



MONOLOGUES COMPETITION - TIPS FOR WRITING

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“The only kind of writing is re-writing”

Ernest Hemmingway

Whether you are an experienced writer or new to the process, there are some basic questions you can ask yourself to help you structure your piece and produce something that the audience can connect with

Character

- Voice – how do they speak, what does that tell us about them and the situation?
- Is the character believable?
- Why are they speaking? Why now? Does the piece give us any clues about what has just happened to prompt the character to speak?
- Can the actor identify who the character is speaking to?
- What flaws or fears does the character have?
- Is there space in the piece for the character to go through a thought process as they speak?
- What is being hidden, not being said by the character?

Plot

- Is there a structure to the story? Where are the dramatic moments?
- Is there conflict – inner conflict within the character or physical with other characters or the situation
- What is the outcome – what has changed to the character or the situation by the end of the piece?
- What are the themes of the piece?
- Are they just retelling a story or does that story trigger feelings, raise questions, emotions?



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Location

- Where are they physically? A public conversation is very different to a private one.
- Where are they emotionally? In the retelling of a past event it is more important to understand how do they feel about it now. They can tell us how they felt at the time but should not try to recreate that
- What time of year is it? What can they see when they are speaking? What can they smell? Any references to the senses will be helpful to the actor.
- Are there any physical limitations – time or space? Pressures and limitations can help to enhance the drama.

Writing

- Make the audience work by avoiding ‘on the nose’ writing. Make the subtext clear. Try to imply rather than state.
- Read what you have written aloud.
- Get someone else to read it aloud. Does it sound real?
- Have someone with an understanding of theatre to read your script. It can be painful to be criticised, but a critical friend will help you hone your script.
- Be prepared to write lots of material that you won’t use but that will inform your final piece. Creating a life for your character will help to produce the moment that the monologue is spoken.
- Rewrite and cut.

Good Luck!