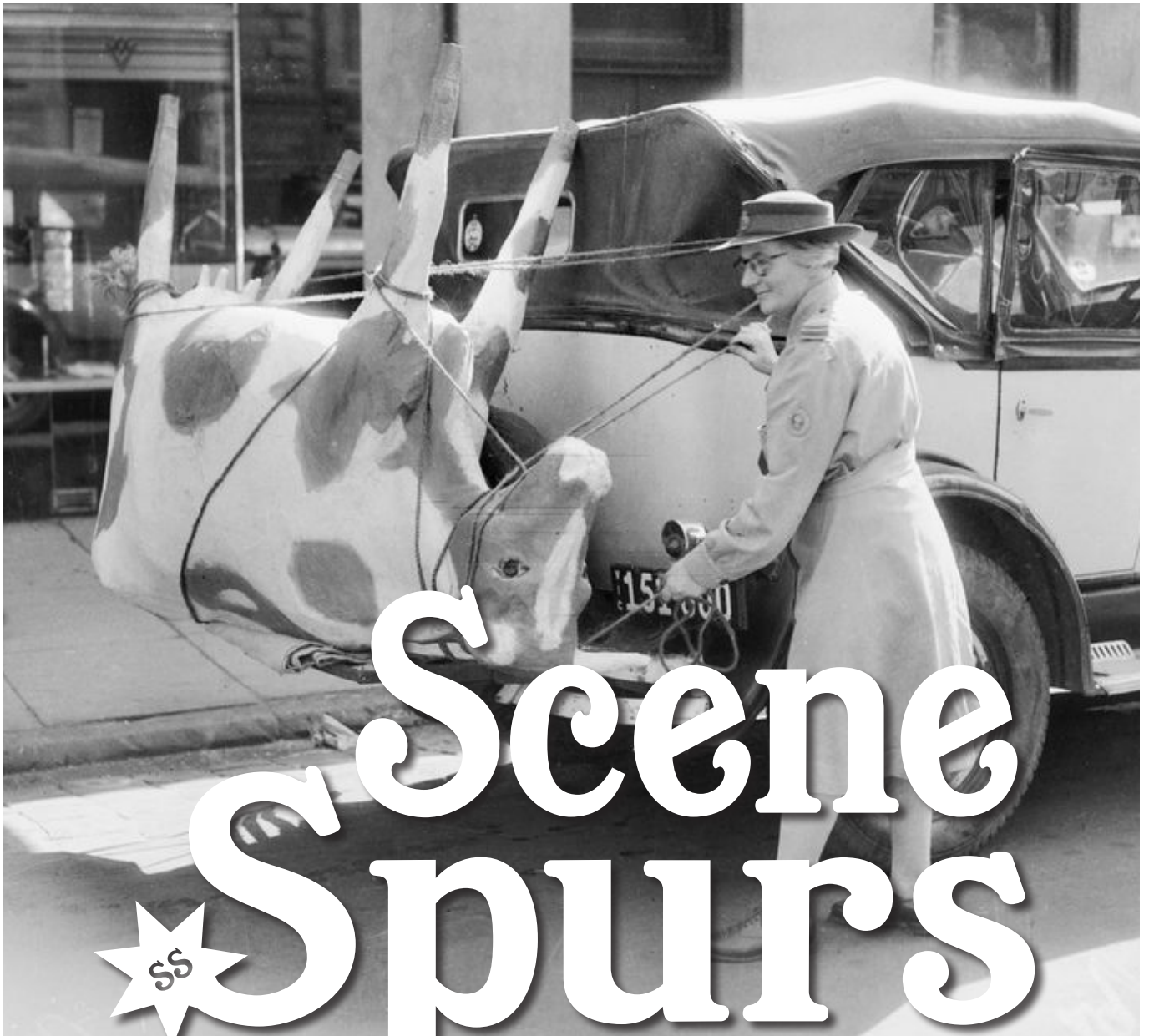


Edited by Lindsay Price

**Sample Pages from**  
**Scene Spurs - Writing Prompts for Dramatic**  
**Depth**

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# Scene Spurs



Writing Prompts  
for Dramatic Depth

Edited by Lindsay Price



# Scene Spurs

Writing Prompts  
for Dramatic Depth

Scene Spurs  
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# Curriculum Guide



## LITERACY THROUGH WRITING

Literacy through writing improves learner comprehension, creativity, and communication. The ability to put thoughts into words and then communicate those words in a specific manner to a specific audience is a skill that extends beyond the classroom.

