



Make
Your
Own
Musicals

Mini Masterclass Booklet

We've created this booklet, filled with useful pages to help you get started on your musical storytelling journey. You'll learn the basics of narrative, character, structure and lyric-writing.

After you've finished, why not have a go at putting your skills into action by purchasing one of our musical activity packs and writing your own musical?

Character Building

In order for a character to be interesting to an audience, they need to be rounded with their own personality, likes, dislikes and a **'want'**.

What is a 'want'?

A want is what drives your character to do things within a play or musical. It is often a big dream or future plan. (e.g. - I want to fall in love with someone or I want to be rich).

These wants then help us to create a character's behaviour. For example, if your character wants love, they may flirt with everyone they meet. Or if they want money, they may steal from their friends even if they know it is wrong.

Nobody's Perfect!

Just like humans, characters aren't perfect. They have flaws which they have to fight and overcome. But this struggle is what makes a character's journey interesting to an audience.

Sometimes it is what the character wants that leads to change in the story. Other times it is the change in the story that causes them to want something new.

As well as overcoming their own flaws, characters sometimes have to overcome **obstacles** such as an impossible task or even other characters. Often, an obstacle can be another character that wants something different to what your main character wants.

Sometimes, by the end of this story, not every character overcomes their obstacles and the story ends with characters not getting what they want. But, sometimes it is just as interesting to see a character realise that they don't need what they had originally wanted.

Character



Obstacle

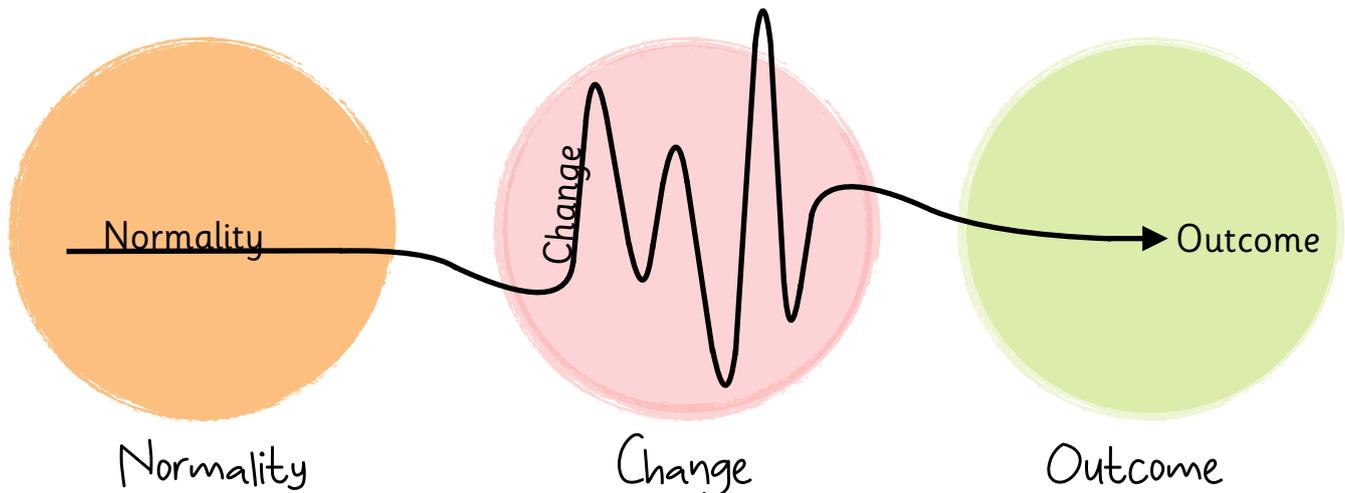


Goal

Storytelling Basics

Musical theatre is all about storytelling, through words, songs, music and sometimes dance! Below you will find some useful advice about storytelling, structure and writing which will help you tell your musical in the most interesting way possible.

All stories have three parts. It's not just 'start', 'middle' and 'end' but 'normality', 'change' and 'outcome'.



A character is happy, sad or bored with how their life usually is.

Something extremely exciting or terrible happens, which the character has to deal with.

Their life is changed forever, for better or for worse.

