

# **PLAY SCRIPTS**

**MONDAY- FEATURES**

## What is a play script?

A play or drama **script** is like a story that has been written for actors to perform, with the term '**play**' relating to a theatrical performance.

People who write them are called **Playwrights**. Children will learn about them during **drama** lessons.

Play scripts can be written in all genres, from comedy to drama, thriller and romance.

They are written differently to stories and novels in that they focus more specifically on **dialogue** and **stage direction** so that actors know how to make the characters behave on stage.

# FAMOUS PLAYS- SOME EXAMPLES

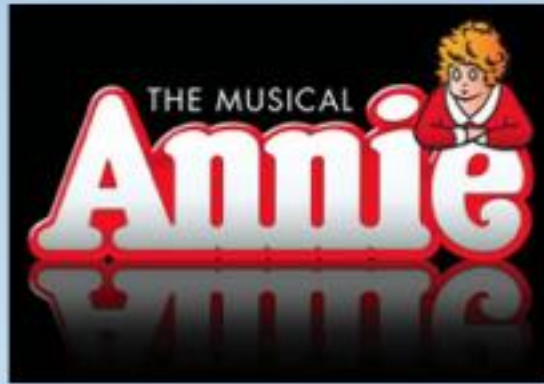
**Shakespeare** wrote many famous plays including: Romeo and Juliet, Hamlet, The Merchant of Venice, A Midsummer Night's Dream, Othello, Much Ado About Nothing.

**Tennessee Williams** wrote many famous plays such as: A Streetcar Named Desire, Cat on a Hot Tin Roof, The Glass Menagerie.

**Arthur Miller** wrote many famous plays such as: Death of a Salesman, The Crucible, All My Sons.

**Anton Chekhov** wrote many famous plays such as: Uncle Vanya, The Three Sisters and The Cherry Orchard.

# FEATURES OF A PLAY SCRIPT



Annie

## Title

The name given to the play script.



Wicked

Macbeth



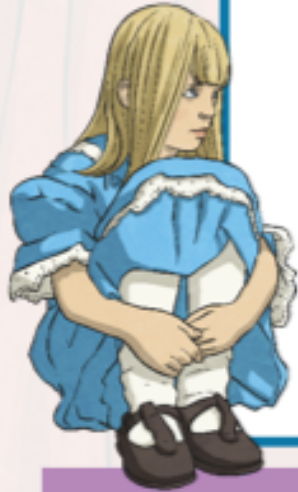
EastEnders



Romeo and Juliet

# Features of a Play Script:

## Character List



### Characters

### Alice In

### Wonderland

**Alice** The main character – A young girl who is lost in Wonderland. Has a great imagination.

**The Mad Hatter** As the name suggests, he is 'crazy'. He gives out riddles, dresses fashionably and likes tea.

**Hare** A friend of the Mad Hatter, thinks it is always time for afternoon tea, is also mad.

**Dormouse** Incredibly sleepy friend of the Mad Hatter.

At the beginning of a play script, you'll find a list of all the characters that are in the play.

Sometimes they will have a short description with them.

Why do you think this is?

**This helps anyone who wants to perform the play know how many actors they need.**

How might this help someone who wanted to perform the play?

**This tells people what the characters are like before reading the play.**

# Features of a Play Script:

Scene Number, Title and Setting Description



A bit like chapters in a book, the sections of a script are broken down into 'scenes'. A new scene usually means a new **setting**.

## Scene 7 – A Mad Tea Party

The Mad Hatter, Dormouse and Hare are sitting at a table having afternoon tea.

Just after the scene number and title is a short description of the **setting**. This tells you what the stage looks like.

# Features of a Play Script:

Speaker Name, Colon and Dialogue

A colon always comes after the name.

**Queen of Hearts:** Guards! Get her! Off with her head!  
Off with her head!



In a script, the name of the character who is speaking goes on the left.

After the colon is the dialogue (the words the character says).

How is this different to writing speech in a story?  
**No inverted commas!**

# Features of a Play Script:

## Stage Directions

Words in brackets are stage directions. These are instructions to the actors so they know what their character should be doing.

**White Rabbit:** (anxiously, whilst rushing across the stage) I'm late! I'm late!

**Alice:** (confused) A talking rabbit? It can't be...

Sometimes they tell the actor how to say their words.

The actors don't **say** the stage directions.



# Features of a Play Script:

## Stage Directions and Narrators

Some plays have a narrator to help set the scene for the audience, but lots of plays don't.

### **Narrator:**

Alice found herself in a strange room, inside was a small table. On top of it, sat a small, peculiar-looking bottle with a label on.

(Alice looks around, confused, then goes over to the table and studies the bottle.)

Stage directions can be given to any character, not just the ones speaking. They are always written in **present tense**.



# Can you find the play script features in the text here?

Scene number and title

Setting description

Speaker's name, followed by a colon (:)

Stage directions in brackets

Speech – without inverted commas!