However, creative writing can be difficult to encourage. There is a misconception surrounding the act of writing, that it takes an innate skill. Learners often believe they lack the necessary “creativity” to improve.

*Scene Spurs* circumvents this misconception through a response-driven framework that provides learners with a starting point. They respond to a picture, a question, a prompt. The creativity is all their own, but the framework offers the necessary support. Learners find confidence to continue writing when they are supported along the way.

*Scene Spurs* provides writing strategies for learners at a variety of ability levels and grades. Beginners improve their literacy by responding to the warm-up questions. Intermediate learners respond to the monologue and scene prompts. Advanced learners further develop their literacy by responding to multiple photos and creating their own prompts.

## HOW SCENE SPURS ADDRESSES COMPREHENSION, CREATIVITY, AND COMMUNICATION

### Comprehension

- Each spur includes exercises (Warm-up Questions & Automatic Writing) which provide learners a prewriting strategy to fully explore the subject matter before they form and develop an idea.
- As *Scene Spurs* focuses on playwriting (scene and monologue writing) it offers a unique genre and format for learners to practice comprehension (understanding how to write in specific play form).

### Creativity

- By providing a response framework, *Scene Spurs* provides learners with a base from which to form creative ideas. This improves learner confidence and self-expression skills.
- Each spur offers a unique photo with endless possibilities. Advanced learners can further improve their literacy by creating their own monologue and scene prompts.

### Communication

- *Scene Spurs* prompts learners to communicate an idea in a specific form for a specific audience.

## LANGUAGE ARTS STRANDS IDENTIFIED IN *SCENE SPURS*

*Scene Spurs* offers a practical strategy to implement Language Arts Strands through questions, journaling, and monologue/scene prompts.

### Learners Will...

- ...apply communication skills by using written knowledge to create a text.
- ...apply prewriting techniques that lead to writing fictional narratives.
- ...employ a technique to create ideas.
- ...communicate a scenario and characters through a scene.
- ...interpret photos in order to gather information and respond analytically.
- ...be engaged to write in a meaningful manner through interesting source material.
- ...write to a specific purpose for a specific audience.

# Instruction Guide



Student writers often find starting to be the most difficult part of the writing process. *Scene Spurs* are a collection of photo-based writing prompts that provide guideposts:

## A PHOTO

An interesting photo specifically chosen to trigger creativity. The purpose of the photo is to give students a starting point – something to look at, think about, and use as a basis to start writing.

## WARM-UP QUESTIONS

Warm-up questions get the brain in gear. Questions are an excellent way to begin the writing process; they allow students to create source material from which a monologue or scene can grow.

**Note:** Some of the spurs ask students to describe the picture using the five senses. Make sure they use taste, even though there's no food in the picture. Taste doesn't have to be obvious. Dust has a taste. Mildew has a taste. Perfume has a taste, and so on.

## AUTOMATIC WRITING EXERCISE

Automatic writing is a technique that motivates students to get words on the page without self-criticism or judgement. Students are given a time period (2 minutes) and a topic (the photo). Their job is to **write for the entire time without stopping**. If they get stuck, they write about that. If they don't like the picture, they write about that.

The act of getting words on the page can be difficult for students as they fear the imperfection of those words – they judge what they're writing before they even start. This is how writer's block forms and how insecure writers come to believe they can't write. If students can practice an exercise where **the act of writing is more important than the content**, they will find over time that getting words on the page becomes easier and easier.

## MONOLOGUE AND SCENE PROMPTS

Each Spur provides 2-3 monologue prompts and 3-4 scene prompts. If you're using the Spurs with a beginner class, start with the warm-up questions, automatic writing, and one monologue. If your class is more advanced, then you can have them complete multiple monologues and scenes.

Each Spur has unique questions, monologue and scene prompts. The class can either work on the same Spur, or each student can work on his or her own Spur. See the sample lesson plans for examples.

## PHOTO ONLY PAGES

We have also provided pages with the photos on their own. We know some students work better with verbal rather than written instruction. This way you can select the questions & prompts or even use your own.

