



Summer 2026

Dear **Drama** Students,

Congratulations on your acceptance to GSA! This summer, you will begin an exciting three-week journey that will inspire, challenge, and support you – as an artist and as a person. In addition to reviewing this letter and preparing for the rigors of the program, please give some thought to your artistic and personal goals.

First, it's important that you arrive well-rested and ready to exercise the complete artist in you – your voice, body, and imagination.

Most of your days will consist of studios with the Drama faculty. Studio is where you'll explore monologues and scenes from plays, practice vocal, physical, and improvisational actor training, and create original theatre pieces. Some of the work you'll do will be process-oriented (learning for learning's sake!), and some will be product-oriented (for a final showcase on the last day of the session).

In addition, we will engage with guest artists, as well as participate in cross-disciplinary collaborations with GSA students, faculty, and guests in other art forms. We'll also take school-wide and Drama-specific field trips. If you are interested in pursuing a career in theatre, our faculty will provide you with the tools you need to audition for college programs and professional theaters.

You can look forward to GSA being a captivating, demanding, and uplifting environment where creativity is encouraged. Presume welcome and extend welcome – be open to learning from everyone, and remember this: if the going gets tough, turn to wonder.

We've also included a brief message from our counselors-in-residence:

GSA is an experience like no other, with opportunities to make memories and be part of an arts community to cherish for a lifetime. In preparation for your time with us, please keep in mind a few important points for both your physical and mental health.

- Even though your brain might go into “summer mode” after wrapping up the school year, please know that the 3 weeks of GSA aren't like a typical summer camp. Every day you will work and play hard and, along the way, be challenged and inspired!

- Because our days are full of activity, be sure to try your best to prioritize rest, healthy eating, and opportunities to recharge when you can. Quite honestly, we recommend making these priorities right now in preparation, so it's a smoother adjustment.
- The GSA staff, faculty, and counselors are available to help if you ever feel out of balance while on campus. We're your go-to people to help you find the best fit in our unique community and to help with any adjustments that are needed. Don't wait to reach out because we're there to help from Day 1!
- As it applies to you, don't forget to bring any prescribed medication (we can help with reminders but do not administer), and know that we can help with coordination of telehealth therapy sessions (with your already established provider) while at GSA as long as it's not overly disruptive to your studio schedule.

NOTE - If you have any questions about what to expect during the program, or if you are unable to purchase any of the supplies listed on the next page due to financial reasons, please send GSA your detailed request IMMEDIATELY to gsainfo@kentuckyperformingarts.org. We're happy to help!

We are very much looking forward to working with you this summer.

Sincerely,

-The GSA Drama Faculty:

Darnell Pierre Benjamin, Acting (Chair)
Kristi Hughes, Movement for the Actor

Bill Caise, Voice & Speech
Staylie Grace, Discipline Assistant

TO BRING TO GSA

In addition to the general GSA packing list, please bring the following for Drama studios:

- **One *MEMORIZED* monologue** – The one you auditioned with is fine, but you may share another if you prefer (as long as it is memorized and prepared). This should be no shorter than 45 seconds and no longer than 90. *Please be sure to memorize, since this will be a part of a collaborative project with another discipline.*
- **A journal and plenty of writing utensils**
- **A folder or binder** for handouts
- **If you play an instrument**, we welcome you to bring your instrument with you to GSA! We are looking for ways to incorporate musicality within our work this summer.
- **A computer or tablet (if you have one).**
- **Spending money** – Though housing, meals, room, and board are covered by GSA, you might want a little extra money for GSA merch sold on campus or souvenirs/snacks during field trips.
- **Face Masks/Coverings** – GSA is not planning to require face masks or coverings, but you are welcome to wear one anytime.
- **Neutral black clothing** – *No logos or writing please.* You will need **at least two** all-black outfits. One in which you can move easily, that is less formal (for studio work), and one “nice” outfit, for showcase performances (black slacks, button-downs, shirts, skirts, etc.).
- **Clothing that allows you to move freely** – Your movement will be rigorous. Wear clothes you can stretch, bend, run, jump, roll in, etc. It is imperative that you do not wear clothes that limit your ability to participate fully (no tight jeans, baggy clothes, short shorts, flip flops, sandals, crop tops, high heels, dangling jewelry, etc.). Sweats or athletic clothing that fit well are highly encouraged. **You will need attire that doesn't show your arms and legs, and a couple of t-shirts without logos or slogans, please.**
- **Closed-toed, comfortable shoes.** Crocs and clogs are not considered closed-toe shoes. Also, you may be asked to work barefoot at times.
- **Layers** for air-conditioned spaces - we may be sweating and then sit down in an air-conditioned space.
- **Hair ties, scarves, or clips** to keep your hair away from your face
- **A reusable water bottle**
- **Deodorant! And toothpaste/toothbrush/mouthwash!** Anything you need to coexist comfortably and hygienically in a shared environment with lots of young people! Think ahead on this to make sure you're prepared for three weeks away from home!

