

Starting Your Play: A Warm-Up

by Morgan Gould



STEP 1

Put a bunch of miscellaneous objects in a hat or bag. (A tennis ball, a pencil, a weird paper weight, a binder clip—anything works!) If you're doing it in a class, put as many objects as you have students. (Though this also works for an individual writer!)

STEP 2

Have each student draw out an object without looking. (Or if you're working solo, draw out an object yourself.)

STEP 3

Spend 60 seconds looking at the object in silence without writing. What does it look like? What color is it? If it could speak what would it sound like? If it could walk, how would it move? Does it remind you of a person? As an object, what's its "job"? (A stapler has a tough life, right?) What might its concerns be?

STEP 4

Start to create a character for that object. You can 1) Imagine the object is a person and write a monologue from the perspective of that character (a rusty spoon is an old, grumpy man, for instance) or 2) Imagine the object is still the object, but with human emotions (A pencil for example, might say "oh whoa is me! Everyone is always turning me upside down and making me erase their mistakes! I'm exhausted!") or 3) Use your imagination to imagine the object is something else. (Maybe that weird Frisbee is a flying saucer!)

STEP 5

Write a monologue as that character. Decide if the monologue is to another character or person (The pencil's owner, the aliens who run the flying saucer, the grumpy old man's granddaughter—whomever!), to the audience (direct address), or to the character himself (like a Shakespeare soliloquy often is).

STEP 6

Let anyone who wants to read out loud, share the monologue!

Is this the beginning of a full play?

Morgan Gould is a New York City based playwright, director, producer and theater professional specializing in licensing and the creation and representation of adaptations for the stage. She's done residencies and directed work at theaters including Ensemble Studio Theatre, New Georges, Brooklyn Arts Exchange, Ars Nova, HERE Arts Center and Playwrights Horizons. She holds a B.A. in Directing from Fordham University and an M.F.A. in Playwriting from CUNY Brooklyn. Her plays for schools have been performed across the nation.



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