So you want to write a script

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| Year 7 | The Arts — Drama |
| Students work in small groups to write, perform and respond to a drama script choosing ideas from the stimulus of — Who, When, Where and What. |
| **Time allocation** | Approximately 7–9 hours |
| **Student roles** | Students work in groups but will be assessed individually |
| Context for assessmentScriptwriting in drama asks the student to play the role of dramatic poet to create and shape dramatic action into a script. The script is a blueprint or roadmap that outlines a story through visual descriptions, actions of characters and their dialogue. |

******This assessment gathers evidence of learning for the following **Essential Learnings**.

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| The Arts Essential Learnings by the end of Year 7 |
| Ways of working**Students are able to:*** select and develop ideas for arts works, considering intended audiences and intended purposes, and make decisions about arts elements and languages
* create and shape arts works by modifying arts elements to express purpose and to include influences from their own and other cultures and times
* modify and polish arts works, using interpretive and technical skills
* present arts works to informal and formal audiences for intended purposes, using arts techniques, skills and processes
* identify, apply and justify safe practices
* respond by analysing and evaluating arts works in social, cultural, historical and spiritual contexts, using arts elements and languages
* reflect on learning, apply new understandings and identify future applications.
 | Knowledge and understandingDrama**Drama involves modifying dramatic elements and conventions to express ideas, considering intended audiences and intended purposes, through dramatic action based on real or imagined events.*** Roles and characters can be presented from different perspectives and in different situations, using variations in voice, movement and focus.
* Purpose and context are considered when modifying mood, time frames, language, place and space, and are used to express ideas.
* Dramatic action is interpreted, prepared and shaped through scenarios and scripts.
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| Assessable elements* Knowledge and understanding
* Creating
* Presenting
* Responding
* Reflecting
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| Source: Queensland Studies Authority 2007, The Arts Essential Learnings by the end of Year 7, QSA, Brisbane. |

Links to other KLAs

This assessment could be expanded to assess the following **Essential Learnings**.

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| English Essential Learnings by the end of Year 7 |
| Ways of working**Students are able to:*** identify and demonstrate the relationship between audience, subject matter, purpose and text type
* construct literary texts by planning and developing subject matter, using dialogue, description and evaluative language.
 | Knowledge and understandingWriting and designing**Writing and designing involve using language elements to construct literary and non-literary texts for audiences across wider community contexts.*** The purpose of writing and designing includes evoking emotion, persuading and informing.
* Writers and designers establish roles, make assumptions about their audience and position them through language choices.
* Words and phrases, symbols, images and audio affect meaning and position an audience.

Language elements**Interpreting and constructing texts involve selecting and controlling choices about grammar, punctuation, vocabulary, audio and visual elements, in print-based, electronic and face-to-face modes (speaking and listening, reading and viewing, writing and designing) across wider community contexts.*** Vocabulary is chosen to establish relationships, persuade others, describe ideas and demonstrate knowledge.

Literary and non-literary texts**Evaluating literary and non-literary texts involves understanding the purpose, audience, subject matter and text structure.*** Literary texts entertain, evoke emotion, create suspense and convey messages and information.
* Characters with feelings and personalities beyond those of traditional characters are explored in texts by selecting vocabulary and using descriptions, imagery, actions and dialogue.
* Descriptions, actions and dialogue, using written and visual elements, develop characters and plot.
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| Source: Queensland Studies Authority 2007, English Essential Learnings by the end of Year 7, QSA, Brisbane. |

Listed here are suggested **learning experiences** for students before attempting this assessment.

* Collaborate with others to structure drama by applying knowledge of drama elements — character, place, time frame, language and mood.
* Model and create scripts using basic conventions and layout.
* Look at published scripts as examples of structuring dramatic action.
* Develop scenes from selections of Who, When, Where and What options to structure dramatic action.
* Use improvisation (e.g. hot-seating, role on the wall, freeze frames to develop characters, scenes and ideas). See Appendix A: Drama improvisation ideas.
* Develop character profiles to outline character traits and details.
* Refine and polish interpretive and technical drama skills — movement (body language and gesture) and voice (pitch, pace, pause, volume and tone).
* Participate in discussion about drama — analyse, evaluate and reflect on use of drama elements.
* Reflect by writing and talking about dramatic action.
* Gain awareness of appropriate audience etiquette (see Appendix B: Audience etiquette).
* Suggest ways to improve your own and others’ use of drama skills and elements.
* Develop and display sensitivity in critiquing others’ work by using appropriate drama languages.

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| Icon_Resource | Teacher resources |

*Adventuring into drama: A dramatic English book for secondary students*, Cheung, M 2006, Dramatic English Ltd, Hong Kong.

*Dramactive book 1*, Stinson, M & Wall, D 2003, McGraw-Hill, Australia.

Celtx scriptwriting software is free to download and has free online support: <www.celtx.com>.