- The exciting and interesting part of a story is always CHANGE.
- This is because in this part, the characters are most ACTIVE.
- We don't mean active in terms of running, but fighting and thinking, actually DOING something to change their life.
- Nobody wants to see someone who accepts that their life is bad, we want to see them fight to change it.

This structure of storytelling has been known about for thousands of years. It is not invented but is something that is fundamental to all of the stories we tell.

What's most important to remember is the idea that 'drama is what happens to a normal character on a strange day'.

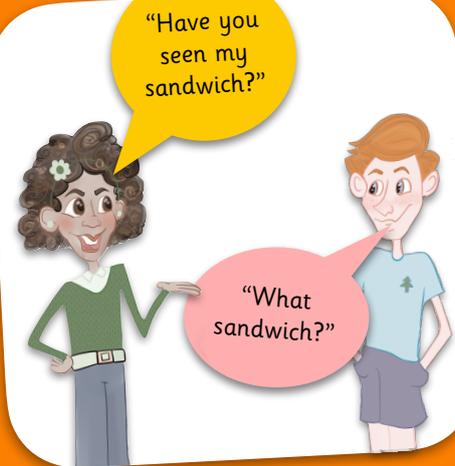
Script Writing

The script in a musical is called '**the book**'. The book is made up of scenes that link together, along with the songs to tell the story of the characters.

Not all scenes have talking in them, because stories can also be told through movement, stage directions and of course, song. However, most scenes include some kind of speech in them.

Dialogue is a written down conversation between two or more characters.

This is the type of speech used mainly in theatre because not only does it help to describe events, but you get to see how characters interact with each other and their relationships. You can also describe the world around you and talk about your opinions and feelings.



An **internal monologue** is something a character can say but that no one else with them hears. The audience can hear it but it isn't spoken to them directly. It is a character's internal thoughts, like a conversation between them and their brain.

Narration is when a character speaks directly and openly to the audience. It is usually a description of events happening in a story. There is sometimes a special character called a narrator who does this.

Speaking directly to the audience is called breaking the fourth wall (the fourth wall is the invisible wall between a stage and the audience). If there is a narrator, they often know more about what is going on than the other characters.

"Once upon a time...there was a sandwich!"



