



What is 'As You Write It – Your Play on Stage'?

At a time when we are all missing out on the magic of going to the theatre, The One Show, along with The Shakespeare North Playhouse is launching an exciting new playwriting competition, giving children and young people across the UK the opportunity to see their ideas come to life on stage. We hope this will help inspire the next generation of playwrights as well as encouraging a love of theatre and the arts in children and young people.

The competition is open to all children and young people aged between 7 and 16 years old. It opens for entries at 7pm on Thursday 25th June 2020. The deadline for entering the competition is just before midnight on Monday 31st August 2020.

All you need to enter is an idea for a play, a short description of up to four of the main characters and the first few opening lines. You'll also need to tell us what having the opportunity to write your play and have it performed on stage would mean to you.

What is the prize?

From the ideas submitted, three finalists from each of the three categories will be chosen and announced on The One Show during autumn 2020. They will then have the opportunity to develop their ideas with professionals and write their final play.

A winner will be selected from each category based on their final play. Winners will be announced on The One Show in early 2021 and an excerpt from their play will be shown on the programme. The final three winners will receive a special award and have their play performed at The Shakespeare North Playhouse when it opens in 2022.

The development of The Shakespeare North Playhouse is being overseen by The Shakespeare North Trust. It is currently being constructed in Prescot on Merseyside. Once built, it will complete the UK's Shakespearean triangle – London – Stratford-upon-Avon – Prescot. Alongside a flexible 350 seat theatre, the Playhouse will also provide educational facilities, a visitor centre and additional performance spaces including an outdoor performance garden.

Categories:

Entry categories are divided by age group as follows:

- ACT ONE - 7 - 10 year olds
- ACT TWO - 11 - 13 year olds
- ACT THREE - 14 - 16 year olds

The entry must be submitted into the correct age category according to your age on 31st August 2020, which is the competition closing date.

How to Apply:

Make your submission using the [ACT ONE](#) online entry form, [ACT TWO](#) online entry form or [ACT THREE](#) online entry form as early as possible before the deadline. Please make sure you have all the information outlined below before you start your form. ALL entries must be submitted by a parent or guardian.

What do you need to do in order to enter?

Tell us about your idea for a play in no more than 300 words.

- What is the theme of the play? The following themes might all serve as inspiration: LOVE, HATE, FAMILY, POWER, FRIENDSHIP, MONEY, FAME, COMEDY, GOOD VS BAD, COURAGE and HEROISM or you could choose your own theme.
- What is the play about and what is going to happen? Is it an adventure with pirates or spaceships? Is it all about a particular fictional family or group of friends? Is it about the world or community around us? Could it be a love story? The list is endless...
- Does your play have a beginning, middle and end?
- Think about where and when your play is taking place. Is it set in the future or the past? What will we see in the location you've chosen? Could it be set in more than one place?
- Have you described all the key moments of the whole story or plot? (Not necessarily in the order outlined above).

List the main characters (no more than 4) with a short description (30 words max) for each.

- What sort of people are they - are they funny, kind, serious, happy or sad, boring? Do they have more than one side to their personality? We want to know what they are like.
- Think about how they look, how they sound. Are they young or old?

Write the suggested opening lines of the play (no more than 5).

- Think about how your play starts. What do the characters say? And what does it tell us about the story.
- Will they grab the audience's attention when they are performed?

Tell us in no more than 200 words what having the opportunity to write your play and have it performed on stage would mean to you.

- This will be considered alongside your idea.

Some important things you need to know:

- Entries must be original and all your own thoughts and ideas.
- If your idea is shortlisted a representative from the BBC will contact you to verify the ideas are your own before proceeding.
- Play ideas can be influenced by other stories, historical events or your own life and experiences but the idea must not be copied and it must be fictional.
- ALL entries must be submitted by a parent or guardian.
- For those entering in Act 1 only (the youngest category), parents and guardians can support, if required, in capturing ideas in writing. Parents and guardians must however outline the support provided in the relevant section of the application form and tick a box to confirm that the ideas and key elements are the child's own.
- Please do not include any information that could identify yourself or others as part of the entry, anything that might be identifying will be removed before the entry is shared with the judges, which could impact on the meaning of the answers.
- Your idea must be appropriate for broadcast on The One Show as extracts from any part of the entries could be made public.
- Although the suggested themes have been inspired by Shakespearean plays in celebration of the new Shakespeare North Playhouse, you don't need to have any knowledge of Shakespeare to take part and knowledge of Shakespeare will not give an advantage in the judging process.
- We welcome and encourage entries from everyone and would not wish any disability to be a barrier to entry in any way. We recognise that some entrants may need the support of a scribe or assistive technology to complete their entry.
- Entries must be submitted in English.
- We can only accept one entry per child / young person and the entry can't be changed once submitted.
- We can only accept entries submitted into the correct category, so double check your age on the 31st August 2020 as this determines which category you should be entered into.
- You (the child / young person) must be willing and able to discuss your idea with a BBC researcher in September and October 2020 or you will not be able to progress to the next stage (see ninth bullet point if you have specific access requirements). We will also need to speak to your school.
- You (the child / young person) entering the competition must be willing to appear on The One Show. The One Show will be following the process right through until the final performances in 2022.
- All parents and guardians submitting entries must be comfortable with all of the information and guidance above and outlined in the competition rules.

Judging process:

Eligible entries will be sent to a shortlisting panel to draw up a shortlist of the best in each category.

Shortlisted entries will be sent to the judging panel to select three finalists in each category (nine in total) to move on to the next stage of the competition.

The judges include One Show presenter Alex Jones, author Frank Cottrell-Boyce and representatives from The Shakespeare North Playhouse. The full judging panel will be announced at a later date.

Judging criteria:

Entries will be judged on the following criteria:

- **Overall story** – How engaging is it? Does it flow as a story? Is the story complete? Would it work on stage? Does it have audience appeal?
- **Originality** – Does it have original features or an original angle? Does it surprise in any way?
- **Characterisation** – Do they have depth? How well are they described? How compelling are they and do they make you want to find out more?
- **Imagination** – How creative is it? Does it grab your attention? Does it draw you in?

Judges will be paying particular attention to how well the idea works as a play – not just whether it's a good story.

Please note that the judges are not judging spelling, punctuation or grammar.

The answer to 'what having the opportunity to write your play and have it performed on stage would mean to you' will be considered alongside the rest of the entry.

Key dates:

Launch: The competition opens for entries at 19.00 on Thursday 25th June 2020.

Deadline: The deadline for entering the competition is 23.59 Monday 31st August 2020.

Shortlisted entrants must be available to speak to One Show researchers in September and October 2020.

The three finalists in each category selected to move onto the next stage of the competition will be announced on The One Show during autumn 2020.

The next stage of the competition:

The nine finalists (three in each category), will be given the chance to develop their ideas with professionals in an age appropriate way (with a minimum of two mentoring sessions either via video conferencing or in person if possible) and write their final short play (expected to be between 20 and 35 mins in duration). A panel of judges will then select a winner from each category based on their final play in early 2021. These winners will be announced on The One Show and an excerpt from their play will be performed on the show. The winners will go on to have the opportunity during 2021 and 2022 to visit The Shakespeare North Playhouse construction site and follow the process as their play is brought to life and performed at the Playhouse following opening.

Competition Rules and Privacy Policy

Please click [here](#) for the Competition Rules.

Please click [here](#) for the competition Privacy Policy.

We aim to be as inclusive as possible and if there are any issues in submitting or completing the form please let us know at asyouwriteit.oneshow@bbc.co.uk.