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MONTANA REP
EDUCATIONAL
PACK

EDUCATIONAL OUTREACH
2011 TOUR



WRITING WILD

THE ADVENTURES OF JACK LONDON

A play by JAY KETTERING

EDUCATIONAL PACK CONTENTS:

Thank you for bringing Montana Repertory Theatre's Fall 2011 Educational Outreach Tour of **WRITING WILD: The Adventures of Jack London**, written by Jay Kettering, to your community. We hope you enjoy this Educational Packet. Please get it to the instructor whose students will be viewing our performance. It includes the following materials:

- **A Biography of Jack London**
- **Notes from the Playwright**
- **A Reading List**
- **Discussion Questions and Writing Prompts**
- **Classroom Activities**
- **Workshop Outlines Used by the Tour Actors on "The Call of Wild: Animal Studies" and "Choose Your Own Adventure"**
- **Hints on Theatre Etiquette**

As always, Montana Repertory Theatre is honored to be a part of your community, your school, and your lives. Thank you again for this opportunity. If you have any questions, please call me at (406) 243-2854 or email me at teresa.waldorf@umontana.edu.

Teresa Waldorf
MRT Educational Outreach Coordinator

WRITING WILD: THE ADVENTURES OF JACK LONDON



JACK LONDON: A BIOGRAPHY

This biography is from a wonderful website, www.jacklondon.net. Check it out for amazing photographs of Jack and his adventures.



“I would rather be ashes than dust!”

“I would rather that my spark should burn out in a brilliant blaze than it should be stifled by dry-rot. I would rather be a superb meteor, every atom of me in magnificent glow, than a sleepy and permanent planet. The proper function of man is to live, not exist. I shall not waste my days in trying to prolong them, I shall use my time.”

Jack London (1876-1916)

“Jack London was a man of adventure, a man of action and only he could have truly conceived such a dynamic and challenging credo as this. And only he, with his great physical strength, his intense intellect, and his turbulent spirit, could have successfully lived up to it. He died when he was only forty, but he accomplished more in this short lifetime than most men could in several lifetimes.”

Jack London's Tales of Adventure.

New York: Doubleday, 1956. Introduction by and edited by Irving Shepard.



Born in San Francisco in 1876 Jack London grew up in a world witnessing the settlement of the last frontier.

Gone forever were the proud days of the pioneer. The country was beset with economic and cultural changes that for decades were to play havoc with the traditional American way of life. It was a world in transition. The easygoing days of an economy dominated by agriculture were being replaced by the world of machine, the factory, and the financial titan. America in the late 1800s was a battleground for unscrupulous tycoons and robber barons. The Far West was torn apart by the struggles of the big railroad interests. Financial panics followed one after the other as the “Big Four” plotted and conspired to gain more money and power. The economy remained in a state of flux. And the people were the pawns.

The memory of Jack London’s early life was etched and scarred by the bitterness of poverty. His family was continually on the move to find subsistence. At the age of ten the boy was on the street selling newspapers to supplement the family’s meager income. For fourteen years thereafter — until his first writing success at twenty-four — life was one vicious, downward cycle of toil, escape, toil, escape, toil. He became a “work beast” laboring in a cannery, a jute mill, a laundry, and shoveling coal in a power station. He worked for ten cents an hour, thirteen to fourteen hours a day, six and seven days a week. Is it any wonder that he saw life in terms of man’s unending struggle against

a ruthless nature? Is it any wonder that he saw in socialism a chance for the salvation of others as lost as he had once been? Is it any wonder that he hungered for knowledge and success that would lift him above the degrading plain of poverty? Look, then, to the formative years for a clue to the life and works of Jack London. There you will see the birth of that indomitable spirit which could eventually lead him only to a philosophy of individualism. In his heart and sympathies Jack London was a socialist; he could not forget the sufferings of his past. But in his mind and actions he struggled — he was an individualist — he could not forget his achievements. Throughout his life he struggled valiantly to reconcile these conflicting philosophies. While he did not live long enough to begin the autobiography his notes indicate he planned to write, we are fortunate that so much of his writing is autobiographical in nature.

