

Creating a Scene from Literature

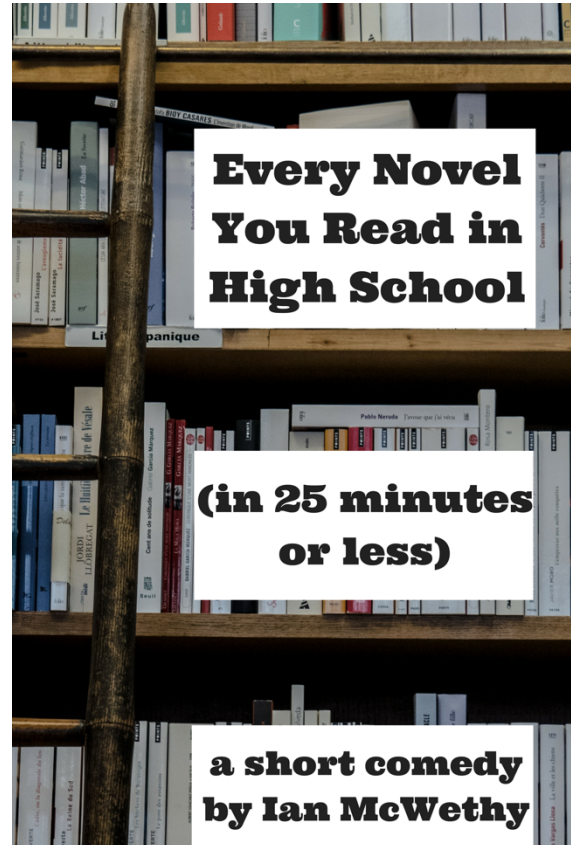
by Maria McConville

Using a play from our catalogue as a starting point and developing lessons around it can help keep the love of theatre alive until we can all congregate for a live performance once again. Playwright Ian McWethy's play, [EVERY NOVEL YOU READ IN HIGH SCHOOL \(in 25 Minutes or Less\)](#), not only entertains, it encourages literacy and may even help you bond with the English department! When developing your curriculum, working with *EVERY NOVEL* makes creating lessons for distance learning a little simpler. Even if your students have not read each novel mentioned in this play, it will most certainly pique their interest.

If you have a block schedule, this lesson for **students creating their own scene based on a book**, could definitely fill the time! If you meet once a week, break up this lesson and spread out the activities over a few meetings. We hope you find the lesson a helpful starting point and we know you will make it your very own. Continue to stay safe as we weather this time together.

WARM-UP

The teacher leads the group through a story. The teacher will offer a prompt or the first part of a story sentence and select a student to complete the thought. The group creates the whole story together. When calling on students over a virtual platform, have them un-mute their computer and mute again when they have finished speaking. Everyone must listen to what ideas comes before in order to build on them and create a dynamic story. The teacher should remember what the students say to put the story together at the end. The first few rounds of this should be fun and improvisational. The students are using their own ideas.



Once upon a time there was a _____.
And every day _____.
But one day _____.
And after that _____.
And after that _____.
So finally _____.

ACTIVITY 1

Re-Telling The Novel

- Students will apply the novel they read as a class to the Once Upon a Time format.
- I encourage you to select a scribe or a student who will write down the Once Upon A Time version of the book you have selected.
- Try this as a class few times until you feel you have the story's most essential information written down.

ACTIVITY 2

Tell your story in 30 Seconds!

- Now that you have whittled the novel down to approximately 6-8 sentences, try telling the entire novel in 30 seconds. Have a few students give this a try! They should tell the story, not simply read the Once Upon a time version you just wrote quickly.
- Set the timer, select a student to un-mute themselves and tell as much of the story as they can in just 30 seconds.
- Students can 'popcorn' around the group for who goes next. When you 'popcorn' around the group, the student who has just had a chance to speak, selects the next student to participate, and then hits mute.

ACTIVITY 3

Three Word Story

- That's right! What are three amazing, descriptive words that encapsulate all that is the tremendous novel in question?
- Popcorn around the group to hear what they have to say the book truly is in three words.
- Notice what words are repeated and what themes remain constant.
- Have students write down their three words first.

Writing The Scene!

- Teachers choice on how this scene is written. Perhaps you can break the class into groups and have them work on a google doc. If you are able to enable break-out rooms on your virtual platform, students can work together to write their scene. Or each student now will write their very own scene for homework. The choice is yours!
- Using the Once Upon A Time story outline, students should select the following for their scene:
 - Location
 - Essential Characters
 - Conflict and Obstacle
- Select a theatrical genre: Musical, Farce, Drama, Comedia....The students can have fun with this.
- I suggest giving the students a limit of 3-5 pages to have their novel play out in dialogue.
- If your students are new to playwriting, please touch on what writing dialogue looks like as opposed to writing a story.

Helpful Hints

- Establish the conflict quickly!
- Clearly establish the protagonist/antagonist.
- Every minute counts.
- Think of creating an obstacle course for the protagonist.

Have fun!If you would like to share your scene(s) with us, send them to Maria@yourstagepartners.com

Maria McConville has been a NYC Public School teaching artist since 2005. In the past she has worked with the Theatre Development Fund, LeAP! Onstage, and Periwinkle Theater for Youth, and as a Shakespeare and Playwriting teaching artist with Theatre For A New Audience. Her students have performed and adapted the work of Shakespeare, written their own plays, devised ensemble performance pieces, sang and danced in musical productions, and performed their peers work on a Broadway stage. Growing up in New York, Maria attended LaGuardia High School of Performing Arts for Drama, and recently adjudicated the auditions for incoming students. In addition to being Stage Partners' Education Director, Maria is also a playwright; her published plays include "#Censored" and "#Viral" (Stage Partners) and "To Date or Not to Date" (Playscripts).



www.yourstagepartners.com

Stage Partners

P.O. Box 7874

New York, NY 10116

Copyright © 2020 by Stage Partners, All Rights Reserved. You may freely use this lesson plan, as long as the document is distributed in its entirety, including the author's bio and this notice.