

Scriptwriting Skill Module

Brainstorming

STUDENT OBJECTIVES

- Use brainstorming strategies to generate ideas for exciting scripts
- Become more attuned to inspiration that can be found in everyday life

RESOURCES AND PREPARATION

- *You Try It!* Student Worksheet – The “My Life” Strategy for Brainstorming

Additional Online Support:

- www.holtmcdougal.hmhco.com
- www.BlueNoseEd.com

Teach the Skill

1. Introduce Brainstorming

Begin by pointing out that there is no wrong way to find a scriptwriting idea. Whatever works for a scriptwriter is acceptable. Tell the students that one of the most time-proven methods used by professional scriptwriters is **brainstorming**. Brainstorming is any activity that allows a writer to generate ideas quickly, leaving the evaluation of the ideas for later. The point of brainstorming is to turn off one’s internal censor, and thereby come up with as many writing ideas as possible. Write the discussion question below on the board. As students answer, write their concrete suggestions and successful personal strategies on the board.

Discussion Question: How can you come up with good ideas for a script?

(Some possible student responses might include: dreams, personal experiences, family legends, etc.)

2. Teach Brainstorming

Remind students that when they are brainstorming, they should let their ideas flow as quickly as possible, without criticizing or editing them. Lead them through one or both of these brainstorming strategies. The first is called the **“Seeds” Brainstorming Strategy**. The second is called the **“Visualizing” Brainstorming Strategy**.

- **“Seeds” Brainstorming Strategy:** Ask: Has anything you have recently read, seen, watched, dreamed, or heard stuck in your mind? An image? A character? A conversation? A moral lesson? A plot point? A good relationship? A bad relationship? As students answer, point out that their responses can serve as **seeds** for a script.
- **Growing a Seed:** Draw the following **story chart** on the board, filling in the headings and the first example. Then have students volunteer their own seeds. As a class, come up with characters and plotlines that grow from the students’ seeds. Point out that every seed can give rise to any number of characters and plotlines.