Oyster pirate, deep-sea sailor, hobo, Alaskan prospector, all these incidents in his life make fascinating reading. But most important of all Jack London’s adventures was his struggle to become a writer. Without guidance, writing under almost impossible circumstances, for the most part educating himself, and faced with continual economic hardship, he stumbled and groped for three long years in the literary wilderness. In the beginning the rejection slips followed one another with monotonous regularity. Had he been a weaker man he might have succumbed. Certainly the odds were against him. But at the end of his three-year travail success was his. He had conquered his Everest; the world was at his feet!

He became the highest paid, most popular novelist and short story writer of his day. He wrote passionately and prolifically about the great questions of life and death, the struggle to survive with dignity and integrity, and he wove these elemental ideas into stories of high adventure based on his own firsthand experiences at sea, or in Alaska, or in the fields and factories of California. As a result, his writing appealed not to the few, but to millions of people all around the world.

Along with his books and stories, however, London was widely known for his personal exploits. He was a celebrity, a colorful and controversial personality who was often in the news. Generally fun-loving and playful, he could also be combative, and was quick to side with the underdog against injustice or oppression of any kind. He was a fiery and eloquent public speaker, and much sought after as a lecturer on socialism and other economic and political topics. Despite his avowed socialism, most people considered him a living symbol of rugged individualism, a man whose fabulous success was due not to special favor of any kind, but to a combination of unusual mental ability and immense vitality.

WRITING WILD: THE ADVENTURES OF JACK LONDON



JACK LONDON: A BIOGRAPHY (CONTINUED)

Strikingly handsome, full of laughter, restless and courageous to a fault, always eager for adventure on land or sea, he was one of the most attractive and romantic figures of his time. He ascribed his literary success largely to hard work—to “dig,” as he put it. He tried never to miss his early morning 1,000-word writing stint, and between 1900 and 1916 he completed over fifty books, including both fiction and non-fiction, hundreds of short stories, and numerous articles on a wide range of topics. Several of the books and many of the short stories are classics of their kind, well thought of in critical terms and still popular around the world. Today, almost countless editions of his writings are available and some of them have been translated into as many as seventy different languages.

In addition to his daily writing stint and his commitments as a lecturer, London also carried on voluminous correspondence (he received some 10,000 letters per year), read proofs of his work as it went to press, negotiated with his various agents and publishers, and conducted other business such as overseeing construction of his custom-built sailing ship, the *Snark* (1906-1907), construction of Wolf House (1910-1913), and the operation of his beloved Beauty Ranch, which became a primary preoccupation after about 1911. Along with all this, he had to continually generate new ideas for books and stories and do the research so necessary to his writing.

Somehow, he managed to do all these things and still find time to go swimming, horseback riding, or sailing on San Francisco Bay. He also spent 27 months cruising the South Pacific in the *Snark*, put in two tours of duty as an overseas war correspondent, traveled widely for pleasure, entertained a continual stream of guests whenever he was at home in Glen Ellen, and did his fair share of barroom socializing and debating. In order to fit all this living into the narrow confines of one lifetime, he often tried to make do with no more than four or five hours of sleep at night.

Jack was first attracted to the Sonoma Valley by its magnificent natural landscape, a unique combination of high hills, fields and streams, and a beautiful mixed forest of oaks, madrones, California buckeyes, Douglas Fir, and redwood trees. He didn't care that the farm was badly run-down. Instead, he reveled in its deep canyons and forests, its year-round springs and streams. “All I wanted,” he said later, “was a quiet place in the country to write and loaf in and get out of Nature that something which we all need, only the most of us don't know it.” Soon, however, he was busy buying farm equipment and livestock for his “mountain ranch.” He also began work on a new barn and started planning a fine new house.