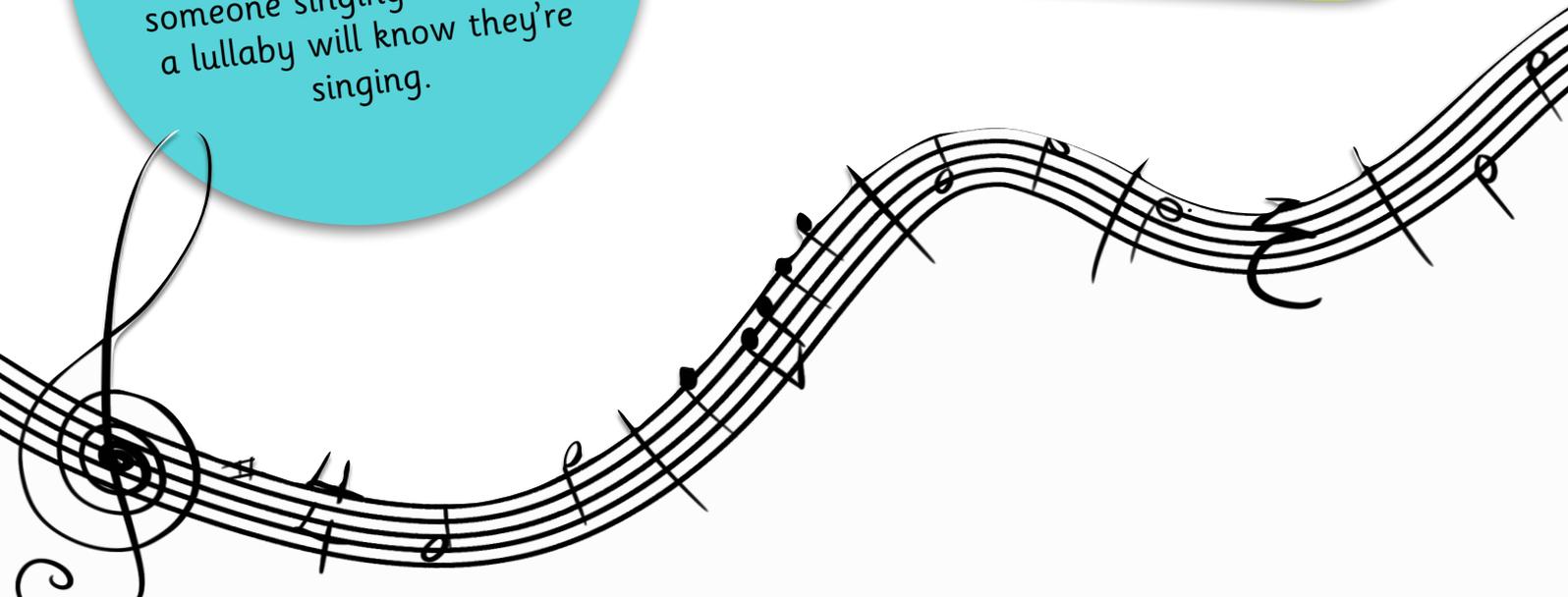
Why Characters Sing

When a character needs to express something that cannot be expressed in speech, they can sing a song. A song is less realistic but just as truthful as a scene, and allows us to know what a character thinks and feels.

Songs are stylised, which means they are not like real life. People tend not to break into song in real life but they often have thoughts and ideas which are difficult to put into words. It is in moments like this that songs are brilliant.

There are some types of song where the characters don't know they are singing and some when they do.

For example - someone singing a song declaring their love won't know that they're singing. But someone singing their baby a lullaby will know they're singing.



Song Structure

Songs are built of sections: verses, choruses and bridges.

Verse

A **verse** is where new ideas are sung about.

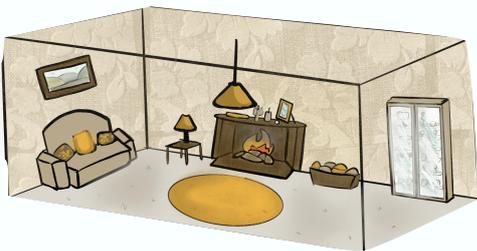
Chorus

A **chorus** is where the main idea of the song is repeated.

Bridge

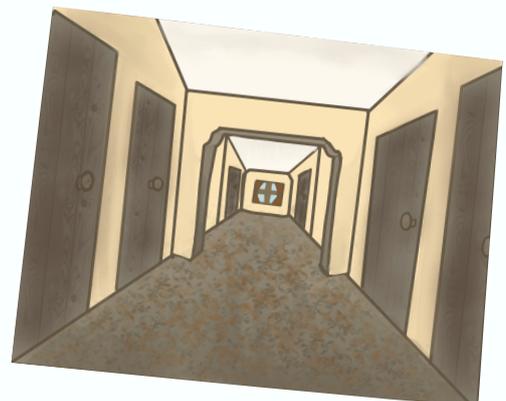
A **bridge** is when a new tune is introduced with new thoughts or information.

Songs can be used for many different reasons and there are many different types of song. It can be useful to imagine two different main types of song: rooms and corridors.



'Room' songs are when a character stays in one state of mind or place, but explores their circumstances or the 'room' around in them in great detail.

'Corridor' songs are when a character's thoughts move from one place to another. They end the song with different ideas and conclusions to when they started.



Lyric Writing

The words in a song are called **lyrics**. The words still come from characters, however they are they are often more poetic and heightened.

In a song, lyrics are supported by music and the two help each other to better express ideas and feelings.

Like poetry, not all lyrics rhyme but a lot of them do. Here are two of the structures used in most songs.

Rhyming Couplet (AABB)

A **rhyming couplet** is two rhyming lines that come one after the other

Twinkle, twinkle, little **star**,
How I wonder what you **are!**
Up above the world so **high**,
Like a diamond in the **sky**.

Alternate Rhyme (ABAB)

An **alternate rhyme** is a set of four lines rhyme and the second and fourth lines rhyme

Roses are **red**,
Violets are **blue**.
I'm out of my **head**
While thinking of **you**.

Why not try making some other rhyme patterns based on these?

REMEMBER!

Lyrics don't have to rhyme but using it can help to emphasise important words or phrases and generally, it sounds nice.

Feel free to use our rhyming sheet and example lyrics at the back of our activity packs to help with your rhymes and writing your lyrics.