Theatre Promptbook

A promptbook is an essential tool used in building a theatre production. A promptbook contains copies of the script and records the thinking, interpreting, staging, costumes, props etc. of the play. A critical aspect of the prompt book is CHOICE-- supported by the text and your vision. YOU make choices about how lines might be delivered, how the actors move; as well as experiment with ways to stage your play—including the props, set, makeup, lights, sound, and costumes.

Required Materials
A. You need a 3 ringed binder
B. Single-sided photo copies of the pages in the play;
   *play should have your final blocking and directing notes on it
C. Given Circumstances WS
D. Character Analysis WS (1 copy for each character: protagonist and antagonist)

Set Up
1. Cover Page (Title of Play, Playwright’s Name, Director’s Name)

   Title of Play
   By: _____
   Director: _____

2. Given Circumstances WS
3. Character Analysis WS
4. Prompt Book entries: Set Design; Costume List; Prop List; Paraphrasing of play, Design element and rendering. Copy of scene (not double sided) with blocking, and final directing notes (also cues may go on this if that’s the design element you chose to do).

Prompt Book Procedures:
I. Read through and study your play (NO MUSICALS!) then select one scene you'd like to stage.
   A. Circle any unfamiliar words; define them in the margin
      1. Use a dictionary or footnotes
      2. Use the playwright’s notes, if there are any
      3. Use an on-line source
   
   B. Write a Concept Paper: The Concept Paper is an analysis of a play and must consist of the following:
      1. Author’s Intent or Theme: A statement of the philosophy or universal truth about life. It may not be stated out right in the play, but it may be revealed through observations made by various characters throughout the play. This is a one paragraph minimum which explains the theme or central idea of the play. (See how to write a Thematic Statement WS)
2. **Visual Imagery:** As you read the play try to see the play being performed. Look for images that communicate emotions or support the theme. Many designers and directors call this the metaphor for the play. Others prefer to describe motifs for the design. These images usually connect to key moments in the action of the play. They will create atmosphere and enhance mood. They will have a relationship with lighting and movement or the lack of movement. This is a one paragraph minimum which describes the images or visual effects.

3. **Point of View:** This paragraph becomes your justification for your artistic choices. It is an explanation of your reasons for selecting the images and the theme. It is the "why" behind your design choices. It tells how your design reinforces the theme or how it relates to the author's intent.

4. **Style and Form:** This paragraph discusses the preferred style of the design. It answers the question, "Whose eyes" is the audience seeing the world of the play through. It establishes the degree of reality in the visual images as well as communicates time, place, characterization, action, etc.

   *NOTE*
   This will require research as you "search" for a concept. The search begins with reading the play several times. The search should be influenced by your personal taste, background, experience, etc. Be willing to explore many art forms and mediums. Visit art galleries, libraries, historic buildings, and architecturally interesting buildings as well as theatrical events and concerts in a variety of venues. Find ways to soak up atmosphere, mood, etc. as you observe form, line balance, mass, color, texture, movement, etc. You can do a lot of this research online!! You can also look at lots of set and light designers' portfolios online. (PowerPoint explaining everything further is in Google Classroom).

   C. Complete the Given Circumstances WS

   D. Copies of the Character Analysis WS with your annotations of them.

   - Your answers to each question
   - What you plan to do with their analysis?

II. **Staging the Scene**

   A. Draw your set design (include as a separate page)

   1. Be sure to include the given circumstances. For example, if there is a bed, you need a bed.

   2. Your set design is 2-dimentional. Use logical shapes for the set pieces.
B. Staging the play involves blocking, which is where and how the characters move on the stage.
   1. Block the characters’ movements next to their lines. Use the abbreviations given below:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Abbreviation</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>USR</td>
<td>Up stage right</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>USC</td>
<td>Up stage center</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>USL</td>
<td>Up stage left</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CSR</td>
<td>Center stage right</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CS</td>
<td>Center stage</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CSL</td>
<td>Center stage left</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DSR</td>
<td>Down stage right</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DSC</td>
<td>Down stage center</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DSL</td>
<td>Down stage left</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

   **Extra Tips**

   2. Try to avoid moving if it is not necessary; or try to avoid characters moving from one side of the stage to the other
   3. Conflict creates tension! Character can lean in to one another or be placed in a triangular shape
   4. Sitting or being further back upstage shows less emphasis or importance
   5. Standing shows emphasis; DSC is the most important place on stage

III. Character Development
A. Refer back to the Character Analysis WS
B. Make production notes for the way you want the play to be played for your character. Including:
   1. Pauses
   2. Tone of voice
   3. Gestures
   4. Facial expressions
   5. Any other notes or diagrams of action and movement
   C. Feel free to indicate character notes for the characters that interact. So that you see how the scene builds, and how your character interacts with others.

IV. Scene Development
A. Costumes
   1. Create a list for each character as to what their costume is
B. Props
   1. Create a list of any props that are used
   2. Be sure to indicate which character uses which prop. If more than one character uses the same prop then you must list all characters that use it.
V. Design Renderings – separate assessment grade, but include in promptbook
   1. Pick an element of design you’d most like to explore: (lights, sound, makeup, or costumes)

   2. Write one paragraph (5-8 sentences) in which you discuss your interest in this design element.

   3. Create a design for the play following your particular element:
      a. Lights – create a lighting board and lighting cue sheet for the scene you selected and write a minimum of one paragraph justifying your light cues
      b. Sound – Create a soundscape and sound cue sheet for the scene you selected and write a minimum of one paragraph justifying your sound cues
      c. Makeup – create makeup rendering for at least 4 characters from the play and write a small blurb explaining each one. (Will need colored pencils and see Mr. Byron for makeup charts)
      d. Costumes – create a colored, costume rendering for at least 3 characters from the play and write a small blurb explaining each one.