By the age of 29 he was already internationally famous for *The Call of the Wild* (1903), *The Sea-Wolf* (1904), and other literary and journalistic accomplishments. He was divorced from Bessie (Madden), his first wife and the mother of his two daughters, Joan and Little Bess, and he had married Charmian (Kittredge).

Living and owning land near Glen Ellen was a way of escaping from Oakland—from the city way of life he called the “man-trap.” But excited as he was about his plans for the ranch, London was still too restless, too eager for foreign travel and adventure, to settle down and spend all his time there. While his barn and other ranch improvements were still under construction he decided to build a ship and go sailing around the world — exploring, writing, adventuring-enjoying the “big moments of living” that he craved and that would give him still more material to write about.

The great voyage was to last seven years and take Jack and Charmian around the world. In fact it lasted 27 months and took them “only” as far as the South Pacific and Australia. Discouraged by a variety of health problems, and heartbroken about having to abandon the trip and sell the *Snark*, London returned to Glen Ellen and to his plans for the ranch.

In 1909, 1910 and 1911 he bought more land, and in 1911 moved from Glen Ellen to a small ranch house in the middle of his holdings. He rode horseback throughout the countryside, exploring every canyon, glen and hill top. And he threw himself into farming-scientific agriculture—as one of the few justifiable, basic, and idealistic ways of making a living. A significant portion of his later writing — *Burning Daylight* (1910), *Valley of the Moon* (1913), *Little Lady of the Big House* (1916) had to do with the simple pleasures of country life, the satisfaction of making a living directly and honestly from the land and thereby remaining close to the realities of the natural world.

Jack and Charmian London's dream house began to take definite shape early in 1911 as Albert Farr, a well-known San Francisco architect, put their ideas on paper in the form of drawings and sketches, and then supervised the early stages of construction. It was to be a grand house—one that would remain standing for a thousand years. By August 1913, London had spent approximately \$80,000 (in pre-World War I dollars), and the project was nearly complete. On August 22 final cleanup got underway and plans were laid for moving the Londons' specially designed, custom-built furniture and other personal belongings into the mansion. That night at 2 a. m. word came that the house was burning. By the time the Londons arrived on the scene the house was ablaze in every corner, the roof had collapsed, and even a stack of lumber some distance away was burning. Nothing could be done.

WRITING WILD: THE ADVENTURES OF JACK LONDON



JACK LONDON: A BIOGRAPHY (CONTINUED)

London looked on philosophically, but inside he was seriously wounded, for the loss was a crushing financial blow and the wreck of a long-cherished dream. Worse yet, he also had to face the probability that the fire had been deliberately set perhaps by someone close to him. To this day, the mystery remains unsolved, but there are strong indications that the fire started by spontaneous combustion of oily rags which had been left in the building on that hot August night. London planned to rebuild Wolf House eventually, but at the time of his death in 1916 the house remained as it stands today, the stark but eloquent vestige of a unique and fascinating but shattered dream.

The destruction of the Wolf House left London terribly depressed, but after a few days he forced himself to go back to work. Using a \$2,000 advance from *Cosmopolitan Magazine*, he added a new study to the little cottage in which he had been living since 1911. Here, in the middle of his beloved ranch, he continued to turn out the articles, short stories, and novels for which there was an ever-growing international market.

From the time he went east to meet with his publishers in New York, or to San Francisco or Los Angeles on other business. He also spent a considerable amount of time living and working aboard his 30-foot yawl, the *Roamer*, which he loved to sail around San Francisco Bay and throughout the nearby Sacramento and San Joaquin Delta. In 1914 he went to Mexico as a war correspondent covering the role of U.S. troops and Navy ships in the Villa-Carranza revolt.