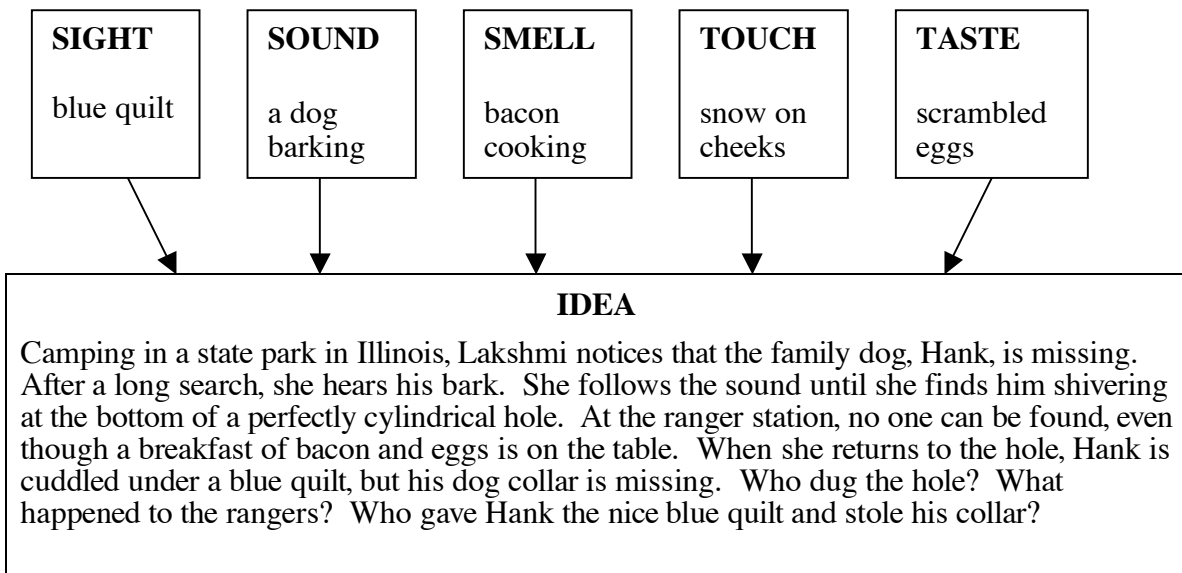
EXAMPLE

| Seed | Characters | Plotline |
|--|--|---|
| Overheard conversation: “Since he got that great job, he’s not the same person.” | Tony, an ambitious young attorney; Maria, his kindergarten-teacher wife; their son Patrick; Tony’s father, who works as a landscaper; Tony’s old pals from the neighborhood. | To get a promotion, Tony aids in a lawsuit that would allow a large weapons manufacturer to build a new plant on the grounds of a beloved neighborhood park. In Tony’s personal life, as he becomes more wealthy, his family relationships suffer, and he must choose between his old |

| | | |
|--|--|------------------------|
| | | life and his new life. |
| | | |
| | | |
| | | |

- **“Visualizing” Brainstorming Strategy:** Draw the following **sensory language diagram** on the board, filling in just the headings. Ask students to help you fill in the “five senses” boxes at the top of the diagram. Then, based upon the example below, have them pick some or all of the images from the “five senses” to create a script idea!

EXAMPLE



3. Apply Brainstorming: Hand out “Brainstorming: The ‘My Life’ Strategy.” This is an individual exercise, so give the students time to work through it. After they are done, have them make a list of ideas that they came up with that they would like to write about in the future.

QUICK CHECK Ask students to identify and explain the “Seeds” and “Visualizing” methods of brainstorming. Make sure that they can use the “Seeds” method on their own, to identify an interesting

idea out of which to grow characters and narrative. Also make sure that they can use the Visualizing method on their own, to build a narrative upon sensory details.

YOU TRY IT!

Brainstorming: The “My Life” Strategy

GOAL

Brainstorming is the best way to generate ideas for scriptwriting. By allowing images and ideas to flow freely, you will discover the exact things you want to write about. By tapping into your own experiences, you can dig out the emotions and situations that will help your scripts stand out in the Blue Nose Scriptwriting Contest.

DIRECTIONS

“My Life” Strategy for Brainstorming

DIRECTIONS Which categories from the list below appeal to you the most? Choose three ideas. Write each idea in a box. Under each idea, list events, feelings, or images from your life that might serve as a springboard for a character, plotline, other elements for a script. If you don’t see a category you like, feel free to make up your own. After you have brainstormed a few ideas, circle the idea that appeals to you the most.

| IDEA CATEGORIES | | | | | |
|-----------------|-----------|------------|--------------|------------------|--------|
| Family | Free Time | Sports | Music/Movies | Friends | School |
| Nature | Pets | Fitting In | World Events | What I Love/Hate | Travel |

| Ideas from My Life | | |
|--|--|--|
| Idea Category 1: _____. | Idea Category 2: _____. | Idea Category 3: _____. |
| Brainstorm Characters from this Category: | Brainstorm Characters from this Category: | Brainstorm Characters from this Category: |
| Brainstorm Plotlines from this Category: | Brainstorm Plotlines from this Category: | Brainstorm Plotlines from this Category: |

| | | |
|--|--|--|
| Brainstorm Other Elements (Locations, Styles, Dialogue, Etc.) from this Category: | Brainstorm Other Elements (Locations, Styles, Dialogue, Etc.) from this Category: | Brainstorm Other Elements (Locations, Styles, Dialogue, Etc.) from this Category: |
|--|--|--|

Self-Check

Look back over the ideas you have brainstormed, based upon actual events, people, and situations from your life. Circle the ones that are the most striking to you. Transfer these ideas to a different sheet of paper, and start constructing a script that uses them. Remember, any time you get stuck, just go back through the brainstorming process again!