

Program Name: Playwriting Workshop

Artist: Frank Higgins

Special Requirements:

TV and VCR in classroom.

Special Points of Interest:

This workshop is designed for students in grades 5-12. Frank also offers a poetry workshop through KCYA for grades 3-12.

Other programs by this artist:

[-Poetry Workshop](#)

Workshop Description

Teaching artist Frank Higgins is a poet and playwright whose works have been seen across the country. He has taught creative writing classes in playwriting and poetry at all educational levels and has been a recipient of grants from the National Endowment for the Arts and the Missouri Arts Council.

Frank's playwriting workshop introduces the principles of dramatic writing which, with small adjustments, also apply to screenwriting and fiction writing. Students will learn that the way actors and writers approach a script and characters lends itself to enhanced study in literature class.

Frank introduces the basic

elements needed for dramatic writing: Conflict (what does each character want and what obstacles get in the way?); High Stakes (why does it matter?); and Visuals (how is the story told through images?) He also explains styles of presentation, such as "hidden thoughts" or "alter ego". Students will work in groups to choose subject matter and style, then write and perform a scene.



Educational Objectives & Standards

Students will:

- Be introduced to the basic structure and requirements of dramatic writing
- Gain insight into how plays, movies and novels are constructed

Theater:

- Articulates the meanings constructed from one's own and others' dramatic performances
- Constructs imaginative scripts that convey story and meaning to an audience



Artist Bio: Jamie Root



List of Resources:

Books:

The Best Stage Scenes of 1995

by Jocelyn A. Beard
Smith & Kraus (April 1, 1996)
ISBN: 1575250152

Playwriting In Process : Thinking and Working Theatrically

by Michael Wright
Heinemann Publishing
(August 4, 1997)
ISBN: 0435070347

The Art & Craft of Playwriting

by Jeffrey Hatcher
Story Press Books (March 1, 2000)
ISBN: 1884910467

Contact KCYA for more
information about this and
other programs

816.531.4022
KCYA.org

Frank Higgins is the author of "The Sweet By 'n' By" which was produced with Tony-winner Blythe Danner and Oscar-winner Gwyneth Paltrow, and "Black Pearl Sings!" which was produced with Tony-winner Tonya Pinkins. His plays have been seen in New York, and at the Williamstown Theater Festival, the Old Globe Theatre, Ford's Theater in Washington, DC, Northlight Theatre in Chicago, San Jose Repertory Theatre, Kansas City Repertory Theater, Inter-Act Theater in Philadelphia, Horizons Theater in Atlanta, and many other places. Among his other plays are "WMKS:

Where Music Kills Sorrow," "Gunplay," and "Miracles." Several scenes from "Gunplay" were read on Capitol Hill just before Congress passed the 'Brady Bill.' He has also written several plays for young audiences, including "Anansi the Spider and The Middle Passage" which had a national tour and will be produced in Feb of 2013 at Union Station by Theatre for Young America. His play "The Country of the Blind" appeared at the Coterie. He is the author of two books of poetry, and two books of haiku, and teaches playwriting at the University of Missouri-Kansas City.

Vocabulary

Abstract: apart from concrete existence; theoretical.

Antagonist: the person who gets in the way of the main character's goal.

Concrete: tangible or real.

Conflict: a clash between characters whose needs and wants bring them into opposition with each other.

Protagonist: the main character.

Spectacle: the visual aspects of a play.

Sub-Text: a theme or idea expressed beyond the literal meaning of the text.

Text: the words or wording of something written or printed.

Post-Workshop Activities

1. Keep your students writing plays! Have them prepare outlines for possible scripts, focusing on conflict and high stakes outcomes. Remind students to write about what they know best.
2. Collaborate with the Theatre Class to observe scenes from a play they are rehearsing. Ask your students to deconstruct the scenes, identifying the elements of the play as described by Mr. Higgins.
3. Contact the Kansas City Repertory Theatre, the Coterie, Theatre for Young America, or another local theatre for their season brochure. Plan a class trip to a student matinee, or encourage your students to attend an evening performance.