

Style Sheet: Example Format

How to format your submission to the
VSA arts Playwright Discovery
Award

Title your play.

Number the pages on the upper right hand corner. Use Arabic numbers. Begin numbering with the first page of dialogue.

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EXAMPLE FORMAT

Characters

In your character list, bold all of the names of your characters. Then, give a brief description of each character.

Jill, a 10th grade aspiring playwright
Sean, Jill's classmate, who also wants to write plays, but does not know the proper format
Mr. Smith, their teacher, who wants them to enter the *VSA arts* Playwright Discovery Award Contest.

At the beginning of the script, list ALL of your characters. Make sure to underline and center your heading.

Setting: The play takes place in a classroom. Upstage is the door. The door leads into the hallway. The students' desks are arranged in rows of four.

Double space before a character heading, after dialogue, and before scene headings

Scene 1

It is recess time. Sean is sitting at his desk, working very hard on his play. Jill walks into the classroom from the hallway.

JILL

(Sits down at the desk next to Sean.)

It was a great idea to work on our plays together today. The deadline for the Playwright Discovery Award is coming up really soon.

(She takes a copy of her play out of her backpack.)

SEAN

(Looking confused at his work.)

Jill, do you know how we are supposed to format our plays?

Make sure to list the name of the dialogue speaker above the dialogue. This heading should be centered and in all capital letters.

JILL

Mr. Smith gave me a style sheet that we can follow

(She takes out the style sheet from her backpack.)

The *VSA arts* Playwright Discovery Award sent this to Mr. Smith so that we would know how to set up our scripts before we submit them.

Single space all dialogue, character headings and character stage directions.

All page margins should be set to 1" all around.

Stage directions should always be placed in parentheses, and indented from the left margin. They should always begin on a new line, even if it's in the middle of a character's dialogue. Also, if they continue on to a second line, make sure to indent the entire stage direction.

Unlike the dialogue headings, the dialogue itself should not be centered. It should be aligned with the left margin

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SEAN

→ (Looks up and completely changes his mood to happy and excited.)
Thank you! I was worried that I would not be able to enter my play if it wasn't formatted correctly. I'd really like to win. I can't even imagine how exciting it would be to have your play selected for full production at The Kennedy Center!

→ (They both ponder what it would feel like, and then they go back to work on their plays.)

Scene 2

← It's the next morning before school has started. Mr. Smith is sitting at his desk looking over some papers. Sean and Jill walk in and approach his desk.

JILL

Mr. Smith, thank you so much for giving me a copy of the *VSA arts* Playwright Discovery Award Style Sheet. I finished my play last night, and now I am ready to submit it!

(Proudly shows Mr. Smith a copy of her finished play.)

SEAN

My play will be done by tomorrow!

MR. SMITH

That's great to hear! If either of you are awarded full production at The Kennedy Center, we'll organize a field trip so that the entire 10th grade can see your play. But in the meantime keep writing more plays. If you do not get full production this year, there is always next.

JILL and SEAN

OK we will!

(The bell rings, and they go sit at their desks waiting for class to begin.)

When a new scene begins, it should be labeled with "Scene" headings. Use Arabic numerals to indicate the scene.

Under the Scene heading, briefly describe any information that the reader needs to know to be able to fully picture the scene.

Don't forget to double-check for errors in spelling and grammar. Also, always ask someone else to proofread your work for you such as a teacher or parent.