



# Tips for a Successful Submission

## How to Use This Guide

This guide is a supplement to registration materials, providing students with guidance on the elements of a successful submission. These elements track to our competition rubrics, and are suggestions and should not be construed as instruction.

### General Guidance

#### Evaluation Criteria

Lenaea celebrates excellence in the theatre arts, and provides educational feedback to students by evaluating their skills relevant to each performance and presentation category.

Respondents utilize a category-specific rubric and a standardized point scale to score each participant's mastery of the different elements of their performances and presentations. At the end of the festival, the tabulated scores are used to confer awards to students.

Respondents look for successful execution of various elements that are tailored to each competition category. Generally, respondents' evaluation is centered on the following concepts:

- **Understanding:** How well does the student understand the piece or project that they have selected? For performances, does the student know the relationships of the character(s) to the world and their environment? For design presentations, has appropriate research been completed to fully conceptualize the presentation and has the script been properly analyzed?
- **Technical Execution:** Is the student utilizing proper technique to perform or display their piece, whether it be singing technique, spoken technique, or visual art technique to effectively communicate design choices?
- **Pacing, Rhythm & Breathing:** Is the student making appropriate choices in the pacing, phrasing, and tempo of the piece performed? Are they utilizing proper breath support to do so?
- **Effective Choices:** Is the student utilizing adequate and appropriate physical movement in the delivery of their piece? For design presentations, are students making appropriate choices to support the thematic content of the piece, and are they attentive to design principals?
- **Overall Success:** Has the student made a personal investment in their performance, including an impactful emotional response? Have they brought their personal perspective to the reality of their character? For design presentations, is there a relationship between all of the elements including inspiration, research, and technical execution? Are performances and presentations polished, leaving a strong impression?

To review the category-specific rubrics used for scoring, please visit [www.lenaea.org/scoring](http://www.lenaea.org/scoring).

# Category-Specific Tips

## Monologues

### Tips for a Successful Monologue Submission

The elements below are important to ensure the success of a monologue.

- **Understanding:** Ensure you understand your piece, including objectives, obstacles, and beats of the character and script. Understand the relationships to other characters in your piece, and the time, place and social environment.
- **Vocal Work:** Speak in a manner and tone that are appropriate for your piece. Use accents only if they can be successfully executed, and use vocal dynamics in a way that suits the piece. Engage proper breath support so volume and pronunciation are controlled and clear.
- **Pace and Rhythm:** Ensure your pacing and tempo match your actions and intent. Create a flow that appropriately reflects the dynamics of your chosen piece.
- **Movement and Presence:** Create a presence that is engaging to the audience. Ensure your choices for physicalization, posture, and movement style match that of your character.
- **Personalization:** The most successful pieces include a personal investment on the part of the actor. Bring your personal perspective to your choices, creating a new and original take on your chosen piece.
- **Cumulative Effect:** Find the right balance between all of the above elements to create a cohesive theatrical vision for your piece.

### Format of Submission

- **Length:** Ensure your monologue does not exceed four (4) minutes, after which time a 10-point penalty is deducted from your final score.
- **Filming Requirements:**
  - Film your submission in landscape format
  - Ensure you are well lit from the front or side, avoiding backlighting
  - Ensure you are close enough to your microphone to be heard clearly
  - Your submission must be “one shot”, free from any editing or electronic modification. You may, of course, film multiple times, however your chosen submission must be free from alteration. Any submissions that have been altered or edited will be disqualified from competition.
  - *When in doubt, try it out!* We encourage you to do test takes to ensure we are able to see and hear your work exactly as you intend us to.
- **File Format:** Your submissions should be in an appropriate video format (.mp4, .m4a, .mov).

## Musical Theatre Solos

### Tips for a Successful Musical Theatre Solo Submission

The elements below are important to ensure the success of a musical theatre solo.

