Youth PLAYS
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YouthPLAYS New Voices One-Act Competition for Young Playwrights

YouthPLAYS is pleased to announce the 16th annual YouthPLAYS New Voices One-Act Competition for Young Playwrights, designed to encourage young writers to create new works for the stage. There will be cash prizes for the winner and runner-up, as well as representation ***of the winning play*** through YouthPLAYS, the publisher of plays for young actors and audiences.

CONTEST GUIDELINES AND ELIGIBILITY

Plays must be unpublished, non-musical one-acts between 10-40 minutes in length (10-page minimum, not counting the Title Page or Cast of Characters page). A rough rule of thumb is one minute per page, though plays with numerous monologues or a significant amount of action may run longer. It is your responsibility to make sure your play's running time meets the guidelines. (We suggest having at least a reading first—and timing it.)

Previous productions are allowed, so long as the play is not committed to publication with another company or otherwise encumbered. Should an entrant accept a publication offer elsewhere after submitting the script, the entry must be withdrawn immediately from our competition.

While there are no limitations as to genre or subject matter, plays should be suitable for school production and feature one or more youth characters in prominent, age-appropriate roles.

Plays must have two or more characters, and large and/or flexible casts (with relatively more female roles) are encouraged.

Plays must be the original work of a single author,19 years old or younger as of May 1, 2026.

Each author may submit one play only.

Plays must be submitted according to the guidelines in the HOW TO SUBMIT section. Be sure that your title page has ALL of the required information, or you may be disqualified.

DEADLINE

All submissions must be received no later than May 1, 2026. Submissions accepted beginning January 1, 2026.

PRIZES

The Winner shall receive $250 and publication/licensing by YouthPLAYS.

The Runner-Up shall receive $100.

All submitted plays remain the property of the author.

Any plays published by YouthPLAYS will be subject to our standard letter of agreement. The cash prize for the winning play will be awarded after the author has satisfied all publication obligations, including but not limited to signing the letter of agreement, providing all requested supporting materials (e.g., the author questionnaire and a W-9) and returning the play proof in timely fashion.

HOW TO SUBMIT

Submit your play as a PDF in standard format through the YouthPLAYS website "Submit a Play" portal no later than the May 1, 2026 deadline. The website is located at https://www.youthplays.com.

We will identify New Voices submissions through their title pages. All submissions must include:

1. A **Title Page** containing the following information:

- **Title of Play**
- **Name of Playwright**
- **Contact Email** (be sure to use an email address that accepts outside emails—not a school email on a closed system—and that will still be functional if you graduate or leave the school)
- The following statement: **I attest that I am 19 or under as of May 1, 2026.**
- **Teacher's Name** (in the case of home school entrants, you may use the name of a parent/guardian)
- **Name of School/Organization**
- **Teacher's Contact Email** (parent/guardian in the case of home-schooled students)
- **School Contact Phone Number** (i.e., the school phone number or a parent's cell phone if you are home schooled)

2. A **Cast of Characters Page** immediately following the title page.

3. The **script** itself, in standard format, should begin on the next page. **All scripts must have page numbers** (you don't need to number the title page, Cast of Characters page or the first page of the script itself).

4. Scripts must be a **minimum of 10 pages** (not counting the Title Page or Cast of Characters Page) in standard format, 12-point font and **run no longer than 40 minutes (**we recommend no more than 35-40 pages).

Scripts that fail to follow the submission directions may be disqualified at the sole discretion of YouthPLAYS.

WINNERS ANNOUNCED

Late fall 2026 or early winter 2027. Winners will be announced via email and on the YouthPLAYS website. Additional entrants may be designated honorable mention for outstanding writing.

Delays in decisions and notifications, however, can happen. We thank you in advance for your patience and for not following up, so that we can focus on completing the process rather than answering emails. Rest assured that we will contact everyone who submits once we've made our final determinations.

YouthPLAYS reserves the right not to designate a winning or runner-up entry should the judges feel that no entries are sufficiently meritorious. Prizes will be awarded upon completion of all publication obligations, where applicable.