

**‘The school is a stage’ –**

Name: \_\_\_\_\_  
Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**English activation through drama**

**Pre-task: The notice board**



**Situation**

- Your school is planning to participate in the **Hong Kong School Drama Festival** for the first time next year.
- You deem it beneficial for your struggling learners (KS3) to **stage a drama performance** in the morning assembly.
- You are taking note of the criteria for **script selection** as the logical first step.

**In search of a script...**

What makes a suitable drama script?

Underline the critical words in connection with script selection.

<b>Script</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <b>Original/adaptations/naturalistic/stylized works are acceptable; can be written by teachers, students in the schools or collaboratively by members of the team.</b></li><li>• <b>Scripts written by commissioned tutors to the schools are not considered for awards nomination.</b></li><li>• <b>Originality of the script (apply to original script)</b></li><li>• <b>Good consideration of the characteristics of drama on adapting script (apply to adaptations script)</b></li><li>• <b>The theme/topics are understandable by the acting team.</b></li><li>• <b>Complete structure and coherent style of the script.</b></li><li>• <b>Logic and coherence development of the script.</b></li><li>• <b>Proper roles description, tension and attraction.</b></li><li>• <b>Terse lines of plays and match up with the story.</b></li></ul>

**Hong Kong School Drama Festival (FAQ29)**

<http://hksdf.hkas.edu.hk/pdf/1718faq-eng.pdf>

**While-task: The script**

**The Awful Billy Smiff (Brian Jacques)**

A drama script has reached you by snail mail from Dr You-Know-Who.

Read the plot **synopsis** and the **extract** of Scene 2.

- Does the script **satisfy** the adjudication **criteria**?
- How would you **adapt** the script with your **lowly 2C students** in mind?

**Synopsis**

‘**The Awful Billy Smiff**’ takes place in a school, where Billy Smiff, an unruly and rude ten-year-old student, torments the new teacher, Miss Crampton.

The play takes place in two settings; the **first** of which is a teacher’s lounge where the character of Miss Crampton learns that she is the recipient of the class which includes Billy Smiff.

The **second** setting is the classroom itself, where Miss Crampton vows not to tolerate Billy’s antics. During the teaching session, Billy continually makes outbursts and smart aleck comments, and Miss Crampton attempts to discipline him and continue teaching the interested students **a lesson on morals**.

Eventually, however, Miss Crampton is forced to allow Billy to participate in the lesson, which culminates in her learning **a lesson of her own** at the end of it all.

[http://redwall.wikia.com/wiki/Wordplays\\_1?action=edit&section=1](http://redwall.wikia.com/wiki/Wordplays_1?action=edit&section=1)



**Extract**

**[Scene 2: 2C’s classroom]**

*(The door opens and Miss Crampton walks boldly in, as befits one who has attended lectures on discipline, and written essays on the subject.)*

[...]

**Miss Crampton:** Right, today we will deal with proverbs, morals and sayings.

**Billy:** *(Hand up in a flash.)* Please, Miss. I know all about proverbs, morals and sayings.

[...]

**Miss Crampton:** (*Ignores Billy... deliberately blind.*) Yes, Mary, I see your hand is up.

**Mary:** Miss, there's a big fierce dog that lives in my road. He barks at people and bites them if he gets a chance. But he is very friendly to me, because I used to feed him and stroke him when he was a puppy.

**Miss Crampton:** That was very good of you, Mary. I wonder what the moral to Mary's story can possibly be. Would you like to tell us?

**Mary:** My father says the moral is, '*A little kindness goes a long way.*'

**Miss Crampton:** And how right your father is, Mary. Good. (*Writes 'A little kindness goes a long way.' on the blackboard.*) Everybody, read it out once, please.

**2C:** '*A little kindness goes a long way.*' (*Everyone reads except Billy, sulking.*)

**Miss Crampton:** Just time for one last story now.

**Billy:** (*Runs up and climbs on top of the desk in front of Miss Crampton. He jumps about, waving his arms madly.*) Miss, if you don't let me tell my story, I'll jump off this desk and break both my legs. It's the best story in the world, Miss. Please, Miss, let me have a go Miss... Miss... Miss... Miss... (*He is shouting very loudly. Miss Crampton covers her ears.*)

**Miss Crampton:** Billy Smiff, will you please stop shouting. You are giving me a headache.

**Billy:** Well, let me tell me my story then! Go on, Miss, please, and I promise I'll be good for the rest of my life! Honest, cross my heart and hope to die, Miss. (*He climbs down from the desk and crosses his heart.*)

**Miss Crampton:** (*Yielding to the inevitable.*) Oh, very well. But keep your voice down and make the story brief.

**Billy:** (*Pace up and down the room with both hands clasped behind his back. He stops in front of Miss Crampton and looks her squarely in the eye, then begins. As he speaks, he waves his arms about and performs all the story as he is telling it.*) Well, Miss, all this happened about a week ago, last Tuesday I think it was... no, wait a minute, I tell a lie, it was Saturday afternoon after the matinee let out at the pictures.

