

# GSA APPLICANT GUIDE

## Drama



## **I. Program Description**

GSA's Drama program is an intensive acting course with emphasis on development of vocal and physical expressiveness, storytelling skills, ensemble attitude, creative thinking, and promoting positive change through theatre. Drama students receive instruction in voice and speech, movement for the actor, monologue and scene study, improvisation, and creating original works. Drama students meet and study with a number of theatre professionals, attend summer theatre productions, collaborate with other GSA disciplines, and are provided with insights into educational opportunities and career options in theatre. While the program is process-oriented, Drama students work toward a final showcase of monologues, scenes, and ensemble pieces for the final day of the Summer Program.

## **II. Preliminary Round Application Requirements (due January 10th)**

*Submit the materials in this section through the online platform [Acceptd](#) no later than January 10<sup>th</sup>. NOTE: Applicants will be prompted to pay a \$30 application fee when submitting their materials (or \$35 if applying in two artforms). Students on free/reduced lunch may opt to have this fee waived when payment is requested.*

For the Preliminary Round, submit the following (see below for more detail):

- a. Two Recommendation Forms
- b. Personal Short Essay
- c. Personal Question Video
- d. Artform-Specific Questions
- e. Monologue Video
- f. *Optional:* Special Skill Video

### **a. Recommendation Forms (do this first!)**

Identify two people to fill out the following recommendation forms (each person will complete one of the following options: your application must include one of each form):

1. School Administrator Recommendation Form: in this form we ask the recommender about your role as a member of your learning community as displayed through items such as attendance, disciplinary record, and general achievement. As such, this form should be completed by a school administrator (e.g. counselor, principal, etc.), or if you are homeschooled, a non-family member who can speak on behalf of your accountability and/or character (i.e. staff at an organization you volunteer for, youth minister, coach, etc.). This recommender is not directly asked about your artistic skill or potential.

2. Teacher Recommendation Form: in this form we ask the recommender about your abilities as a student and young artist. As such, we encourage you to select a teacher who instructs you in your artform, if possible. We understand not everyone has a teacher in their artform, in which case you may select a teacher in another subject who knows you well. The person completing this form can teach any subject and may be someone who teaches you privately and/or outside of school (if they are not a family member). If you are homeschooled and taught only by family members, you may select a recommender who fits the profile referenced in the school administrator section.

You will enter the names and email addresses of each recommender in your online application, and those individuals will receive emails instructing them on how to complete the recommendation form, which will take about five minutes.

Before submitting your recommenders' information, we strongly encourage the following:

1. Inform them you are applying for GSA and would like to list them as a recommender. Tell them they will complete a short form via email, and that their responses are confidential (you will not have access to them). Ask if they have any questions about GSA and/or your desire to apply.
2. Confirm what email address you should list for them; double check that you have the correct spelling.

Submit your recommenders' information as soon as possible so they have plenty of time to complete the forms prior to January 10<sup>th</sup>. After you have submitted their information, we strongly encourage the following:

1. Tell your recommenders to check their email. The email will come from Acceptd (not GSA) with a subject line that begins with "Documentation Request."
2. Ask them to confirm with you when they have submitted the form – and then tell them thank you! If they have not received the form, ask them to check their junk folder and ensure you entered their email address correctly in the application. Contact GSA if you need to correct an email address.

Note: Once you submit your recommenders' information, you will have to click back into your profile to access the remainder of the application ; Acceptd will refer to this next section as "Application Part 2."

Additional information about recommendations:

- No letters of recommendation are needed, nor should you submit any. Recommenders simply need to complete the form they receive via email.
- Applicants are not be able to review the contents of their recommendations.
- Applicants' parents/immediate family may not fill out their recommendation forms.
- While we encourage you to secure the best recommenders possible within the guidelines listed, know that we rely on your personal application materials (essays, artistic work, etc.) as the primary tools to assess your fit for GSA. Recommenders have the option to choose "unknown" if they are not aware of the answer to a question, and this will not be held against you as an applicant.
- If you are applying for two artforms and using the same recommender(s), they must complete two forms (one for each artform), even if their answers are identical.
- Recommendation forms include your name, but not the artform you are applying for. Ensure your teacher recommender understands your area of interest. If you are applying in two artforms AND using the same person for the teacher recommendation in both applications, keep track of which artform application you fill out first so the recommender knows which email is for which artform (the first email they receive will be for the first artform application in which you listed their info).

#### **b. Personal Short Essay (250-word max)**

Provide an answer to the following question in essay form:

**Describe your personal connection to your artform or creative practice. Why and how is it important to you on a personal level?**

Be open, honest, and authentic in your response – let us learn something about you. Upload this essay response as a document file; type out the question at the top of your response, so the question and answer are both in the document (the question restatement does not count toward the word count limit). When uploading your essay, title the file "Personal Short Essay."

