
Dinéyah Drama Festival

30 Social Activism Playwriting Prompts


The following 30 playwriting prompts are intended to stimulate ideas for scenes, characters, and dialogue for writing practice or actual play development. The focus on characters and stories related to social activism including water protectors, MMIW, and land back. They are suitable for individuals or groups. They are color coded to indicate prompts for scenes, for character sketches, for story development, and for dialogue.

Suggestions for use:



1. Print the prompts on paper and cut them into squares. Mix them up and pull one to start the day's writing.
2. Set a minimum time for writing. Smaller time lengths such as 10 minutes are highly recommended to start.
3. Encourage writing without stopping. If wanted, shaping or editing can be done later.
4. Read the writing aloud to oneself or to the class.
5. Consider writing to from a prompt every day to exercise the writing muscle and generate other writing or creative ideas.
6. Create your own writing prompts and share.
7. Write in English and/or in Diné Bizaad to encourage language fluency.
8. Share your creations with the Dinéyah Drama Festival!

Feel free to share these prompts and credit us.


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Write a scene
in which a person or a
community's water is
under threat.




Tell the story of your
character's first time
holding a weapon.




Could be a pen, a picket sign, a microphone.




Tell the story of the first
time your character spoke
up against someone more
powerful.



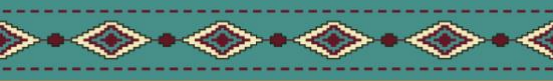
Or you or another family member or relative.





Write a character sketch
based on a lesser known
Diné activist who helped
their community in a
small but profound way.




Could be a strong grandmother, a teacher, a child.




Write a character
sketch based on a Diné
woman activist such as
Kathleen Smith or
Annie Wauneka.




Write a scene
that takes place on a
picket line or during a
march.







Write a character
sketch based on a Diné
water or land protector.


*Who or what is the land to them? Does the land
or water speak to them or they to the land or water?*







Tell a story of a place a
Diné woman went
missing from the
perspective of the
place (land, water,
trees, etc.).







Write a scene
in which a character
shares a traditional Diné
story during a
contemporary challenge.







Write a character
sketch based on a
missing Diné
woman.







Tell the story of your
character's fight to keep a
Diné child who lost his/her
parents within the family,
clan, tribe.







Write a scene
that includes or is
influenced by strong
poetry by a Diné poet such
as Esther Belin.







Create a dialogue
between a present
day activist
character and an
activist character
from the past.







Create a dialogue
between two people
who have a conflicted
activist past and meet
again unexpectedly or
in an unexpected
place .







Create a dialogue
between a present
day activist character
and an activist
character in or from
the future.







Create a character
monologue based
upon an actual
speech given by an
activist.







Create a dialogue
in which two
characters saw the
same event
differently.






Create a dialogue
between two
boarding school
survivors who meet
again for the first
time.






Write a character sketch based on an elder who speaks out at a Chapter House or other meeting.







Tell a story of land back.






Tell a story of alcohol.






Write a court scene.


Who's key to the scene? The defendant, prosecutor, judge, jury member or audience member?







Write a scene of an activist being interviewed by a friendly or unfriendly reporter.







Write a character sketch based on an activist or protector while in jail.







Write a character sketch based on a woman who assists or fights for survivors of domestic abuse.







Tell a story of a sit-in or of the takeover of a space to seek justice for a person or a cause.






Tell a story backwards, i.e. from its end to its beginning.






Write a scene of celebration.


At home, in a courtroom, outside.






Write a scene set in a jail cell.

Between prisoners, between prisoner and guard, or?





Write a character sketch based on a food or food way protector.

