

Resources for Teaching Playwriting Compiled by Adam Russell

Cassady, Marsh. *Playwriting: Step by Step*. San Jose: Resource Publications, Inc., 1984.

Introduction to the “six elements of playwriting” as set forth in Aristotle’s *Poetics*—plot, character, thought, diction, music and spectacle for use in writing plays.

Catron, Louis E. *Playwriting: Writing, Producing, and Selling Your Play*. Illinois: Waveland Press, Inc., 1984.

Discussion of the “six elements of playwriting” for help with writing a play. Includes exercises and examples from classic works for writing plays.

----- *The Elements of Playwriting*. New York: Macmillan, Inc., 1993.

Wholly comprehensive, step by step, resource that takes the writer from basic playwriting steps all the way to a polished play. Includes resources for helping get the play produced or published.

Downs, William M. and Lou Anne Wright. *Playwriting From Formula to Form: A Guide to Writing a Play*. Fort Worth: Harcourt Brace College Publishers, 1998.

Dedicated to the belief that playwrights are made, not born, this text examines the relationship between creativity, technique, and structure for aspiring playwrights.

George, Kathleen E. *Playwriting: The First Workshop*. Boston: Focal Press, 1994.

Extremely user-friendly approach to writing and studying plays loosely based on twenty principles of good playwriting. Lots of exercises and examples from modern classics thoroughly studying the art and craft of playwrights at any age or stage of development.

Hatcher, Jeffrey. *The Art and Craft of Playwriting*. Cincinnati: Story Press, 1996.

Uses six “essential” elements to teach writers the craft of playwriting through example from dramatic texts and how to apply those elements. Complete with exercises and interviews of respected playwrights.

Jonas et al., ed. *Dramaturgy in American Theaters: A Source Book*. Fort Worth: Harcourt Brace College Publishers, 1997.

An anthology/library surveying the practice and theory of the dramaturg. More theoretical than practical for the aspiring playwright, providing a sense of history and place to the role of the dramaturg.

Pike, Frank and Thomas Dunn. *The Playwright's Handbook*. New York: PLUME, 1996.

A quick, user-friendly handbook for writers of any age or stage of development. Follows the process of writing a play to producing and selling the play.

Sweet, Jeffrey. *The Dramatist's Toolkit: The Craft of the Working Playwright*. Portsmouth: Heinemann, 1993.

A balance between the technical aspects of writing and professional issues dealing with going from the page to the stage. A "toolkit" for students and writers with the raw materials of a play already under their feet.

Vena, Gary. *How to Read and Write About Drama*. 1966. Reprint. New York: ARCO, 1988.

An advanced resource for students of drama tracing the history and tradition of drama from ancient Greece to the present time. Concerned more with reading and writing about drama rather than writing drama.

Wallis, Mick and Simon Shephard. *Studying Plays*. New York: Oxford University Press, Inc., 1998.

A tool for exploring and examining dramatic texts, particularly: character, dialogue, action and space.

Wright, Michael. *Playwriting in Process: Thinking and Working Theatrically*. Portsmouth: Heinemann, 1997.

A hands-on compendium of games and exercise specifically designed to help shape the way playwright's think and write. Written in response to the feeling that playwriting textbooks in general are not useful, if used at all.