

# EDUCATION ACTIVITIES

PLAYWRITING:  
THE DRAFTING PROCESS  
& WRITING TIPS

**STATE THEATRE**  
**COMPANY SOUTH AUSTRALIA**

# THE DRAFTING PROCESS

Some people like to plan out exactly what they're going to write and think about the ideas first. Others like to start writing and think about the bigger picture later.

No matter which method you choose, at some point you will need to consider the broader idea, themes and/or purpose behind your play. That's where the State Educate "Getting Started" playwriting resource steps in ([statetheatrecompany.com.au/state-educate-resources](http://statetheatrecompany.com.au/state-educate-resources)).

Take your time to work your way through the "Getting Started" resource before writing your first draft or in between the first and second drafts.

## THE FIRST DRAFT

The first draft is an opportunity to see how your characters, story and setting work together on the page. Try to write your first draft freely, with few revisions, and work your way through the character development and action. You will need to go back and make changes, so don't try to make it perfect the first time around.

Once you have a first draft, ask some friends, family members or classmates to read it aloud in front of you. This will allow you to get an overview of the story and hear what parts are (not) working. Ask the people reading the script for their initial feedback.

## REDRAFTING

Once your first draft is complete, you can focus on some more technical and detailed aspects of the script. This stage requires an enormous amount of self-criticism.

Here are some questions and points to help with this re-drafting process:

- Who are the characters and what do they want? For more on character, see the "Characterisation & Dialogue" resource ([statetheatrecompany.com.au/state-educate-resources](http://statetheatrecompany.com.au/state-educate-resources)).
- Do the characters have secrets from each other?
- Are they just talking or are they driving the story along with their actions?
- How do they speak and do they all have distinctive voices?
- Are all the characters necessary for the story you are telling?
- Is the plot being told in the best possible way?
- What is the structure of the work?
- Do you need to cut or add any scenes?
- Is what you hear being read actually what you intended to write?
- What is the style of the piece and is your language and character action serving this style?
- What are the major events that occur throughout the play?



## WRITING TIPS

Even when you have a particular idea, theme or purpose in mind for your play, it can often be difficult to sit down and actually write the play.

The following tips have been created to help you start and continue writing.

**Write every day.** Set aside a certain amount of time to write every day, even if it's only a short amount of time. Alternatively, set a goal for each day - for example, tell yourself you'll write a scene or 1,000 words each day. If you're having difficulty, just write whatever comes to mind - you can always edit it later.

**Get rid of distractions.** Don't go on social media during the time you have set aside to write. If you find this difficult, consider using a social media blocking app for your phone and/or computer.

**If you get stuck, try switching things up** - start to write by hand, go for a walk, take a shower or make a cup of tea or coffee. Sometimes moving around can help to clear your mind.

**Figure out when you write best.** Some people find their minds are most sharp and alert in the mornings, while others have greater focus at night. Explore what works best for you and try to set aside that time each day for writing.

RESOURCE CREATED IN 2020,  
SOME ELEMENTS ADAPTED FROM  
AN EARLIER EDUCATION RESOURCE

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