- **Understanding:** Ensure you understand your piece, including objectives, obstacles, and beats of the character and script. Understand the relationships to other characters in your piece, and the time, place and social environment.
- **Diction and Tonality:** Speak and sing in a manner and tone that are appropriate for your piece. Use adequate articulation to ensure your lyrics are heard, and ensure your singing is on pitch.
- **Breathing and Musicality:** Utilize proper breath support throughout the piece, and ensure your breathing within the song occurs in the appropriate places to create phrasing that is musically and dramatically appropriate. Utilize vocal dynamics when they are motivated by your storytelling.
- **Movement and Presence:** Create a presence that is engaging to the audience. Ensure your choices for physicalization, posture, and movement style match that of your character.
- **Personalization:** The most successful pieces include a personal investment on the part of the actor. Bring your personal perspective to your choices, creating a new and original take on your chosen piece.
- **Cumulative Effect:** Find the right balance between all of the above elements to create a cohesive theatrical vision for your piece.

### Format of Submission

- **Length:** Ensure your musical theatre solo does not exceed four (4) minutes, after which time a 10-point penalty is deducted from your final score.
- **Accompaniment:** Musical Theatre Solos must be accompanied by a piano, either provided by a live accompanist or recorded piano track. Karaoke or full instrumental tracks are not permitted. If you need assistance obtaining a piano track for your student, please email [alicia@lenaea.org](mailto:alicia@lenaea.org) and we can provide support in this area.
- **Filming Requirements:**
  - Film your submission in landscape format
  - Ensure you are well lit from the front or side, avoiding backlighting
  - Ensure you are close enough to your microphone to be heard clearly. Your accompaniment should play from an external source that is at equal distance from your microphone as you are to ensure proper balance.
  - Your submission must be “one shot”, free from any editing or electronic modification. You may, of course, film multiple times, however your chosen submission must be free from alteration. Any submissions that have been altered or edited will be disqualified from competition.
  - *When in doubt, try it out!* We encourage you to do test takes to ensure we are able to see and hear your work exactly as you intend us to.
- **File Format:** Your submissions should be in an appropriate video format (.mp4, .m4a, .mov).

# Costume Design

## Tips for a Successful Costume Design Submission

The elements below are important to ensure the success of a costume design submission

- **Research:** Do your research! Ensure you understand the nuances of the play's concept, emotion, mood and period and that you reflect it in your research. Document your inspiration for your color and texture choices, and ensure that your research is well organized and thorough.
- **Script Analysis and Concept Statement:** Demonstrate that you understand the themes, symbols and metaphors of the text of your play. Ensure your concept statement communicates your approach meaningfully and supports your design choices.
- **Visual Communication of the Design:** Provide materials that demonstrate your technical skills in communicating your design. Consider color renderings and other appropriate and effective means of depiction.
- **Technical Drawings and Documentation:** Utilize organizational and design documents to document your process. Consider costume plots, a costume bible, storyboards, quick-change charts, etc, or production photos if your design was realized.
- **Design Choices:** Ensure that you pay attention to design principals (color, shape, texture, space, form, etc.) and that your choices support the thematic content and character relationships of the play. Be sure that your choices address the physical needs of the production.
- **Overall Presentation:** Ensure that the relationship between your inspiration, research, early sketches and resulting design choices are clear. Your submission should guide the viewer through the design process, be visually organized, and be polished and professional, leaving a strong impression.

**Materials:** Students should present materials which most closely show the design process. Supporting materials that would be most useful include combinations of the following items. This is not a definitive list - choose elements that best articulate and document your conceptual approach and process.:

- Brief design concept statement (approx. 250 words) (see below for tips on this element)
- Design research collage (see below for tips on this element)
- Costume bible
- Storyboards
- Color costume renderings with fabric and trim swatches
- Costume plot
- Production photos, if your designs were realized in a production

**Concept Statements:** The concept statement should contain a visual vocabulary. It should communicate the essence of your design approach stated in meaningful terms, against which to evaluate the design decisions you made. It is helpful to create a concise written statement about the play as a way to make your feelings about it clear. Use descriptive words. If you are struggling to begin, consider these tips:

- Make a list of adjectives that describe to you the moods, ideas, and places in the play can be a good exercise. Adjectives such as dark, hard, and gloomy are perhaps useful, but more specificity in the choice of adjectives might lead to better examples. Adjectives such as fragile, brutal, labyrinthine, or fractured conjure up stronger visual ideas.
- Consider using adjectives in the text itself, or that the playwright uses to describe things in the play.
- What are the colors and textures? What feeling or mood does the design evoke? Remember, your concept statement should support the play.

