

The Art of Writing for the Theatre

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Playwriting: The Given Circumstances

On a separate sheet of paper, answer as many of these questions as you can for every major character in your play:

Who am I? Fill in as many details about your character as you can including name, age, address, relatives, likes, dislikes, hobbies, career, physical traits, opinion, beliefs, religion, education, origin, enemies, loved ones, etc.

What time is it? Answer these questions for every scene. What is the century, season, year, day, hour, and minute? Discover the significance of time for your characters. How does this influence their mood?

Where am I? What is the country, city, neighborhood, home, room, area within a room? Is your character in their own home? Are they locked in the closet of their arch enemy?

What surrounds me? Discover all the animate and inanimate objects around your character. Be specific. Would the presence of a knife or a gun change the scene?

World events? What is going on in the world currently? Who is the leader of the country? What world events have happened recently?

The moment before. What has happened to each character immediately before the play begins? Or before a specific scene begins?

What are my relationships in the scene? Define each character's relationship to the events, other characters, and objects in each scene.

What do I want? What do I do to get what I want? As discussed earlier, these last two are the most important and the crux of any good play.