## USING *SCENE SPURS* IN THE CLASSROOM

- Warm-up exercises during a playwriting unit.
- Introduce the theatrical writing process to new writers.
- Emergency lesson plans for a substitute teacher.
- A creativity spur for a group or class writing their own play.
- Use the Photo Only Pages and the sky's the limit. Distribute the pages and provide select prompts verbally.



# Sample Lesson Plans



## WORKING WITH BEGINNING WRITERS: THE INDIVIDUALITY OF THE WRITER

- Hand out the same Spur to everyone in the class.
- Divide the class into groups. Each group completes the Warm-up Questions.
- The groups discuss the answers verbally, then record their answers. Emphasize that if the groups disagree on an answer they can write more than one down.
- Discuss the answers as a class. What groups come up with similar answers? How do answers differ?
- Use this as a jumping off point to discuss there is no one right answer in creative writing. We all think differently so all writers write differently.
- Discuss how many different elements can be found in one picture and why using a picture is a good starting point for inspiration.
- Everyone individually completes the two minute automatic writing section.
- Choose one monologue prompt. Everyone completes the same monologue prompt.
- Students share their monologues in their groups.
- Discuss how unique the monologues are even though everyone started from the same place.

## TIMED SECTIONS: ACCEPT ALL IDEAS

- Hand out the same Spur to everyone in the class.
- Warm-up Questions: This is a timed section. Students are given two minutes to answer as many of the Warm-Up Questions as possible. They will probably not complete them all, but the aim is to push students to get all their ideas on paper and to not reject an idea before writing it down. Encourage students that if one question stumps them, move on to the next.
- Automatic Writing: Students have two minutes to write about the picture. Encourage students to keep their thoughts focused on the picture for the entire time, even if they get stuck.
- Monologue Prompt: All students receive the same monologue prompt. Students are given two minutes to write a monologue.
- Discuss what it was like to write under time constraints. Did it help or hinder the thought process?

## WORKING WITH ADVANCED STUDENTS

- Hand out different Spurs to each student.
- Warm-up Questions: Set a time length within which students answer as many as the warm-up questions as they can. (e.g. 15 minutes)
- Automatic Writing: Students are given two minutes to write about the picture.
- Monologue Prompts: Students complete all of the given monologue prompts. Encourage students to use the source material they came up with in the Warm-up Questions.

- Scene Prompts: Students complete two scenes. Encourage students to choose the scene prompt that takes them out of their comfort zone as a writer. How do they respond to writing a scene that isn't easy for them?

## THE EMERGENCY LESSON PLAN: FOR THE SUBSTITUTE TEACHER

- Hand out the same Spur to the class. Emphasize that student work will be collected at the end of the period.
- Warm-up Questions: Students have 15 minutes to complete as many warm-up questions as they can. Announce the start time, the mid point, and the end time.
- Automatic Writing: Students have two minutes to write about the picture. Read aloud the Automatic Writing paragraph on the page. Announce the start time and the end time.
- Monologue Prompts: Students choose one monologue prompt. They have 10 minutes to work on a monologue. If they finish their monologue before the time is up, they are to start work on a second monologue.
- Scene Prompt: Students choose one scene prompt. They have 30 minutes to complete that scene. If they finish their scene before the time is up they are to start work on a second scene.
- Collect all work at the end of class.

# Scene Spurs in the English Classroom



*Scene Spurs* is conceived as an introduction to the craft of playwriting but the techniques can be applied to all literary genres.

- Use the warm-up questions regardless of the genre learners will use. They provide a prewriting technique to acquaint learners with the photo and help brainstorm potential ideas for stories, poems, screenplays, as well as plays.
- Character development is useful in all genres. Use the monologue prompts as a character development exercise for the main character in a story.

## JOURNALING TOPICS

- Use the automatic writing prompts in each spur as a journaling topic. These prompts offer a transition to self-expression and autobiographical writing as learners respond to the photo.

## POETRY

- Use the title of each spur as a title for a poem inspired by the accompanying photo.
- Use the monologue prompts, substituting the word "poem" in place of "monologue."

## SHORT STORIES

- Use the title of each spur as a title for a short story inspired by the accompanying photo.
- Use the scene prompts, substituting the word "story" in place of "scene."

