



4-H Drama Festival Tips

1. First and foremost....Let this be FUN
2. Set some ground rules (see examples)
 - a. Each actor will be responsible for their own costume (or asking for help if needed)
 - b. Choose a date/time that is convenient for the Director
 - c. Actors/parents must commit to attending ALL scheduled practices
 - d. Actors must commit to memorizing their lines (or else have an uncanny knack for improvisation)
 - e. Choose an "age appropriate" play. (i.e. if you have young members in the play, then don't pick plays with "adult situations.")
 - f. The Director should be willing to adapt to the style and situation of their youth.
3. Parent(s) must either attend the entire practice or be prompt when picking them up...Directors get to choose.
4. Use your imagination, encourage and empower the actors to use their imagination.
 - a. We want the audience see your imagination.
 - b. "Realistic" props are not required for a BLUE ribbon play.
 - c. Most judges will judge on the communication and interaction between the actors...is it believable?
5. Most of the preparation requires getting all actors together to read the play out loud.
6. Tell the actors to pay attention to the story and at the end of the reading, let them request specific parts.
7. If more than 1 actor is interested in the same character, then let them take turns reading that character's lines. (The Director gets the final say on which actor will be chosen to BE that character.)
8. Sometimes extra characters can be invented for more people to participate.
 - a. Some can be speaking parts; others can be "extras."
 - b. If at all possible, include everyone who wants to participate.
 - c. Someone (or a couple of actors) can "narrate" the play if that is helpful.
9. After parts are divvied out, then gather in a circle (preferably standing) and read the play with chosen actors reading their own lines.
10. Read it out loud in the group so many times that the emotion and energy immerse with the words.
11. Practice reading it SLLLLLOOOOOWWWWWW.
12. Practice reading it **LOUD**
13. Practice reading it **LOUD** and Slllllloooowwwww



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tips from Paula Marcinkowski
with additions from Joe Licitra and Campbell Barrett

- a. When everyone seems to start catching on...have the group meet outdoors to read the entire play.
 - b. It is good to realize that it is a lot different to speak **LOUD** and *Slllllloooowwww* when you are standing outside.
 - c. Outside will be very similar to how it will sound from a stage...lots of lines get muffled.
14. Once the lines are learned (and that is defined as being able to read the parts in the style of a conversation) and only then, practice memorizing the lines. (This is important to do BEFORE using the stage or adding movement or props).
15. After lines are memorized then it's time to work on the staging (movement and props).
- a. Keep the movements simple
 - b. Try to use the entire stage (not just one small section)
 - c. Costumes, props and backdrops can be kept to a minimum. The most important part of the production is the volume and how believable the interaction with each other is while reciting the lines.
16. Parents can be GREAT helpers when it comes to props and/or backdrops.
- a. Costumes can often come from someone's closet.
 - b. Props can be from someone's closet or a toy or handmade item as it's available.
 - c. Encourage volunteers to set a time to meet and discuss some of the options.
17. Practice running through the whole play without stopping.
- a. If someone forgets their line, have someone prompt them. (Someone can be selected as the "line prompter.")
 - b. If there is a mistake, try to improvise to get the play back on track.
 - c. Empower each actor to "help" if possible (while still in character)
 - d. ONLY if it's necessary, stop and regroup.

Some places to look for potential plays

Free sites:

- <http://www.freedrama.net/>
- <http://www.storiestogrowby.com/script.html>

Books:

- *Skits and Spoofs for Young Actors: One-Act, Royalty-Free Plays, Skits, and Spoofs for the Amateur Stage (Cheatham)*
- *Theatre for Young Audiences: 20 Great Plays for Children (Jennings)*
- *12 Fabulously Funny Fairy Tale Plays: Humorous Takes on Favorite Tales That Boost Reading Skills, Build Fluency & Keep Your Class Chuckling With Lots of Read-Aloud Fun! (Martin)*
- *12 Fabulously Funny Folktale Plays (Martin)*
- *Many other books available. Just search for "children's plays" at Amazon or other book seller.*

DRAMA FESTIVAL SIGN UP SHEET

NAME OF CLUB _____

DIRECTOR OF PLAY _____ PHONE # _____

ASSISTANT(S) _____

LEADERS OF CLUB _____

NAME OF PLAY _____

AUTHOR _____ TYPE OF PLAY _____

ESTIMATED LENGTH OF PLAY _____ ESTIMATED SET-UP TIME _____

CAST OF PLAYERS: **(give age)**

STAGE CREW, MAKE-UP, COSTUMES:

SUMMARY OF PLOT:

Missoula County Drama Festival Score Sheet

Name of Play _____

Name of Club _____

Plays will be judged according to the Danish system- Blue, Red, White.
The overall winner receives an additional Purple ribbon for the club.

When scoring the performances, please take into consideration
the age of the cast members.

Circle the score and add the total of all circled scores at bottom of page

3 = Excellent	2 = Satisfactory	1 = Unsatisfactory
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|---|--|---|---|---|
| 1. The Play | | | | |
| a. Selection of play (suitable for age of members or worthwhile material) | | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| b. Choice of characters | | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| c. Length of play (15-40 minutes or production may be penalized) | | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| 2. Acting | | | | |
| a. Characterization | | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| b. Ease | | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| c. Action | | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| d. Naturalness | | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| e. Voice and Diction | | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| 3. Staging | | | | |
| a. Makeup and costumes | | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| b. Setting and props | | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| 4. Presentation | | | | |
| a. Projection of spirit of the script | | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| b. Audience reaction | | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| c. Tempo | | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| d. Believability | | 3 | 2 | 1 |

Total Score (sum of all circled ratings) _____

Total Score Ribbon Ratings 33-42 = Blue 21-32 = Red 14-20 = White

Judge's Comments :