

How to Write a Monologue for a Play

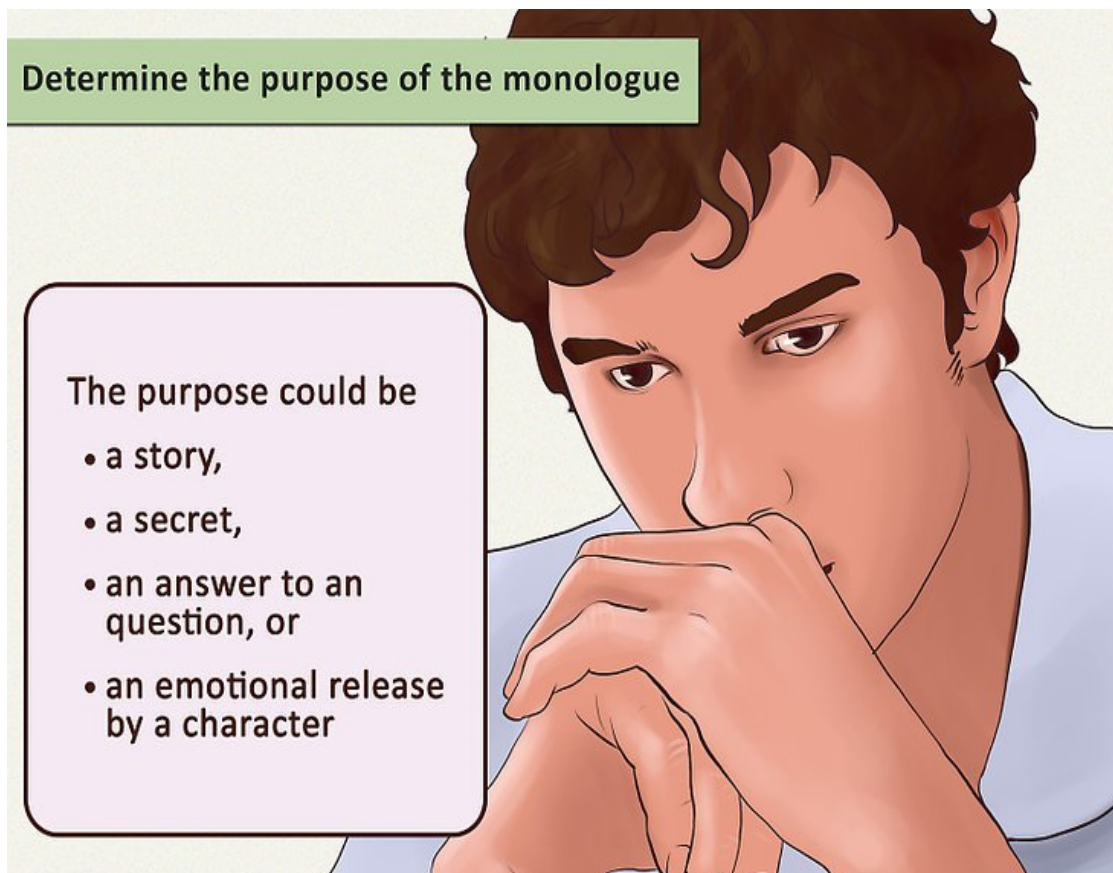
Monologues can be tricky to write as they must provide character detail and plot without bogging down the play or boring the audience. An effective monologue should express the thoughts of one character and add emotion or intrigue. You should start by structuring the monologue so you can then write and polish the monologue as much as you can.

Part 1 Structuring the Monologue

1. Decide the perspective of the monologue.

The monologue should be from the perspective of one character.

- A monologue is where the character speaks on their own to give them a chance to fully express themselves both physically, mentally and verbally.



2. Determine the purpose of the monologue.

Consider what the point of the monologue is, as it should serve a key purpose.

The monologue should reveal something to the audience that cannot be revealed through dialogue or character interaction. This could be a story, a secret or an emotional release by a character.

Your monologue should serve a clear purpose and act as a revelation for the speaker.

- The monologue should add tension, conflict, and/or emotion, and give the audience an insight into the character.
- For example, you need to explain how you are feeling and why you are feeling like that.

3. Decide who will be addressed in the monologue.

You should determine who your character will be talking to or addressing in the monologue so you can frame the monologue with the audience in mind.

- The monologue character may be talking to themselves in a mirror, they may be talking to the audience or be talking to a teddy or object such as something special to that character.

4. Consider the beginning, middle, and end of the monologue.

A good monologue will have a clear beginning, middle and end. Like a mini story, the monologue should also include a clear shift from the beginning to the end, where the character has a revelation or a realisation. Your monologue should begin and end with purpose.

- Create an outline that includes a beginning, middle, and end for the monologue. Note what will occur in each stage of the monologue.
- Alternatively, write the first and last lines of the monologue, then create the content between them to generate ideas and thoughts.

Part 2

Writing the Monologue

1. Start the monologue with a hook.

Your monologue should get the listener's attention right away and draw them in. You want to hook your audience so they are willing to listen to your character's monologue. The opening line of your monologue will set the tone for the rest of the piece and give the audience a sense of the character's voice and language.

2. Use your character's voice and language.

The monologue should be written from the perspective of one character and should feature their unique language and voice. A strong character voice in a monologue can go a long way to adding colour, interest, and depth to the piece. Use your character's voice when you write the monologue and include any slang or particular phrasing they might use.

For example: If your character is American what language/words would they use?

3. Allow your character to reflect on the past and the present.

Many monologues discuss the present/current situation and also reflect back on past events. You should strive to have a balance between reflection on the past and discussion of the present in your monologue. The character should try to use memory to address an issue in the present. What is the technique called when you look back in time and then return back to the present day? A flashback.

4. Add description and detail.

Keep in mind your audience will not have the luxury of seeing a picture of what is happening in the monologue. All they can rely on is the words you use in the monologue to describe a certain moment or a certain detail. You should try to tie in as many of senses as you can so the audience becomes interested in the events.

- I can smell _____. I can see _____. I can taste _____. I can feel _____.

5. Include a moment of discovery.

Your monologue should include a moment of discovery or a revelation. This could be a moment of discovery for the character or a moment of discovery for the audience. Having a revelation in the monologue will give it purpose. For example: *I have realised this makes me feel like _____ because of _____.*

6. Have a clear ending.

The monologue should have a clear ending but this shouldn't be like a speech where you say, 'thank you and goodbye'. It could be a cliff hanger...what is a cliff hanger?

7. Read the monologue out loud.

A monologue is written to be read out loud to an audience so you should test its effectiveness by reading it out to yourself or to a 'test' audience. You should listen to ensure the monologue has a distinct character voice and uses language that suits the character.

Your monologue can be between 2-5 minutes. Please do ask me for help and I will also zoom with you 1-2-1 to see you monologue or we can share it in the group sessions every week.
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Best of luck my budding actors 😊