Present tense

## Scene 7 – A Mad Tea Party

The Mad Hatter, Dormouse and Hare are sitting at a table having afternoon tea.

**Narrator:** Lost and lonely, Alice continued towards the sound. She didn't know what to expect when she reached a clearing...

(Alice enters the scene, stage left)

**Mad Hatter:** (starts for a moment, pauses and a broad grin appears across his face. He gets up out of his chair and walks across the table towards Alice) It's you.

**Dormouse:** (exasperated) No it's not! Hare brought us the wrong Alice!

**Hare:** (gasps and throws his hands against his head) It's the wrong Alice!

**Mad hatter:** You're absolutely Alice, I'd know you anywhere.

(to the rest of the characters at the table)

I'd know him anywhere!

(Dormouse and Hare laugh manically)

Well, as you can see we're still having tea. You're terribly late you know... naughty.

**Alice:** I'm incredibly intrigued.

click the different features to show the answers

# FEATURES

- Title
- Character list
- Scene number and title
- Setting description
- Character's name followed by dialogue (no speech marks, dialogue is separated by a colon)
- Stage directions

# YOUR TASK

- Look at “A holiday at the beach” and notice how the story (narrative) has been turned into a play script.
- Then identify the features of a play script.
- Underline each different type of feature in a different colour and make a key.

## **A Holiday at the Beach**

The sun was shining. The sand was so hot it stung your feet. Ben sat on the beach, eating an ice cream. Strawberry, his favourite.

“Let me have a lick,” his sister, Marcia, asked.

“Maybe,” said Ben, and he continued to eat the ice-cream.

“Pleeeeeeeeeeease,” said Marcia.



## **A Holiday at the Beach**

### Character list

BEN – 10 years old, a lively boy.

MARCIA – Ben’s younger sister, sometimes annoying.

### SCENE 1- The beach

*A beach. It is very sunny. The waves are flowing up and down the golden sand. Seagulls fly overhead in the clear sky.*

# **PLAY SCRIPTS**

**TUESDAY- DIALOGUE**

# WRITING SPEECH

Writing speech in a play script is different to writing speech in a narrative (story).

## Narrative

- We use inverted commas (speech marks) before and after direct speech.  
E.g. “I’m hungry,” she complained.
- Each new piece of speech must start with a capital letter.
- When a new/different person starts to speak, we start a new line.
- Punctuation, such as full stops, exclamation marks and question marks go inside the inverted commas.
- We use a reporting clause to show who is speaking, e.g. “Hello,” said Sally.

## Play script

- We write the name of the person talking, followed by a colon.
- We start a new line when a different person starts talking.
- New pieces of speech start with a capital letter.

E.g.

Mum: Be quiet you to, find something to do with yourselves.

Megan: But mum, I’ve read all my comics and done all my puzzles.

# WRITING SPEECH- EXAMPLES

## Narrative

“Uncle Scrooge, good day to you. Please excuse the snow on my boots,” said Fred.

“What do you want? Can’t you see I’m working?” asked Scrooge, angrily.

“I have brought a gentleman to see you,” replied Fred.



## Play script

Fred: Uncle Scrooge, good day to you.  
Please excuse the snow on my boots.

Scrooge: What do you want? Can’t you see I’m  
working?

Fred: I have brought a gentleman to see you

# YOUR TASK

- Read the extract from “Little Red Riding Hood”
- Convert the speech from narrative direct speech to play script style speech
- Look at the previous example and explanation for guidance

## CHALLENGE

Once you have finished, you could write a conversation in the style of a play script. It can be any conversation. For example, it could be a conversation you had with someone today, or it could be a made up conversation.

# **PLAY SCRIPTS**

**WEDNESDAY-STAGE DIRECTIONS**

# WHAT ARE STAGE DIRECTIONS?

- They are instructions in a play script that tell the actors how to enter, where to stand, how to say their lines and how to move.
- For example, stage directions might tell an actor to pace while delivering their lines, to pick up a prop while talking, to sit down or to move in a certain way (e.g. jump).
- Although stage directions can sometimes include instructions for lighting, scenery and sound effects, their main job is to guide actors through their movements onstage.
- Depending on the writer, stage directions might be written inside brackets, *in italics* or **in bold**.

# CAN YOU SPOT THE STAGE DIRECTIONS?

*(The family is in the car on the way to the sea-side)*

David: *(Whining)* Dad, are we nearly there yet?

Megan: *(Shoves David)* I'm getting fed up with you!

Dad: *(Angrily)* Look, it's bad enough driving for two hours without having to listen to you two arguing.

Mum: *(Snappily)* Be quiet you two, find something to do with yourselves.

Megan: *(Whining)* But mum, I've read all my comics and done all my puzzles.

David: I've read my comic too *(whines)* AND I've listened to my story tapes.

Mum: O.K. then, let's play I Spy for a while, you start, Megan.

Megan: *(Looks at David)* I spy with my little eye something beginning with F.

