

ALEX BROUN PLAYWRITING MASTERCLASS

COURSE TUTOR: ALEX BROUN ©
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The secret to writing a good ten-minute play

1. **There are no secrets** – the secret to writing a good ten minute play is the same as writing a good play of any length. Strong characters, interesting situation/story and good dialogue. You should also think about theatricality – what makes your play need to be performed on stage and dramatic tension – which is usually caused by bringing characters into conflict.
2. **Why should I care ?** – Ask yourself why the audience should care about your story, your characters and pay. What makes it special ? What makes it different ? What makes it stand out from the hundreds of plays, movies and TV shows the audience will see every year.
3. **Don't submit your first draft** – Like any good play, a ten minute play takes time to get right. Don't think just cause it's a ten minute play you can whip it up quickly and it will be right. Write a first draft – put it away for a week or two, get some feedback (from a number of sources), have a reading. Then write a second draft, then a third draft. Keep going until the play is as good as you can possibly make it – and every word is important – then you can submit it to Short + Sweet. Be flexible, listen to feedback. It might make your play better.
4. **Don't give up** – It's very rare that you'll write a play perfect the first time. An example of this is my play "10,000 cigarettes". Just because your first draft isn't as good as you want it to be – the idea for the play may still be good. So keep working on the play. Don't throw it away just because someone says – "I didn't like it." And remember – playwriting, like any skill, takes a while to develop – and the more you do it. The better you'll get.
5. **You never know until you try** – Many of us think of writing a play without ever picking up a pen to try. The first step to writing a good play is actually writing something.
6. **Remember : What is the story you are trying to tell** – and just tell that story. It's a ten-minute play. You don't have time for anything that is unnecessary to the story you are telling.
7. **People like characters, story, dialogue** – they are not interested in the message UNLESS you have all those three. If you want to write a thesis or dissertation then go and do that. Audiences don't respond well to didactic theatre.
8. **Write what you want** – don't question yourself. If you have a play in your head just write it. If you love the story/situation – others might as well. Let your plays be your passion.

What else can I do ?

- + **Go to www.alexbroun.com** and download some examples of ten minute plays. It's free.
- + **Read and watch ten minute plays** – the best way to learn is to see how others do it
- + **Write something and get some friends around to read it** – plays are written to be performed not read. The only way to see if a play works is to see it performed or hear it read out loud.