**Additional Notes**

❖ Feel free to decorate your prompt book
❖ Play with your creativity!
❖ Make sure include a cover page

**A Few Final Notes**

✓ Your prompt book will be an on-going assignment w/ periodic “due” dates
✓ Always use the text to help you & support your decisions
✓ It will be evaluated by you, peer reviewed, & reviewed by the teacher
✓ It will count as a major project grade for the end of the unit, and is used as a performance assessment rather than giving a second test at the end of the unit
✓ It will be used to help you learn how to build a scene for your one-man show
Assessment Breakdown

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Prompt Book</th>
<th>Points</th>
<th>Evaluation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Given Circumstances WS</td>
<td>15pts</td>
<td>Completeness</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Character Analysis WS</td>
<td>5pts</td>
<td>Accuracy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Paraphrasing (Including definitions)</td>
<td>10pts</td>
<td>based on the text</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Blocking (including scene design)</td>
<td>20pts</td>
<td>Effort</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Character Development Notes</td>
<td>20pts</td>
<td>Organization</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scene Development - Props</td>
<td>5pts</td>
<td>Neatness/Appearance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scene Development - Costumes List</td>
<td>5 pts</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total Point Value</strong></td>
<td><strong>100 points</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Concept Paper:** 20 points  
**Design Element and Renderings:** 30 points  
**Presentation of Promptbook/Designs:** 50 points

**Total for Promptbook Project:** 200 points  
**DUE DATE:** 3/7

**Concept Paper Rubric**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Criteria</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>5</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Clarity</strong></td>
<td>Four or more grammatical or spelling errors. Sentence construction is awkward and difficult to follow. Tense changes from sentence to sentence.</td>
<td>Two grammatical or spelling errors. Only a few awkward sentences. Writing is choppy or wordy, limiting the narrative flow.</td>
<td>No grammatical or spelling errors. Writing is clear and understandable. The narrative flows smoothly throughout the paper.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>References</strong></td>
<td>Few or no sources mentioned or cited in the text.</td>
<td>References are given but not always cited for quotes or specific ideas. Relies too much on internet sources rather than peer-reviewed material.</td>
<td>A bibliography is given with clear citations in the text as appropriate. Main sources are from books or published articles (even if they are accessed online)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Organization</strong></td>
<td>No topic sentences. Disparate ideas not linked, but just a listing of random facts.</td>
<td>Topic sentences are given. Ideas not linked together.</td>
<td>The essay links all ideas together with clear introductory and concluding paragraphs.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

An additional 5 points will be added for concept conferences
WRITING THEMATIC STATEMENTS
(A STEP-BY-STEP PROCESS)

1. Using 1–3 abstract words, explain what the short story/play/novel is about. Use words that express human conditions/emotions. These are often abstract words such as hope, love, security, faith, gratitude, et al.

   **For Example:** What is *The Great Gatsby* about?
   *Answer:* disillusion, corruption, greed, obsession, ambition

2. Explain in a one (or more) complete and detailed sentences what the author believes the work is about.

   **For Example:** F. Scott Fitzgerald believes that the quest to obtain an obsession results in a moral vacuum and a hollow life of disillusionment.

3. Cross out the first three words:

   **For Example:** The quest to obtain an obsession results in a moral vacuum and a hollow life of disillusionment.

4. Academically fine-tune the sentence(s) (i.e. no first/second person pronouns— I, me, my, we, us, you, your). Provide a main clause and subordinate clause in your thematic statement.

   **For Example:** The compulsion to pursue an obsession requires moral ambiguity, which can only lead to hollow disillusionment.

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WHEN FORMULATING A THEMATIC STATEMENT:

A. Avoid clichéd sayings (ex. “Never give up” or “Love conquers all”) If it can be found on a t-shirt or bumper sticker, it’s not the best choice for an AP thematic statement!

B. Be careful not to make your theme too PREACHY or judgmental (ex. “Don’t judge a book by its cover” and “Always be friendly.” Avoid absolutes and never use “never” or “should” or “ought to” or “always.”

C. Theme is NOT a SUMMARY of the book/play/poem/story!

D. Theme should reflect the work AS A WHOLE not just isolated events!
Given Circumstances

Directions: After you have read your play, answer the following questions.

1. What happens in your play? Outline the basic events.
   A.

   B.

   C.

   D.

2. What do you think are the key purposes of your play?
   A.

   B.

   C.

3. What are your reactions to this play?
Character Analysis

Character_____________________

Directions: Answer questions in complete sentence. Do this twice: once for antagonist and once for protagonist.

1. What makes you interested in this character?

2. What does your character want in this play (objective)?

3. What is your character's motivation for doing what he or she does?

4. What obstacles stand in his or her way?

5. What happens when your character confronts these obstacles?

6. Are there any distinctive elements in your character's way of speaking (elaborate, plain, musical, monotone, etc.)?

7. What is your character thinking during the play? How does he or she react to the other characters and events?