#### **c. Personal Question Video (90-second max)**

Provide an answer to the following question in video form:

**Describe your vision for how your individual artistic work/creative practice can impact others. How do you want to affect others through art, and/or what response do you hope others have to your work?**

- Be open, honest, and authentic in your response – let us learn something about you. While you are encouraged to prepare your thoughts before shooting the video and you may consult notes as you speak, please do not just read off a transcript. We want to get a sense of your personality.
- Record your answer in an interior space that is free from interruptions, noise, etc. Do not edit or splice the video. You do not need to include an introductory frame or any effects such as fades, etc.
- Shoot straight on, leaving the camera in one location. Review the video to ensure you can be seen AND heard. Ensure the video plays all the way to the end.
- When uploading your Personal Question Video, title the file "Personal Question Video."

#### d. Artform-Specific Questions

Applicants will be asked questions about their specific interests in their artform and their level of access to training/classes/lessons in their artform. Applicants can review the specific questions for their artform once they have submitted their recommender information. There are no right or wrong answers for these questions, nor are we looking for one profile of a student over another – rather, we ask these questions to understand the applicant in the fullest context possible.

#### e. Monologue (1 video, max 90 seconds)

Introduce yourself by stating your name, the character's name, and the name of the play. For example: "Hello, my name is Barry. I will be doing the Gentlemen Caller from *The Glass Menagerie*."

Your monologue should:

- be spoken by a character from a produced and published play that you have read entirely, rather than a piece of poetry or prose. It can be dramatic, comedic or anything in between; just ensure it is a piece you enjoy and that you can easily discuss the character's objective (what they want or need during the moment the monologue happens in the play).
- be active (a person speaking about a present situation, not telling a story from their past)
- be memorized
- not rely on props, costumes, make-up or any other technical elements
- not contain material or language that others might find offensive
- be a character close to your own age. 12-25 is a good character age range for most high school performers.

- not require a dialect

More Monologue Requirements:

- Record your monologue in an interior space that is free from interruptions, noise, etc. Shoot straight on, leaving the camera in one location. Let the camera be your scene partner.
- Do not edit or splice your video. You do not need to include an introductory frame or any effects such as fades, etc.
- Review the video to ensure you can be seen AND heard. Ensure the video plays all the way to the end.
- Name your video file "monologue\_last name"

#### f. Optional Special Skill Video (max 60 seconds)

If you choose, you can include a video demonstrating a special skill (e.g. performing a dialect, singing, dancing, telling a joke, roller skating, or whatever else you'd like to share). The purpose of this video is simply to get to know you better; this video is NOT scored or measured against criteria. If you choose not to submit this video, it will not be held against you. Name your video file "special\_skill\_last name".

### **III. Final Round Requirements**

*Some applicants will be invited to participate in the Final Round of GSA Auditions/Reviews, which will consist of the elements described below.*

The Final Round for Drama will include:

- a. Questionnaire
- b. Group Audition
- c. Group Interview

#### **a. Questionnaire**

When you arrive at the main registration table for your auditions/reviews, you will receive and complete a one to two-page questionnaire. This questionnaire may cover a range of topics, including your previous experience in your artform, your favorite artists, and/or your college and career goals. The questionnaire is not a quiz and is not scored, but it is a way for adjudicators to get to know you. The questionnaire may be used to customize questions in your interview.

#### **b. Group Audition**

You will participate in a group audition. The audition lasts approximately 45 minutes. During the audition, you will participate in:

- Ensemble theatre games and exercises
- Improvised scene work

### c. Group Interview

Applicants will participate in a brief group interview with the adjudicators.

Please note: You will NOT perform your monologue in the live audition.

## **IV. Criteria**

*The work of each student will be given an objective review by the adjudicators as to how they fulfill each of the following criteria:*

### **Creative Choices**

An ideal applicant makes original and inspired dramatic choices that enhance the performance of the monologue, scene, or ensemble work.

### **Voice**

An ideal applicant will speak text with clear pronunciation and strong vocal production while effectively using their voice to create meaning (e.g. the voice expresses the character's intentions and feelings adequately).

### **Body**

An ideal applicant exhibits physicality which is true to the character, their intentions/feelings, and circumstance of the story; the applicant makes choices about physicality that are both strong and clear.

### **Dedication to Artform, Growth, and Community**

An ideal applicant demonstrates a commitment to and passion for their artform, as well as a desire and ability to grow as an artist. The applicant can thoughtfully and authentically explain why they want to attend GSA and how they are uniquely qualified to contribute to a robust, diverse community of artists.