# Do Not Mutilate or Cut Tree



theatrefolk.com/spurs

Scene Spurs by Lindsay Price

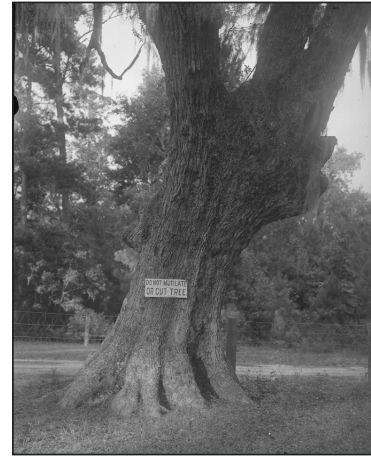
1

# Do Not Mutilate or Cut Tree



## WARM-UP QUESTIONS

1. Where was this picture taken?
2. What kind of tree is it? How old is it?
3. What do you think of the fence in the background? Why was that type of fence chosen?
4. What events have taken place under this tree?
5. Who has hid in this tree? What were they hiding from?
6. To whom does the tree belong?
7. The sign on the tree says, "Do not mutilate or cut tree." Who put it there and why?
8. Is there anything carved into the tree?
9. What does the tree think about having a sign nailed into its trunk?
10. Who took this picture and why?



## AUTOMATIC WRITING

Automatic write on this picture for two minutes. What comes into your mind when you look at the picture? Look at it from top to bottom, left to right. Look at the lettering on the sign, the wire fence behind. Keep writing for the entire time.

## MONOLOGUE PROMPTS

Write a monologue from the perspective of the tree. Give the tree a specific emotional response in the monologue. Is the tree sad? Happy to have been alive so long? Mad at the sign?

Write a monologue from the tree's perspective where the tree shares the most momentous event that's taken place at its base.

Write a monologue from the perspective of the person who decided to put up the sign. What prompted the action? Who does the person talk to in the monologue (e.g. a wife, a husband, a dog, a plant?) Give them someone or something specific to talk to. Perhaps they talk to the tree itself...

## SCENE PROMPTS

Write a dialogue between two teenagers in a relationship. One teen has carved (out of sight in the picture) a heart and their initials into the tree and is showing them to the second teen for the first time. What is the second teen's reaction?

Take the scene supernatural – write a scene between someone who cuts into the tree and a ghost who appears as a consequence of the act.

What if the person who puts up the sign doesn't own the tree? Write a scene between the land owner and the tree hugger. What if the land owner wants to chop the tree down?

Write a scene with non-human characters – how do the animals of the forest respond to the sign?

# Teaching Resources

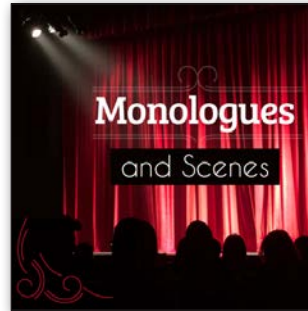
Quality resources to use in your drama classroom



## 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)

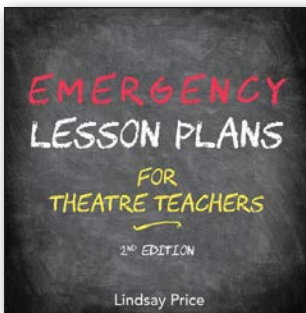


## Monologue and Scene Collections

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.

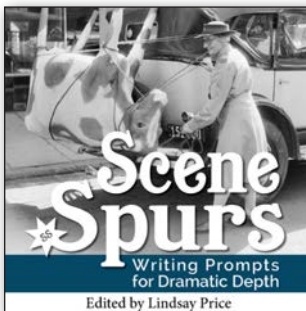
[theatrefolk.com/elp](http://theatrefolk.com/elp)



## 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)

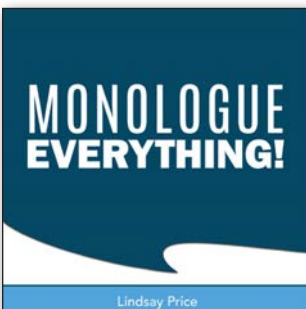


## Write Your Own Vignette Play

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)