- What do the costumes look like (of the main characters)? What are the shapes, styles, colors and textures used? What about shoes, and hair? Are the garments new, or old? Tattered, neatly ironed and starched, exaggerated, tight-fitting? Describe it in detail.

Remember, all your design choices should help tell the story of the play.

**Research Collages:** Find images that support your concept, including images of garments and clothing your characters might wear. Find clothing specific to the time, location, and status of your characters, including any shoes, hats, and hairstyles they may have. Find the colors and patterns they may wear. Make sure the images you find gives someone a clear idea of what the main characters might be wearing onstage. *Do not* use photos of other people's designs, or renderings created by other designers.

Arrange images carefully, making your main (key) images prominent. Choose a background that helps tell the story. Make sure your images are cropped to feature the elements you want to show, and are cropped neatly and of appropriate resolution. Don't forget to add your name and the name of the play.

**Verbal Presentation:** As a designer, you should be able to communicate both visually, in writing, and verbally. Remember not to give a summary of the play unless it is a critical component of your presentation. Your verbal presentation should include a full slate, presentation of your concept supported by your research images, and how you took the concept and research, and created your design! Be sure to practice your verbal presentation so you are comfortable and confident!

## Format of Submission

- **Length:** Your verbal presentation should be no more than three minutes.
- **Materials:** Your materials will be uploaded in advance of the festival. Provide documentation on the order you would Respondents to view your materials. You will have the opportunity to provide your verbal presentation during your Respondent session.

## Set Design

### Tips for a Successful Set Design Submission

The elements below are important to ensure the success of a costume design submission

- **Research:** Do your research! Ensure you understand the nuances of the play's concept, emotion, mood and period and that you reflect it in your research. Document your inspiration for your color and texture choices, and ensure that your research is well organized and thorough.
- **Script Analysis and Concept Statement:** Demonstrate that you understand the themes, symbols and metaphors of the text of your play. Ensure your concept statement communicates your approach meaningfully and supports your design choices.
- **Visual Communication of the Design:** Provide materials that demonstrate your technical skills in communicating your design. Consider a 1/4" scale color model with figures, or another appropriate and effective means of depiction.
- **Technical Drawings and Documentation:** Utilize organizational and design documents to document your process. Consider a 1/4" scale ground plan and other drafting such as center line section, elevations, and paint elevations, or production photos if your design was realized.
- **Design Choices:** Ensure that you pay attention to design principals (color, shape, texture, space, form, etc.) and that your choices support the thematic content and character relationships of the play. Be sure that your choices address the physical needs of the production.
- **Overall Presentation:** Ensure that the relationship between your inspiration, research, early sketches and resulting design choices are clear. Your submission should guide the viewer through the design process, be visually organized, and be polished and professional, leaving a strong impression.

**Materials:** Students should present materials which most closely show the design process. Supporting materials that would be most useful include combinations of the following items. This is not a definitive list - choose elements that best articulate and document your conceptual approach and process.:

- Brief design concept statement (approx. 250 words) (see below for tips on this element)
- Design research collage
- Preliminary sketches
- 1/4" = 1'0" scale model (with a figure) or color sketches
- Scale ground plan and other drafting sections
- Paint elevations
- Production photos, if your designs were realized in a production

**Concept Statements:** The concept statement should contain a visual vocabulary. It should communicate the essence of your design approach stated in meaningful terms, against which to evaluate the design decisions you made. It is helpful to create a concise written statement about the play as a way to make your feelings about it clear. Use descriptive words. If you are struggling to begin, consider these tips:

- Make a list of adjectives that describe to you the moods, ideas, and places in the play can be a good exercise. Adjectives such as dark, hard, and gloomy are perhaps useful, but more specificity in the choice of adjectives might lead to better examples. Adjectives such as fragile, brutal, labyrinthine, or fractured conjure up stronger visual ideas.
- Consider using adjectives in the text itself, or that the playwright uses to describe things in the play.
- What are the colors and textures? What feeling or mood does the design evoke? Remember, your concept statement should support the play.

- What does the set look like in detail? What do you see onstage? Describe it in detail – is it old, new, dilapidated, peeling paint, granite, formidable, looming, etc. Is it an old and overgrown foggy mossy forest? Is it a neglected run-down cracker-box house build in the 1930's? Be descriptive!

Remember, all your design choices should help tell the story of the play.

