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The Monologue Everything Program**

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# MONOLOGUE EVERYTHING!



Lindsay Price

Monologue Everything!  
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Published by Theatrefolk Inc.

e-mail: [tfolk@theatrefolk.com](mailto:tfolk@theatrefolk.com)

website: [www.theatrefolk.com](http://www.theatrefolk.com)

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## WHAT IS MONOLOGUE EVERYTHING?

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*Monologue Everything* is a book crammed full of exercises that will help you to become an expert in the art of monologue writing.

The monologue is a mini-play. It is a microcosm within the macrocosm that is the play, a moment of magic that has its own form within the larger story structure. The monologue functions as communication directly from the soul of a character to the audience.

Monologues are inherently theatrical, because in real life they rarely occur. No one stands up and reveals their innermost thoughts as they're waiting for the bus. But monologues are tricky to write – they can quickly turn ugly. Monologues can become boring, pedantic, and drag the pace of a play down to a grinding halt. A great monologue will make an audience sit forward and hold their breath as a door is opened for them into the character's psyche.

Monologues aren't just play devices: A monologue is a Swiss army knife for the writer, it's a warm-up tool, it's a backstory/character development tool, it can be used in the classroom – the possibilities are endless.

Enjoy!

**PS:** Lesson Plans and Rubrics to help you to employ these exercises in a formal classroom setting can be found in the Classroom Edition of *Monologue Everything!*

Lindsay Price



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## INTRODUCTION: WHAT IS A MONOLOGUE?

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*From the Greek: monologos – speaking alone (mono = alone, logos = speech/word)*

### WHAT IS A MONOLOGUE?

A monologue is spoken text which:

- is presented by a single character.
- is written in the first person.
- can be comedic or dramatic.
- reveals something: the character's inner thoughts, emotions, secrets, a story, or the answer to a question.

### WHAT IS THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN A MONOLOGUE AND A SOLILOQUY?

A soliloquy is a speech which a character makes to him or herself while alone onstage – they are thinking aloud. The most famous soliloquy is Hamlet's "To be, or not to be" speech from Shakespeare's *The Tragedy of Hamlet, Prince of Denmark*. In contrast, a character who delivers a monologue is communicating either with the audience or with another character.

### HOW LONG HAVE PLAYWRIGHTS BEEN USING MONOLOGUES IN THEIR PLAYS?

Since the very beginnings of theatre! Ancient Greek theatre evolved from monologues – in its earliest form, one character spoke alongside a chorus. Later, this form evolved to use two actors, then three – but it all began with the monologue.

### IF I'M AN ACTOR, SHOULD I WRITE MY OWN MONOLOGUES FOR AUDITIONS?

I'd never say "never," but, for the most part, taking a monologue from an existing play is a better choice than using a stand-alone monologue. You want to present a piece that comes from a larger work, one which relates to a wider context. A stand-alone monologue exists only within its own moment.

## IF I'M A PLAYWRIGHT, WHY SHOULD I BOTHER WITH MONOLOGUES? I PREFER DIALOGUE!

It takes skill to write an impactful and effective monologue, and developing that skill is reason enough to practice writing monologues. You can use the monologue as a warm-up tool – even if it's not your preferred style of writing – or use it to further develop your characters. There are many ways to hone your skills through using monologues.

### WHAT MAKES A GOOD MONOLOGUE?

There are many factors to consider when writing a monologue. The three key elements are:

- A need to speak. The character is speaking for a reason – they have a need to share, a need to reveal, a need to explain. *“I need to tell you about my dad.”*
- A specific character voice. Capturing how a character talks is essential to creating a captivating monologue. What type of language do they use? At what pace do they speak? How do they convey their story? Do they speak in run-on sentences, or in fits and starts? *“You sit down, you hear? I got somethin’ to tell ya!”*
- A journey. A monologue is a mini-play, so it must have a beginning, a middle, and an end – but don't limit your concept of “a journey” to something physical. An emotional journey for a character can be just as impactful – where is the character emotionally at the beginning of the monologue, and where do they end up? *From “I need to tell you about my dad,” to “That’s why I will never marry you.”*

### EXERCISE

- Gather thirty monologues. Get them from books, from online sources, or ask a teacher for examples. The only rule is that the monologues must come from plays. Read each monologue and decide if the three key elements (a need to speak, a specific character voice, and a journey) are present.
- Create your own criteria – what do you think makes a good monologue? To what standards will you hold your own work? Do your gathered monologues meet *your* criteria?

## WHAT ARE SOME EXAMPLES OF GREAT MONOLOGUES?

It's impossible to have a top ten list of monologues that works for everybody. What makes a monologue great depends on your personal relationship to the character and the play. Are you looking for a man's monologue or a woman's monologue? Are you a teenager, or are you in your fifties? Are you looking for something modern or something classic?

