

LPP 2024: Advice for submissions

Layout

It's useful to familiarise yourself with the ways that theatre scripts are laid out. You can find the standard template for UK theatre layout here at the BBC writers room website (<https://www.bbc.co.uk/writersroom/resources/medium-and-format>) as well as other useful writing advice.

A key thing to remember is that the stage script is an invitation to collaborate with actors, designers and directors. As a useful guideline, it can be worth thinking what's the minimal amount of directions your script needs in order to be coherent. Too many and excessively detailed directions may actually make it harder to read a script; it might also lock those artists out of the creative process. Ask yourself, do you need to tell the actor how to say every line? Does every lighting change need to be signposted?

Finding the story

There are many different ways to begin, develop and end stories. However, it can be useful to ask a few simple questions:

- Who are my main characters?
- What do they want?
- What is getting in the way?
- Do they achieve their goals by the end of the story?

You might find the answers to these questions may change as you write your piece. It may also be the case that the characters evolve as the story unfolds (for instance, they may realise that thing they want is not actually the thing that they *need*). This idea of change is important; you'll read or hear many writers say that drama *is* change. Think about how, scene by scene, things change in *your* script; if they don't change, why not?

It's important to note that we're looking for a maximum length of 30 minutes for your piece (roughly equivalent to 30 pages in a standard script). This is not a huge amount of time so you might think about just how many characters and storylines you want to fit into your piece. It might be worth limiting your cast to a maximum of 5 or 6 actors for this reason.

Responding to the theatrical form

You're being asked to write a script for the theatre. This doesn't mean that you can't be cinematic, but it's worth recognising the power of the live audience. Given the right prompts, a theatre audience becomes part of the collaborative process. An actor gets up on stage and says they're at the North Pole; if they're good enough and the script commits to it, the audience will soon also commit to being at the top of the world. This ability to do 'let's pretend' is what makes theatre so special and powerful. Don't lose sight of this ability. And good luck!