Note: The projects shown the “Project central” section of the Celtx website may contain material that is not appropriate for young people.

Preparing

Consider these points before implementing the assessment.

* Remind students of the appropriate audience etiquette. Discuss and model sensitivity to ensure that students reflect on the performances of others’ in a suitable manner and tone.
* Use the Y-chart graphic organisers in Appendix B: Performance and audience etiquette, or brainstorm more ideas to encourage students to think critically about achieving a positive classroom environment for drama, and to identify appropriate behaviours using aspects of looks like, sounds like and feels like.
* Provide a suitable uncluttered area for rehearsals and performances.
* It is vital to do vocal warm-ups before performing to avoid vocal strain during performance. It is also useful to do some warm-ups before any rehearsal to help performers focus on the task that follows. See Appendix C: Vocal and physical warm-ups.
* The teacher may supply a costume box of basic items (e.g. jacket, shirt, tie, hat, cap) to help students feel more in role, but only the vocal and movement qualities are to be assessed.

## Implementation

Consider these points when implementing the assessment.

* Monitor group work carefully to ensure that all students are contributing and developing ideas towards the script, scriptwriting and rehearsal.
* Hot-seating is a good way to help students develop their character profiles. The teacher and the class question or interview a student sitting in front of them. The interviewee acts as if they were the character they have developed — they will be “in-role” for the interview.

### Adapting this assessment to suit other KLAs

The Who, When, Where, and What stimulus sheet from this assessment could be adapted to include features of another text. For example, students could use a novel or text from an English or SOSE unit to script a chapter and discuss the characters, time, place and situation relevant to that chapter.

The Assessable elements of a character profile, script, reflection and performance could still be undertaken. Teachers would need to clarify audience and purpose for the assessment.

## Sample implementation plan

This table shows one way that this assessment can be implemented. It is a guide only — you may choose to use all, part, or none of the table. You may customise the table to suit your students and their school environment.

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| **Suggested time** | **Student activity** | **Teacher role** |
| **Section 1. Create a drama story** |
| 1 hour | Students work in groups of 3–4 to plan their drama story using the Who, When, Where and What stimulus, Script ideas and Drama structure planning sheets in the *Student booklet*.Students work individually to develop a character profile.Students participate in hot-seating or other improvisational activities to develop a deeper understanding of their character. | Monitor and guide group selection.Guide and assist groups as needed in their oral and written planning. Assist students in developing their characters by conducting an improvisation exercise (see Appendix A: Drama improvisation ideas).  |
| **Section 2. Write a group script** |
| 2–3 hours | Students work as a group to write the script for their drama story.Each student contributes one page of dialogue — a scene or section of the script. | Reinforce scripting conventions given in *Student booklet*.Monitor group work to ensure that each student is contributing a section of work. |
| **Section 3. Perform the group script** |
| 3–4 hours | Students concentrate on movement and voice skills using the Actor’s checklist in the *Student booklet* to guide rehearsal and improve skills.Students rehearse, refine and polish their script to performance level.Students perform their work without scripts. | Organise feedback opportunities during the rehearsal phase.Reinforce etiquette and warm-up (see Appendix B: Performance and audience etiquette & Appendix C: Vocal and physical warm-up).Consider audience location in the space to be used for performances.Video the performances to play back for student viewing and informal discussion. |
| **Section 4. Reflect on scripts** |
| 1 hour | Students complete a reflection on their own scripts and the performances and scripts of other groups. | Guide and assist as needed. |

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| Icon_Resource | Resources for the assessment |

Appendix A Drama improvisation ideas

Appendix B Performance and audience etiquette

Appendix C Vocal and physical warm-up

During the learning process, you and your students should have developed a shared understanding of the curriculum expectations identified as part of the planning process.

After students have completed the assessment, identify, gather and interpret the information provided in student responses. Use only the evidence in student responses to make your judgment about the quality of the student learning. Refer to the following documents to assist you in making standards-referenced judgments:

* *Guide to making judgments*
* *Indicative A response*
* *Sample responses* (where available).

### Making judgments about this assessment

Monitor group work carefully to ensure that all students are contributing and developing ideas towards the script, scriptwriting and rehearsal. The planning sheets will provide valuable evidence of individual contributions and video documentation will provide evidence to support making judgments about student performance.

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| Icon_ForFurtherHelp | For further information, refer to the resource *Using a Guide to making judgments*, available in the Resources section of the Assessment Bank website. |

Evaluate the information gathered from the assessment to inform teaching and learning strategies.

Involve students in the feedback process. Give students opportunities to ask follow-up questions and share their learning observations or experiences.

Focus feedback on the student’s personal progress. Emphasise continuous progress relative to their previous achievement and to the learning expectations — avoid comparing a student with their classmates.

### Giving feedback about this assessment

Provide feedback on the different processes of creating, presenting, responding and reflecting on drama. This may be given individually to particular students, to small groups or to the whole class group as particular needs are identified.