The following list is by no means a complete list, but it's a good place to start. To get the best impact from each monologue, you'll need to place it in context – so be sure to read the entire play from which it comes.

### CLASSIC MONOLOGUES

PLAY	PLAYWRIGHT	CHARACTER	FIRST LINE
Hamlet, Prince of Denmark	William Shakespeare	Hamlet	"To be, or not to be, that is the question..."
A Midsummer Night's Dream	William Shakespeare	Helena	"How happy some o'er other some can be!"
Tartuffe	Moliere	Marianne	"Sir, by that Heaven which sees me here distressed..."
Man and Superman	George Bernard Shaw	The Devil	"Well, well, go your way, Senor Don Juan."
The Cherry Orchard	Anton Chekov	Lopakhim	"I bought it."
The Seagull	Anton Chekov	Nina	"Why do you say that you kissed the ground on which I walked?"
Antigone	Sophocles	Antigone	"Tomb, bridal chamber, eternal prison in the caverned rock, whither I go to find mine own..."
Oedipus Rex	Sophocles	Oedipus	"What's done was well done. Thou canst never shake my firm belief."
Faustus	Christopher Marlowe	Faustus	"Ah, Faustus. Now hast thou but one bare hour to live..."
Twelfth Night	William Shakespeare	Viola	"I left no ring with her; what means this lady?"



## MODERN MALE MONOLOGUES

PLAY	PLAYWRIGHT	CHARACTER	FIRST LINE
Death of a Salesman	Arthur Miller	Biff	"All right, phoney! Then let's lay it on the line."
Biloxi Blues	Neil Simon	Arnold	"I was in the latrine alone."
The Laramie Project	Moisés Kaufman	Dennis Shepard	"My son, Matthew did not look like a winner."
Fences	August Wilson	Cory	"Going to his funeral would make me feel defeated."
The Glass Menagerie	Tennessee Williams	Tom	"Listen! You think I'm crazy about the warehouse?"
The Homecoming	Harold Pinter	Lenny	"One night not too long ago..."
The House of Blue Leaves	John Guare	Ronnie	"My father tell you all about me?"
Mad Forrest	Caryl Churchill	Priest	"This is so sweet like looking at the colour blue."
Our Country's Good	Timberlake Wertenbaker	Ketch	"James, sir, James, Daniel, Patrick after my three uncles."
Angels in America	Tony Kushner	Ray	"I'm dying, Joe, cancer."

## MODERN FEMALE MONOLOGUES

PLAY	PLAYWRIGHT	CHARACTER	FIRST LINE
Crimes of the Heart	Beth Henley	Babe	"And we were just standing around on the back porch playing with Dog."
'Dentity Crisis	Christopher Durang	Jane	"When I was eight years old, someone brought me to a theatre..."
A Streetcar Named Desire	Tennessee Williams	Blanche	"I, I, I took the blows in my face and my body!"
No Exit	Jean-Paul Sartre	Inez	"To forget about the others?"
Eleemosynary	Lee Blessing	Echo	"Uncle Bill hardly remembers you..."
The Children's Hour	Lillian Hellman	Karen	"No, no, no. This isn't the way things work."
The Caucasian Chalk Circle	Bertolt Brecht	Grusha	"Now you've wet yourself again."
'Night Mother	Marsha Norman	Jessie	"I am what became of your child."
Our Town	Thornton Wilder	Emily	"Oh, Mama, just look at me one minute... I can't! I can't go on!"
Les Liaisons Dangereuses	Christopher Hampton	Merteuil	"When I came out into society I'd already realized..."

## MONOLOGUES FOR TEEN ACTORS

Theatrefolk offers two books of contemporary monologues for student actors: *Competition Monologues*, and *Competition Monologues Book 2*. We also have plays that are completely comprised of monologues or feature monologues heavily: *The Pregnancy Project*, *Puzzle Pieces*, *Stressed*, and *Have You Heard?*

Here are some selected monologues from Theatrefolk plays. The complete works can be found at [www.theatrefolk.com](http://www.theatrefolk.com).

