

# A Comprehensive Guide to Empowering Young People to Create Plays that Transform the World

Theatre has the power to transform lives. It can educate, inspire, and empower people to make a difference in the world. For young people, theatre can be a particularly powerful tool for personal and social change.

This guide provides educators, mentors, and parents with a wealth of strategies and resources to support young people in creating plays that address social issues, inspire empathy, and promote positive change in their communities and beyond.

The first step to empowering young people to create transformative theatre is to create a safe and supportive environment. This means providing a space where they feel comfortable sharing their ideas, taking risks, and exploring their creativity.



## Citizen Artists: A Guide to Helping Young People Make Plays That Change the World by Sebastian Barry

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Here are some tips for creating a safe and supportive environment:

- **Establish clear ground rules.** Let young people know what is expected of them in terms of behavior and respect.
- **Be patient and understanding.** Young people need time to develop their skills and confidence.
- **Provide positive feedback.** Focus on the strengths of young people's work and offer constructive criticism in a supportive way.
- **Encourage collaboration.** Help young people to work together to create their plays. This can help them to develop their social skills and learn from each other.
- **Be a role model.** Show young people that you are passionate about theatre and that you believe in their ability to make a difference.

Once you have created a safe and supportive environment, you can begin to help young people choose a social issue to explore in their play. This is an important step, as it will help them to focus their research and writing.

Here are some tips for choosing a social issue:

- **Start with the young people's interests.** Ask them what they are passionate about and what they want to learn more about.
- **Research different social issues.** Help young people to learn about the different social issues that are facing their community and the world.
- **Narrow down your choices.** Once you have a list of potential social issues, help young people to narrow down their choices to one that

they are particularly interested in and that they believe they can effectively address in a play.

Once young people have chosen a social issue, it is important for them to do thorough research. This will help them to understand the issue in depth and to develop informed opinions.

Here are some tips for researching a social issue:

- **Use a variety of sources.** Encourage young people to use books, articles, websites, and documentaries to learn about their chosen social issue.
- **Talk to experts.** Invite experts on the social issue to speak to young people or arrange for them to visit organizations that are working to address the issue.
- **Experience the issue firsthand.** If possible, arrange for young people to experience the issue firsthand, such as by visiting a homeless shelter or volunteering at a soup kitchen.

Once young people have researched their chosen social issue, they can begin to write their play. This is a challenging but rewarding process.

Here are some tips for writing a play:

- **Start with a strong story.** The story of your play should be engaging and relatable. It should also be clear and concise.
- **Develop your characters.** The characters in your play should be well-developed and believable. They should also be representative of the

different perspectives on the social issue that you are exploring.

- **Create a conflict.** The conflict in your play should be central to the social issue that you are exploring. It should be a conflict that is both believable and engaging.
- **Resolve the conflict.** The resolution of your play should be satisfying and thought-provoking. It should also leave the audience with a sense of hope and inspiration.

Once you have written your play, it is time to produce it. This involves finding a venue, casting actors, rehearsing the play, and designing the set and costumes.

Here are some tips for producing a play:

- **Find a venue.** The venue for your play should be appropriate for the size and scope of your production. It should also be affordable and accessible.
- **Cast actors.** The actors in your play should be talented and committed. They should also be able to work well together as a team.
- **Rehearse the play.** Rehearsals are essential for ensuring that your play is well-rehearsed and polished. They also provide an opportunity for you to work with your actors to develop their characters and explore the themes of your play.
- **Design the set and costumes.** The set and costumes for your play should be visually appealing and appropriate for the story. They should also help to create the mood and atmosphere of your play.

Performing your play is a culmination of all of your hard work. It is an opportunity to share your message with the world and to make a difference in the lives of others.

Here are some tips for performing a play:

- **Be confident.** Believe in yourself and your play.
- **Project your voice.** Speak loudly and clearly so that everyone in the audience can hear you.
- **Move around the stage.** Use the stage to your advantage to create a dynamic and engaging performance.
- **Connect with your audience.** Make eye contact with the audience and draw them into your story.
- **Have fun!** Performing your play should be an enjoyable experience for both you and the audience.

Once you have performed your play, it is important to evaluate it. This will help you to learn from your experience and to improve your work in the future.

Here are some tips for evaluating a play:

- **Get feedback from others.** Ask your actors, crew, and audience members for feedback on your play.
- **Reflect on your experience.** Take some time to reflect on the process of creating and performing your play. What did you learn? What would you do differently next time?

- **Set goals for the future.** Use your evaluation to set goals for your future work. What do you want to achieve with your next play?

Creating plays that transform the world is a challenging but rewarding endeavor. By following the strategies and resources outlined in this guide, you can empower young people to use theatre to make a difference in the world.

- **Theatre for Change** (<https://www.theatreforchange.org/>)
- **Applied Drama** (<https://www.applieddrama.org/>)
- **Drama for Life** (<https://www.dramaforlife.org/>)
- **The National Youth Theatre** (<https://www.nyt.org.uk/>)
- **The Royal Court Theatre** (<https://www.royalcourttheatre.com/>)



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