### **Ensemble Attitude (Final Round only)**

An ideal applicant works as part of an ensemble collaboratively; supporting consensus based on mutually agreed ideas; contributing input about group process and offering positive energy to the workspace. The actor is encouraging of others and exhibits an understanding of how their role is "a part of a whole."

## V. Tips

These tips are suggestions. They are NOT eligibility requirements for admittance to GSA.

Here are tips for expanding your knowledge of plays and playwrights, which will help you search for monologues:

- First off, know that finding the right monologue for you can be time-consuming and challenging – but you can do it! Schedule out time for your monologue search, in addition to time you put aside for monologue rehearsal.
- Look for plays to read in libraries, used bookstores, or online resources like playscripts.com. If you find a monologue from a monologue book (which we do not recommend) you MUST read the play that it is from.
- Ask teachers if they can help you find scripts (your English teacher may be a great resource if there isn't a Drama teacher at your school).
- Some streaming services like Netflix and Amazon (and especially BroadwayHD.com) have recordings of live theatre performances. Watching these is a great way of seeing theatre inexpensively.
- Research actors who you admire/are a similar type as you – look online for their resumes to see what stage work they have done; read the plays that they have done and any reviews of their performances.
- Research theatre companies with good reputations and read plays they are producing or have produced during the last five years.
- Read less popular plays by important playwrights.
- Go to the theatre whenever you have the chance! See plays!

Here are suggested general tips about your interview, audition, and monologue performance:

- Do not use a monologue that is not from a complete play. If you find a monologue on the internet and the site does not name the source of the play, it is most likely not from a complete work and is not to be used.
- Be sure to **read the play** and develop your intellectual understanding of the words, syntax and meaning of your selected monologue. Develop an understanding of your character's objectives, tactics, obstacles, and word choice. If you do not understand a word, look it up in a dictionary. You are expected to know the meaning and pronunciation of every word you say.
- **Memorize** the lines accurately and thoroughly; rehearse the monologue until you feel absolutely confident to play it easily.



- After you introduce your monologue, **take a moment** to connect with the person/object you are speaking to in a way that allows the viewer to see you transition from you to your character. Do not look at the floor or turn your back to the camera for this transition.
- **Don't rush** the final moment of your monologue. Take a moment at the conclusion of the piece, and then acknowledge that you are finished with a simple "thank you" to your audience.
- Be sure to **support your voice with breath** in order to create a supported sound and enunciate your words when you speak.
- Develop your **physical and facial expressiveness** as a reflection of the character.
- Consider practicing your monologue for your teacher, peers or family members. You may even want to try having a guardian or teacher give you a "mock interview."
- Be sure to **dress appropriately in clothes that are presentable, yet do not restrict your movement**.
- If you submit a special skill video, **do so with intention** and care (just like you would with your monologue video). Share something that lets us learn more about you, your hobbies, and/or your personality, as opposed to something random just for the sake of submitting another video.
- Remember: **be yourself** and let your personality shine through.
- Pay close attention to the adjudication criteria. While GSA students are accepted based on their holistic identity as a young artist, the criteria are the foundation of how your materials are being scored.
- Remember the adjudicators are **very excited to see your work and they want you to do well!** We know it takes hard work to submit this application, and that it can be scary to "put yourself out there." We have faith in you, so put your best foot forward and don't be afraid to show us the wonderful artist you are. You prove a level of dedication just by submitting your application, and you should be proud of yourself.

## **VI. Application Timeline/Deadlines**

### **January 10, 2021 - GSA Application Due**

All applicant materials must be submitted via Acceptd by 11:59 p.m. We encourage you to submit early and not to wait until the last minute, as the application portal runs slowly when many people try to upload at once.

### **February 19, 2021 – GSA Finalists Announced**

All applicants will be notified of whether they have advanced to the final round of adjudication.

March 19 & 20, 2021 – Final Round Auditions/Reviews

All finalists attend an in-person audition/review at the University of Kentucky in Lexington (if health guidelines allow). If auditions must shift to a virtual model, more information will be sent to applicants.

Friday, April 16, 2021 – Announcement of GSA 2021 Accepted Students and Alternates

All Finalists will be notified of whether they have been accepted into the summer program. A list of alternates will also be announced.

June 27 – July 17, 2021 – GSA 2021 Summer Program

**For technical support with the application, contact Acceptd**

Email: [support@getacceptd.com](mailto:support@getacceptd.com)

Phone: 1.888.725.2122, press 2

**For questions about Summer Program, the content and/or requirements of the application,  
contact GSA**

Email (preferred): [gsainfo@kentuckyperformingarts.org](mailto:gsainfo@kentuckyperformingarts.org)

Phone: 502.566.5192