PLAY	PLAYWRIGHT	CHARACTER	FIRST LINE
Wait Wait Bo Bait	Lindsay Price	Tamara	"Oh Mr. Phone, why don't you ring?"
Puzzle Pieces	Krista Boehnert	Jamie	"Pressures. I guess you could say that's how this all started."
A Box of Puppies	Billy Houk	Skip	"I used to enjoy English."
The Pregnancy Project	Lindsay Price	Neil	"First she's quiet."
Sixteen in 10 Minutes or Less	Bradley Hayward	Vance	"I wish I could stay in the same house."
Chicken. Road.	Lindsay Price	Ten	"I am a chicken."
Chemo Girl	Christian Kiley	Girl	"It's harder than it looks, holding your breath."
Sweep Under Rug	Lindsay Price	Rea	"Accept so much."
Stressed	Alan Haehnel	Alex	"I would go in my bedroom."
Have You Heard?	Krista Boehnert	Cleo	"Cause of death undetermined."
Bottle Baby	Lindsay Price	Alice	"This isn't the way it's supposed to go Beeb."
Floating On a Don't Care Cloud	Lindsay Price	TJ	"But don't you see Jamie?"

# Teaching Resources

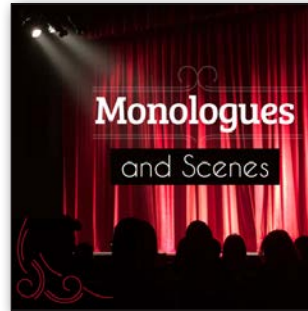
Quality resources to use in your drama classroom



## The Drama Classroom Companion

*The Drama Classroom Companion* is filled with articles and exercises to build the skills needed for theatrical performance as well as real world skills like creative thinking, critical thinking, collaboration, and communication.

[theatrefolk.com/companion](http://theatrefolk.com/companion)

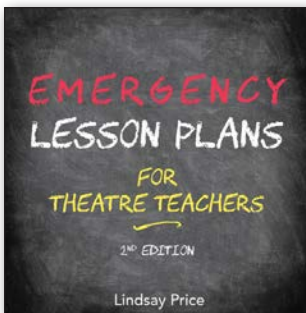


## Monologue and Scene Collections

Whether it's for classwork, competitions or auditions, these collections of student-appropriate monologues and scenes can help you find what you're looking for.

All monologues and scenes come from published plays and include running-times, descriptions, character notes and staging suggestions.

[theatrefolk.com/collections](http://theatrefolk.com/collections)



## Emergency Lesson Plans For Theatre Teachers

*Emergency Lesson Plans For Theatre Teachers, 2nd edition* gives you the tools and resources you need to confidently leave your class in the hands of a substitute teacher. Customize your lesson plans to suit the specific needs of your class when you can't be there.

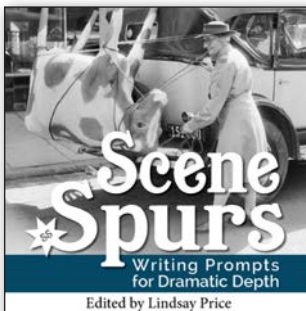
[theatrefolk.com/elp](http://theatrefolk.com/elp)



## The Student Director's Handbook

Help students take their show from first audition to opening night with *The Student Director's Handbook*. This easy-to-use ebook is full of guidelines, tips and templates designed to help students create a vision, circumvent problems and organize rehearsals on their way to a successful production.

[theatrefolk.com/student-director](http://theatrefolk.com/student-director)



## Scene-Spurs: Writing Prompts for Dramatic Depth

*Scene Spurs* is a collection of photo-based writing prompts developed by playwright Lindsay Price. The set includes 35 different Spurs along with an instruction guide to integrate them into your drama classroom.

[theatrefolk.com/spurs](http://theatrefolk.com/spurs)

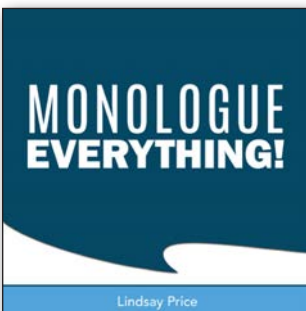


## Write Your Own Vignette Play

Your students want to write and perform an original play. You want to include a playwriting unit in your program. But where to start? What if your students have never written a play before? What if you've never written before?

*Write Your Own Vignette Play* will answer all your questions and more

[theatrefolk.com/write\\_vignette](http://theatrefolk.com/write_vignette)



## The Monologue Everything Program

Want your students to write their own monologues? Have you tried to incorporate monologue units into the classroom with less-than-satisfactory results?

[theatrefolk.com/monologue-everything](http://theatrefolk.com/monologue-everything)



## Competition Material

Plays, monologues, and scenes for drama competitions including royalty information and exemptions.

[theatrefolk.com/competition](http://theatrefolk.com/competition)



## Practical Technical Theater: The Complete Solution for Technical Theater Classrooms

This series of instructional DVDs is perfect for the teacher who feels more at home with a prompt book than a hammer, and would welcome a new, visually oriented teaching tool for their tech classes and production crews.

[theatrefolk.com/ptt](http://theatrefolk.com/ptt)



[www.theatrefolk.com/resources](http://www.theatrefolk.com/resources)