**Research Collages:** Find images of architectural elements you want onstage, be it a seaside cliff, a medieval castle gate, a worn-down back porch in Pittsburgh from the 1950s. Find detail elements you may want such as images of architectural details, peeling paint, plants, doors or windows, textures such as castle stones, props, etc. These images should give someone a clear idea of what they will find onstage for your set. *Do not* use photos of other people's designs, or renderings created by other designers.

Arrange images carefully, making your main (key) images prominent. Choose a background that helps tell the story. Make sure your images are cropped to feature the elements you want to show, and are cropped neatly and of appropriate resolution. Don't forget to add your name and the name of the play.

**Verbal Presentation:** As a designer, you should be able to communicate both visually, in writing, and verbally. Remember not to give a summary of the play unless it is a critical component of your presentation. Your verbal presentation should include a full slate, presentation of your concept supported by your research images, and how you took the concept and research, and created your design! Be sure to practice your verbal presentation so you are comfortable and confident!

## Format of Submission

- **Length:** Your verbal presentation should be no more than three minutes.
- **Materials:** Your materials will be uploaded in advance of the festival. Provide documentation on the order you would Respondents to view your materials. You will have the opportunity to provide your verbal presentation during your Respondent session.

## Original One-Act Scripts

### Tips for a Successful Original Script

The elements below are important to ensure the success of an original script.

- **Story:** Your script should have a clear beginning, middle, and end, with a clearly defined objective for your characters. Each scene should move the story forward, creating a strong story arc that entices the audience or reader.
- **Character:** Your characters should be well defined and fully developed, with clear relationships to each other.
- **Dialogue:** Ensure your dialogue “shows” rather than “tells”. Strong dialogue is realistic, conversational, clever, and concise, establishing relationships and moving the story forward.
- **Emotion:** Your script should entice the audience or reader to become emotionally invested, creating an emotional build and resolution.
- **Overall Success:** Other factors that normally contribute to an overall successful script are ensuring that a clear established theme is maintained throughout the piece; establishing conflicts that are resolved by the play’s end; and ensuring the audience or reader is captivated until the end.

Remember, your script must be an original, not an edited version of any previous work. Adaptations of works by others are not eligible unless the adaptation is a substantial reimagining of an original story with predominantly new dialog.

### Format of Submission

- **Length:** Your script should be no more than 35 pages in length
- **File Format:** Your script should be uploaded as a PDF file to preserve your intended formatting.

## One Act Play

### Tips for a Successful One-Act Play Submission

The elements below are important to ensure the success of a musical theatre solo.

- **Understanding:** Ensure you understand your piece, including objectives, obstacles, and beats of the character and script. Understand the relationships to other characters in your piece, and the time, place and social environment.
- **Diction and Tonality:** Speak and sing in a manner and tone that are appropriate for your piece. Use adequate articulation to ensure your lyrics are heard, and ensure your singing is on pitch.
- **Breathing and Musicality:** Utilize proper breath support throughout the piece, and ensure your breathing within the song occurs in the appropriate places to create phrasing that is musically and dramatically appropriate. Utilize vocal dynamics when they are motivated by your storytelling.
- **Movement and Presence:** Create a presence that is engaging to the audience. Ensure your choices for physicalization, posture, and movement style match that of your character.
- **Personalization:** The most successful pieces include a personal investment on the part of the actor. Bring your personal perspective to your choices, creating a new and original take on your chosen piece.
- **Cumulative Effect:** Find the right balance between all of the above elements to create a cohesive theatrical vision for your piece.

### Format of Submission

- **Length:** Ensure your One-Act Play does not exceed 50 minutes, after which time a 10-point penalty is deducted from your final score.
- **Filming Requirements:**
  - Recordings can be in any format you choose, including single camera, multi-camera, recorded Zoom session, etc. We're excited to see what you create!
  - Ensure that sound is audible and sufficiently loud and balanced.
  - *When in doubt, try it out!* We encourage you to do test takes to ensure we are able to see and hear your work exactly as you intend us to.
- **File Format:** Your submissions should be in an appropriate video format (.mp4, .m4a, .mov).

## Questions?

For questions relating to the contents of this package or anything else pertaining to the festival, please email [info@lanaea.org](mailto:info@lanaea.org).