When students are providing feedback to each other, it is important to encourage sensitivity and the use of appropriate drama language.

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| Icon_ForFurtherHelp | For further information, refer to the resource *Using feedback*, available in the Resources section of the Assessment Bank website. |

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| **Drama improvisation ideas** |
|  | Freeze framesA series of frozen actions or pictures from a situation or story that can be presented by a small group of students to the rest of the class. The watching students close their eyes while the presenting group prepares each frame. On a signal from the teacher, the watchers open their eyes and observe each frame, which is held for about five seconds. A sequence of about three frames is needed to convey the action or story. |
| Hot-seatThe teacher or student in role sits in an agreed location and is interviewed or questioned by the participants in the drama. The person in the hot-seat can question and challenge the participants. |  |
|  | Role on the wallInformation about a character or characters from the drama is written within and outside the blank outline of a figure. The information inside is related to the character’s feelings and ideas, while the information on the outside of the figure relates to appearance, actions or what others say about them. |

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| **Performance etiquette**

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|  | **Looks like …*** actors showing movements and voice suitable for their character
* blocking and movement around stage considered.
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| **Sounds like …*** lines committed to memory
* listening to positive comments and praise.
 |  | **Feels like …*** exciting, worthwhile, valued
* motivated, engaged, cheerful, happy
* comfortable in performing, purposeful, satisfying.
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| **Audience etiquette**

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|  | **Looks like …*** people watching attentively
* everyone quiet and respectful
* sitting focused, looking towards performers.
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| **Sounds like …*** quiet during performance
* praise and encouragement with clapping at end of performance
* positive, respectful comments.
 |  | **Feels like …*** everyone is valued
* worthwhile contributions by all students
* motivated, engaged, interested audience
* performers trying their best.
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| Vocal and physical warm-ups |
| It is vital to do these vocal and physical warm-ups before performing. They will help you avoid vocal or physical strain during the performance. It is also useful to do some warm-ups before any rehearsal to help you focus on the task that follows. Daily practice with these exercises will improve your vocal and physical flexibility.Only do those exercises that you have already experienced in class.VocalOne of the most important things to do to maintain good vocal health is to keep your vocal chords lubricated. When you are rehearsing, performing, or just doing a lot of talking, keep water nearby and sip it as often as you can. Don’t let your vocal chords dry out.**Clarity of speech** can be helped by exercises and tongue twisters. It is important to try to make the sounds as clearly and quickly as possible. Try these:* Divide the group into four. Each sub-group takes a turn at the following phrases:
* boom boom boom boom (keeping a steady beat)
* baba baba baba bah
* dah digga digga digga digga digga dah
* shika tika shika tika shika tika shah
* Look around the space and name everything you see with its real name. Then give them gibberish names such as “blof” for clock.
* Choose a phrase to “speak” silently. Open your mouth wide and exaggerate the articulation so observers can guess the phrase.
* Give a “silent” scream.

Breathing and projectionThe basis of all **voice projection** is breathing and breath control. Follow these steps:* Lie on your back on the floor. Rest your hands lightly on your diaphragm (just above your stomach).
* Breathe in, trying to fill the lowest part of your lungs. Feel your diaphragm working.
* Breathe in for three counts; hold for three counts; breathe out for three counts.
* With soft knees, bend forward from the hips, keeping a nice, straight back, and breath in and out.
* Breathe out as much as you can. Holding your nose, scrunch as small as you can then release your nose and slowly stand up, allowing the vacuum to pull air back into your lungs.
* Walk for three counts and on the third count jump and say “Ha!”
* To gauge how your capacity and control have improved, choose a fixed spot some distance away from where you are standing and count how many times you can clearly speak the letters of the alphabet, projecting your voice to that spot.

PhysicalPhysical warm-ups help you avoid tension in workshops and performance. Try these:* A gentle body roll. Start in neutral stance. Gradually, and in turn, push your knees forward, then your hips, then stomach, chest, nose. Go back to the knees and establish a gentle pattern and rhythm.
* Repeat above and freeze in one position. Carry this position through to a walk around the room.
* Exaggerate the posture and add a letter of the alphabet to develop a voice for this character walk, e.g. a stomach person may walk with a big, round “O” sound, and a nose person may use “E”.
* Milk carton volleyball. Hit a milk carton up into the air and see how many hits the group can count before the carton drops to the floor.
* Let your little light shine. Start in neutral stance. Pretend you have little lights on different parts of your body and shine those lights in little, slow circles. Use your big toes, knees, fingertips, shoulders, elbows, nose and so on. Change the direction of the circles.
* Fixed point. Choose a fixed point somewhere in the room. Run around the room and, when the leader calls a part of the body, freeze and point that part of the body to the fixed point. It may be right knee, left elbow, forehead, and so on.
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Adapted from “Warm-ups: Student resource 4”, *The Arts — sourcebook modules*, The Office of the Queensland School Curriculum Council 2002.