His greatest satisfaction, however, came from his ranch activities and from his ever more ambitious plans for expanding the ranch and increasing its productivity. These plans kept him perpetually in debt and under intense pressure to keep on writing as fast as he could, even though it might mean sacrificing quality in favor of quantity.

His good health began to desert him; his strenuous living had taken its toll. In 1915 and again in 1916 Charmian persuaded him to spend several months in Hawaii, where he seemed better able to relax and more willing to take care of himself. He suffered from severe mental fatigue and depression. His doctors urged him to ease up, to change his work habits and his diet, to stop all use of alcohol, and to get more exercise. But he refused to change his way of life, and plunged on with his writing and his ranch, generously supporting friends and relations through it all. If anything, the press of his financial commitments and his increasingly severe health problems only made him expand his ambitions, dream even larger dreams, and work still harder and faster.

On November 22, 1916, Jack London died of gastrointestinal uremic poisoning. He was 40 years of age and had been suffering from a variety of ailments, including a kidney condition that was extraordinarily painful at times. Nevertheless, right up to the last day of his life he was full of bold plans and boundless enthusiasm for the future.

Much earlier he had prophesied, "I shall not waste my days in trying to prolong them. I shall use my time." And use his time he did. As an author, he left behind a legacy of stirring fiction. He had amassed a literary fortune of eighteen volumes of short stories, nineteen novels, seven nonfiction books, and hundreds of published articles, essays, reviews, etc.

Jack London in truth, had used his time well.

WRITING WILD: THE ADVENTURES OF JACK LONDON



RECOMMENDED READING LIST

Call of the Wild by Jack London

White Fang by Jack London

“To Build a Fire” by Jack London

The Sea-Wolf by Jack London

Jack London: An American Original

by Rebecca Stefoff
(A biography for younger students)

Jack London: A Life by Alex Kershaw

(A biography for older students)

THE PLAYWRIGHT JAY KETTERING

Jay Kettering was born and raised in Montana, making him one in a million (approximately). Jay earned his BA in English/ Creative Writing from The University of Montana in 1982 and currently lives and works in Missoula. Local productions of his plays include staged readings at the Missoula Colony of *The Mushroom Cloud Container* and three others, as well as various independent productions. Recently, Montana Public Radio produced two radio plays, *My Dad and Pre-Socratic Thought* and *How I Learned to Tell Time*. In addition to writing for the stage, Jay has written short stories, children’s books, poems, advertising copy, and radio commercials; he has also bartended, painted houses, and sold shoes.



NOTE FROM THE PLAYWRIGHT

What amazes me about Jack London is not so much that he survived fantastic adventures at age 15, as an oyster pirate in San Francisco Bay, at age 17, as a sailor on a sealing schooner bound for Japan, or at age 21, as a gold prospector in the Klondike, but rather the relatively brief time he spent at these adventures in relation to the massive amount of material he was to produce from their inspiration. In writing over 50 books in 18 years, he was just as much a powerful force of nature sitting at his writing desk as the typhoon he sailed through on the *Sophie Sutherland*. And I love that he can take me to places I’ve never been and make me feel like I just came ashore. When Jack describes a fight, I feel bruised; when he trudges through Alaskan snow, I put on a sweater; and when he pulls up anchor, the air around me turns salty. He pushes me into the story in the time it takes to read the first sentence. After the first paragraph, I am no longer looking at the page but all around me at the new environment where I have suddenly landed, confronting the face of a hungry wolf, looking out from the crow’s nest at a fifty-foot wave, or running alongside a dogsled gliding over endless white. Reading Jack is being self-propelled – you must reach out to grip something so you don’t fall off the ride.

~Jay Kettering

WRITING WILD: THE ADVENTURES OF JACK LONDON

STUDY QUESTIONS / WRITING PROMPTS

What is the role of Jack London's mother, Flora Wellman, in the play?

Pick one of the following two characters (French Frank or Broken-Backed Ben) and write about how that character influenced Jack London in the early years of his life before he became a writer.