# YOUR TASK

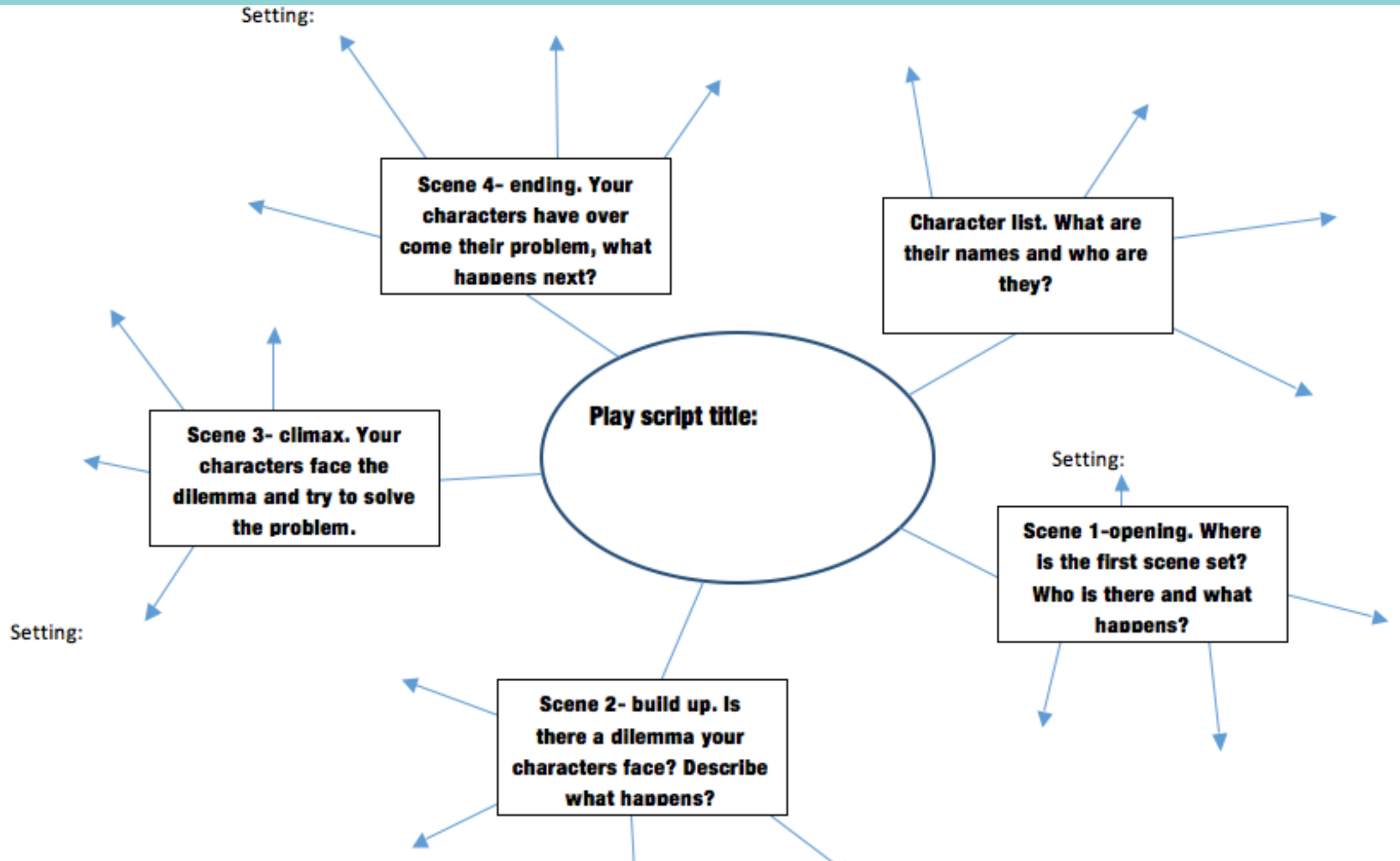
- Complete “The Reluctant Swimmer” worksheet.
- You will need to think about what the stage directions tell you about the characters’ feelings, and then continue the play script, including dialogue and stage directions.

# **PLAY SCRIPTS**

**THURSDAY- PLAN**

# PLANNING A PLAY SCRIPT

- Plan it in the same way you'd plan a story.
- Instead of doing chapters or sections, write scenes, with a scene number and title.
- Don't forget to include stage directions to describe what is happening and the way in which characters are speaking.
- Don't forget to write speech using the character's name and a colon.
- If you're struggling for inspiration, you could write a fairytale as a play script, e.g. Little Red Riding Hood, Goldilocks and the three bears etc.



Where are my scenes set? (E.g. London, in the woods, in a castle etc)

My scene titles will be:

Characters (and brief description):

# **PLAY SCRIPTS**

**FRIDAY- WRITE AND EDIT**

# FORMAT OF YOUR PLAYSRIPT

Title – Little Red Riding Hood

Character list

Scene I – The woods

(Little Red Riding Hood is walking through the woods on her way to granny's when she meets a wolf).

Wolf: Hello there.