



YPIP

STORY & PREMISE


FIRST UP: **A WORKING MODEL OF A PLAY**

By now, maybe you have scratched at an idea long enough that you know what you want to write about! Here, we'll talk about next steps in your writing journey.

Before you start, click [HERE](#) to read Jessica's *Mermaids*, which is an example of a 10-minute play. We'll refer to it in this series, so be sure to read it!

Now let's use *Mermaids* to explore the idea of story!

ELEMENTS OF A STORY



There are elements you need to know before you can get started – the elements of story. Together, I like to call these things the premise...or the promise. :) You know you are ready to start when you can answer these:

This play is about...

It takes place...

The main character wants... but...

It starts when...

It ends when...

APPLYING THE MODEL ---

Using *Mermaids* as an example, let's answer the premise questions!

This play is about **dealing with a difficult diagnosis, and hope.**

It takes place **on a New England beach.**

The main character **wants to connect with his wife** but **he's too worried about their circumstances to be present.**

It starts when **they first see the ocean.**

It ends when **Don agrees to sit with her.**

LET'S GET SPECIFIC

Topic vs Event vs Theme vs Concept

Let's use *Mermaids* as a model. Jessica's thoughts are below:

TOPIC

What is the subject of the play?

"Grief and hope."

EVENT

What is happening to invoke the play?

"A couple arrives at the ocean for the first time."

THEME

What is the vision, the lesson you wish to impart, the truth worth writing about?

"Hope is possible through human connection."

"Grief is manageable when shared."

CONCEPT

Do you want to tell the story theatrically?

It might be useful to frame your story as a what if statement.

"What if mermaids were real? what would that mean for a couple in despair?"

NOW YOU TRY!

Pick two or three ideas and create a premise!
Pick one idea and identify topic, event, theme, and concept.

OR

Pick an existing play or movie and identify the elements, according to your own viewpoint!

Remember: it doesn't have to be perfect and you don't have to know everything to start. Sometimes the writing process teaches you as the play unfolds, so just start!