YPF is an opportunity for students interested in playwriting to get experience with the development process at a truly world class institution. Participants will gain an understanding of dramatic form and structure, work with experienced theater artists, and most importantly, see their creative vision brought to life on the stage. Students will have an entire creative staff to work with, and will be given ample opportunity to re-write heading into the staged reading. They will then see their play performed before a live audience.

What does the Young Playwrights Festival not offer?

Housing and travel for festival attendees are not provided (although meals are).

How much does it cost to participate in the Festival?

Currently, there is no cost to be involved in the festival.

When did YPF begin?

YPF began in 2006 with only a handful of playwrights submitting from a single school. It has now grown to include hundreds of submissions from scores of schools - both local and national. Sophia Chapadjiev, Director of Education, has been running the festival and teaching in-school playwriting workshops since 2008.

What is the rehearsal schedule for the Festival?

Typically on the first day, Friday, from 6-10pm you will meet the other young playwrights and your artistic team (director, actors, dramaturg, designer). You will also hear the first read-through of the selected plays. On Saturday, rehearsals take place starting at around 9am and go until around 6pm. On Sunday, rehearsals start in the morning again, followed by an afternoon technical rehearsal and the public performance in the early evening. If your play is selected, you will be required to be there for all rehearsals and for the presentation.

What are students, teachers, and parents saying about the Young Playwrights Festival?

"A GREAT EVENT! Those students were beaming from the experience, as they should have been. What a learning event for them. They will never forget it, I know. Those seeds we planted will flower, I can practically guarantee it. We at the high school are very grateful to you for extending this opportunity to our students."

~ Gay Collins, English Teacher, Waterford High School

"I was surprised by the amount of excitement and joy I had during the weekend and during the performance. I thought being a Select Playwright would be serious—and it was—but it was also really fun and exciting. Every aspect of the process was so enjoyable and interesting, and all the people involved were nice and supportive. My favorite part was the actual performance because I got to see my final play in front of the audience and see how everyone reacted. And it was great seeing the other playwrights' plays. Being a part of a group of people who were all collaborating and helping each other was so one of my best experiences of my life."

~ William Palmer, age 12, *Achilles' Dilemma*; YPF 2017

"Working with actors in rehearsal was especially helpful for me... a play is meant to live onstage, not merely on a page. Just hearing the speech patterns of each of my characters read by these amazingly talented performers gave me inspiration to strengthen my characters. The actors asked me interesting questions about their roles, which allowed me to think more deeply about each set of objectives and tactics. It was thrilling to watch the actors come into each rehearsal with so much positive energy and respect for the work being done."

~ Lucy Sydel, age 16, *Saving Grace (The Human Experiment)*; YPF 2017

"My time at YPF was truly a life changing experience. Given that I had never even met another playwright before, I really had no idea what to expect. I was really surprised that I had my own creative team: my own director and actors and dramaturg. It's very easy for adults to talk down to teenagers who write. I think the thing that most surprised me was how respectful all the adults were in the program. They truly treated the playwrights as writers first and teenagers second, rather than the other way around. This is always very encouraging for young artists; to feel like someone respects you and your work can make all the difference."

~ Isabelle Pierce, age 15, *The Bedroom*; YPF 2016

"Georgia attended YPF the first year as a runner-up, and the second year as one of the winners. The encouragement she received first time--being selected, and having her work taken seriously

by professionals--gave her the confidence to try again. And then the reward of learning, from the inside, the hard work that goes into developing a play, combined with seeing her play performed by professionals was worth more than I can describe. The whole experience was enormously confidence-building. It confirmed for her that her individual ideas mattered."

~ Ruth, mother of Georgia White, age 17, *Deliverance*; YPF 2016

"*Good Guy, Bad Guy, Bad Guy, Bad Guy* was my first play, ever. So you can only imagine my surprise when I was chosen to be a part of the Young Playwrights Festival. I try to avoid big events and spotlights as much as possible. Friday, May 9th rolled around quicker than I hoped it would, and this is where the fun began. I was nervous [but] something about the place felt like I belonged there. I just had to get used to the crowd of people. Turns out that it wasn't that hard. Every person I met and spoke to during the weekend was friendly. Everyone just slipped right into comfortable conversation. As if we all knew each other beforehand. I stopped feeling like a stranger. The butterflies in my stomach never left, they just calmed down a tad bit. I'm not too good with names but I'll remember everyone's faces forever. Being with playwrights and actors for a weekend gave me a whole new love for theatre. I got in the car to go home Sunday May 11th with a new sense of the person I am. I learned to use my voice and share the thoughts I have. I learned that you have to step up and make what you want happen. I still don't enjoy the spotlight but putting on a show people like and want more of made me so proud of myself. I hope to do it again. The Young Playwrights Festival will stay on the list of Top 5 Life Changing Events for me. I wish that all aspiring Playwrights can experience the weekend I experienced. It was truly worth it."

~ Sasha Volkerts, age 17, *Good Guy, Bad Guy, Bad Guy, Bad Guy*; YPF 2014

"Before YPF I was always kind of skeptical [of] plays. Why act something out live when you can make a movie with special effects and stuff? That's all changed now. I think I actually prefer plays over movies. You get to see real, live people performing, reading lines that they aren't just reading off a teleprompter. As for collaborations, I love them. I was always the sort of person to work alone, but by working with the actors and my director, I was able to get SO much more out of my play than I ever thought was even possible. And... it really exposed me to all the things I never even knew went on, such as lighting, character development, and blocking. Altogether, I think YPF was an amazing experience for both me and the other attending playwrights."

~ Owen Seltzer, age 13, *Warehouse Whereabouts*; YPF 2016

"It was simply incredible to see something that had once been only an idea in my head come to life even brighter than I had ever pictured and none of it would have been possible without the Young Playwrights Festival."

~ Carin Estey, age 16, *A World with Three Sides*; YPF 2013

Standard Script Format Sample

Please take time to read through the below in its entirety, then re-format your script into this format. While it does not look like a traditional published script, this layout allows ample room for note taking, for both playwright and actor.

Title of Show in Bold and Italics

by

Your Name

(When you are opening a scene or you need to describe the action that is not apparent in the spoken lines, Stage Directions can and should be used. Stage Directions should be placed two tab stops in from the left hand margin and in italics. Please use Times New Roman or Courier 12-point font.)

CHARACTER #1

Your Character name should be placed 3 tab stops over from the left hand margin, and be in all caps. You do not need to indent your first line of Dialogue.

(If you have stage directions in between lines, then they go in between the CHARACTERS' dialogue. Also when referring to CHARACTERS in the stage directions, their names should appear in all caps.)

CHARACTER #2

Please note that the Character dialogue is not double spaced within the lines, but there is a double space between the Characters.

CHARACTER #1

(Softly)

If you wish to include a note as to how the line of your character is to be delivered, it will go two tab stops over from the left hand margin, under the character's name. These should be limited to one to two words only and should not be italicized - nor should there be too many of them.

CHARACTER #2

This is how your script should look after it has gone through the re-formatting process.

CHARACTER #1

Have fun re-formatting! Oh, and please remember to number your pages.

End of Scene

THE END