**Miss Crampton:** Okay, what happened next?

**Billy:** (*Still ignoring her.*) I looked around and I saw these two great big huge muggers running after me. They were shouting, 'Come here Billy Smiff, we are going to beat you up.' But I just ran as fast as my legs could carry me, right down the road and around the corner by the church. I must have been doing fifty miles an hour but they were close behind me, running so fast that smoke was coming from their boots.

**Miss Crampton:** Oh dear. What was the moral?

**Billy:** I skidded around the corner of the crescent on one foot. The sweat was pouring off me. Right down the High Street I ran. People were jumping out of the way as the three of us tore past. I turned quickly and dashed down a little alley between two shops, and there at the bottom was a great brick wall. I could go no further, Miss, I was trapped.

**Miss Crampton:** Oh, no. What was the moral?

**Billy:** *(Still ignoring Miss Crampton.)* There I was, the great Billy Smiff, caught like a rat in a trap. *(Throws his arms wide and looks about desperately.)* Suddenly, one of these twelve-foot high muggers pulls out a big piece of wood and tries to hit me.

**Miss Crampton:** Oh, you poor boy!

**Billy:** *(Carrying straight on.)* Ha ha, but I did a bit of *Kung Fu* and suddenly grabbed the wood off him. Smack! I hit him on the head. I had to jump up high because he was fifteen feet tall. Down he went like a log, Miss.

**Miss Crampton:** Oh, you brave boy! Now, what was the moral?

**Billy:** *(Still ignoring Miss Crampton.)* Then the other hooligan put up his fists and tried to hit me. But I dodged round him and thwack! I smacked him on the nut with the wood and he went down like a ton of bricks, because he was sixteen feet tall, Miss.

**Miss Crampton:** *(Getting to the end of her tether.)* Oh, I can't bear it. What was the moral?

**Billy:** *(Still in full flight.)* So then the two of them were on the floor. They were shouting, 'O mercy, Billy Smiff. Please let us go.' But I didn't let them go. Oh, no! I jumped on their faces, and I kicked them in the bottom, and I hit them with the wood, and I jumped on them, and I did a bit more *Kung Fu*, and I bounced all over them, and I hit...

**Miss Crampton:** *(Suddenly cuts in and roars at the top of her voice.)* Billy Smiff! I can't take anymore! What... was... the... moral...?

**Billy:** Well, Miss, the moral is... *(The whole room is in suspense. The pause is cleverly calculated. Just as the strain is beyond endurance, Billy speaks again.)* The moral is... **'You don't mess with Billy Smiff!'**

*(There is an awful silence. The class pauses a moment, then claps appreciatively. Billy clasps his hands together over his head in acknowledgement. The door opens and Mrs Carmody looks in.)*

**Mrs Carmody:** Billy Smiff — you've done it again!

**Post-task: The think tank**

**In need of advice...**

**Miss Crampton:** I did a course on problem children at college, and I've still got the lecture notes and essays.

**Mr Cunningham:** Marvellous. But Billy Smiff is a special case.

*'A little kindness goes a long way'* – Miss Crampton – the beginning teacher – needs your help!



**Discussion**

1. **'If schools got nothing fun to do // I would rather break the rules'** – how might a teacher allow 'something fun to do' without risking discipline problems? [Team A]

2. **'Teachers, we are what you teach // You gotta practise what you preach'** – what are the attributes of an accomplished teacher of English? [Team B]

Teacher competency framework – **teaching and learning domain** (pp. 25–29)  
<http://www.edb.gov.hk/attachment/en/teacher/qualification-training-development/development/cpd-teachers/ACTEQ%20Document%202003%20-%20Eng.pdf>

3. **'Hear my voice that's all I need // I don't want another speech'** – what are **learners' diverse needs** in Hong Kong schools? [Team C]

Teacher competency framework – **student development domain** (pp. 30–33)  
<http://www.edb.gov.hk/attachment/en/teacher/qualification-training-development/development/cpd-teachers/ACTEQ%20Document%202003%20-%20Eng.pdf>

4. **'I will be very firm with this Billy Smiff'** – If you had **unruly** Billy in your English class, what might be useful **classroom management strategies**? [Other participants]

## **Sharing**

5. **‘All along the ivory tower’ (Tinnok Ng)** – having journeyed between higher- and lower-band schools, what do you make of your **career development?**

Choi, T. H. (2013). Autobiographical reflections for teacher professional learning. *Professional Development in Education*, 39(5), 822–840.  
doi:10.1080/19415257.2012.737355

## **Websites**

### **Hong Kong School Drama Festival – FAQs**

<http://hksdf.hkas.edu.hk/pdf/1718faq-eng.pdf>

### **Hong Kong School Drama Festival – Handbook**

<http://www.edb.gov.hk/tc/public-admin/related-bodies-schemes/edu-schemes-fund/drama/handbook/content.html>

### **PIXAR IN A BOX – The art of storytelling**

<https://www.khanacademy.org/partner-content/pixar/storytelling>