ABOUT THE EXPERIENCE, HOW TO PREPARE

THE COMMUNITY

GSA offers a Judgment-Free Zone. Artists are accepted for who they are, what they believe, and where they come from. This community is built on respect, kindness, and open-heartedness. Everyone has something to offer, and your faculty will be diligent in ensuring our working space is inclusive and respectful. Students will be encouraged to express themselves and to give space for others to express themselves. We ask that you show up curious and collaborative for the three weeks you are here.

TO DO BEFORE GSA

1. **Read a play.** (At least one. Two would be great. Three would be fantastic! And so on.) Save & note any potential age-appropriate monologues for you or others in the ensemble. Here's some of our favorite playwrights, though feel free to choose your own full-length play(s):
 - a. **(Classic, old-school)** Arthur Miller, William Inge, Tennessee Williams, Eugene O'Neill, Lillian Hellman, Edward Albee, Alice Childress, Clare Boothe Luce, Sophie Treadwell
 - b. **(Modern masters)** Caryl Churchill, Sam Shepard, Beth Henley, Moisés Kaufman, Tony Kushner, Paula Vogel, Lanford Wilson, Terrence McNalley, Anna Deavere Smith, George C. Wolfe, Steven Dietz, David Mamet, John Patrick Shanley, Theresa Rebeck, Amiri Baraka, Jane Martin, August Wilson, Lorraine Hansberry
 - c. **(Contemporary)** Jordan Harrison, Ayad Akhtar, Annie Baker, Sarah Ruhl, Suzan-Lori-Parks, Ike Holter, Branden Jacobs-Jenkins, Lynn Nottage, Jeremy O. Harris, Stephen Adly Guirgis, Lauren Gunderson, Kristen Greenidge, David Adjmi, Victoria Stewart, Allison Moore, Keith Adkins, Will Power, Charles Smith, Katori Hall, Clare Barron, Jen Silverman

If you can, bring the script(s) with you. The more options we have for monologues and scenes, the better.

2. **Discuss your health plan with your family** - If you have a restricted diet, be sure to make good eating choices while away from home. Likewise, plan on getting good amounts of sleep and, most importantly, be sure to take all your needed medications on their appropriate schedules. In other words, **GSA is NOT the time to experiment with your health!**
3. **From Bill Caise for Voice:**
 - a. Students will need to bring:
 - A current news article that addresses a topic important to the student.
 - A song that is important to the student.

4. For Kristi's Movement Class:

The Picture Exercise – What to Bring and How to Prepare

For our first Movement Studio, please bring a printed copy of a painting or photograph that includes people. It may feature more than one person, but choose an image where one central figure clearly stands out—that is the character you will embody. (We've attached two examples on the next two pages for inspiration.)

You'll be asked to recreate the exact physical pose of that character—down to the hand gesture, tilt of the head, and attitude of the body. If the clothing or an object in the image seems important to the character's emotional life or pose, try to bring something similar. Please don't spend money—use what you already have or can borrow.

The goal is to arrive ready to explore this character's physical life and inner world through their posture, expression, and presence. Please spend some time preparing and reflecting on your character before arriving.

IMPORTANT: Please confirm that you've read the entirety of this letter and that you're aware of all of the information mentioned by emailing Darnell Pierre Benjamin (Drama Chair) at benjamind3@nku.edu. (Please, only use this email to confirm receipt of this letter. All other inquiries should be sent to gsainfo@kentuckyperformingarts.org.)



