

Dramatic Writing Assignment 1: **Play with Premise**

Goal: Write a play.

Rules:

- there must be at least 3 characters in your play
- they must speak at least 100 lines altogether
- your play needs to have a premise
- it is to be a one-act play, but you may have multiple scenes
- include some short character descriptions beforehand so the reader knows who's who
- write the premise at the end, but cover it with sticky notes so I can guess before reading it
- bring your work to Literary Seminar next week



Premise:

A basis of argument; a proposition stated or assumed as leading to a conclusion.

-from Webster's International Dictionary

Other words that have similar meaning: theme, thesis, root idea, central idea, goal, driving force, subject, purpose, plot, plan, basic emotion. The premise suggests that one thing leads to another, which is more than just a theme or plot. The premise must be clear, because it provides direction for the play and for the emotions of the characters.

When planning or discovering the premise in your work, it's important that you believe it. You should not write anything with a premise you don't believe. Be specific when honing your premise, but never put it in the dialogue of your play. It should be evident in your writing.

It's ok to figure out your premise as you go but in the end you need to have one or your writing will be flat. It's also ok if none of your friends agree with your premise; perhaps your writing will convince them that your premise is sound.

****all of the above ideas paraphrased from *The Art of Dramatic Writing*, pp2-23****