How does the humor in the play help tell the story of the life of Jack London?

Jack London often used wolves as characters in his stories and novels, often portraying them in a sympathetic light. What are your opinions about wolves, and do you consider them to be sympathetic figures or not?

How do you feel about Old Koskoosh being left behind by his tribe?

According to the play, what difficulties did Jack London face starting out as a writer?

Give a brief summary of Buck's adventures in the second-to-the-last scene of the play.

What is the significance of Jack London's being wrapped in words in the final scene of the play?

What is the role of the Stage Manager when she comes onstage during the play? What do you think her role is in the production when she's not onstage?

What is your favorite moment from the play? What scene do you think did the best job of telling the audience about Jack London's life?

Were there any parts of the play that you struggled with or didn't understand?

WRITING WILD: THE ADVENTURES OF JACK LONDON



CLASSROOM ACTIVITY ONE POETRY

Poetry figures heavily into the play *WRITING WILD* when it comes to telling the story of Jack London's life and his adventures. Have your students write a poem (it's up to you whether it's rhyming or not, or if they write it in a particular style, like haiku or as a sonnet) that details a true-life adventure that they have had in the outdoors. The poems should be long enough to challenge the students (and give them plenty of room to tell their stories) but not so long that they couldn't be written in class, or that night for the next day. Have your students read/perform the poems for each other.

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CLASSROOM ACTIVITY TWO "TO BUILD A FIRE"

Here are two websites, one being the text of Jack London's most famous story, "To Build a Fire," and the other a free audio book of that same story from LibriVox.

Text of "To Build a Fire"

<http://www.jacklondon.net/buildafire.html>

Free Audio Book of "To Build a Fire" from LibriVox

http://ia600201.us.archive.org/2/items/stories_003_librivox/to_build_a_fire_london_blb_64kb.mp3

Below are two classroom activities, both dealing with "To Build a Fire," one which is shorter, and one which is longer and more intensive.

● If your students aren't familiar with the story, you can simply read it during your class time, or listen to the audio book. Since it would take only 30 minutes (at the most) to read or listen to, you could do this activity before your students see *WRITING WILD* so they have an idea of the sorts of themes about which Jack London wrote. Or you can read the story after seeing the play and discuss how *WRITING WILD* treated the subject matter of "To Build a Fire," as opposed to London's original story.

● *WRITING WILD* takes a comic approach to telling the story of "To Build a Fire," but a great classroom activity would be to challenge your students to write a short scene from the story in a more dramatic light. Ask them to pick a section of the story and dramatize it in play form. Since there isn't very much dialogue, lines could be added where the main character talks to himself or to his dog. Students could also approach telling parts of the story from the dog's perspective or use some poetic license and have there be dialogue between the man and his dog. Scenes can be written individually or in groups, and when they are completed they can be read to the class, or if you have time, they can be acted out in class with costumes and props.

Here is an example of a way to adapt the story into play form.

ORIGINAL TEXT:

"The dog dropped in again at his heels, with a tail drooping discouragement, as the man swung along the creek-bed. The furrow of the old sled-trail was plainly visible, but a dozen inches of snow covered the marks of the last runners. In a month no man had come up or down that silent creek. The man held steadily on. He was not much given to thinking, and just then particularly he had nothing to think about save that he would eat lunch at the forks and that at six o'clock he would be in camp with the boys."

PLAY SCRIPT:

(The Man and his Dog enter Stage Right. The Man is bundled up against the cold. They are both cold, shivering, and trudge along slowly. The man stops center stage, looking left, then right.)

Man: Wow. I don't see any other tracks anywhere. No one must have passed by this spot in a month. What do you think, boy?

Dog: (Howls mournfully.)

Man: You said it. Don't worry. Here in a bit when we get to the fork in the road we'll have some lunch, and well be in camp by six. How does that sound?

Dog: (Pants happily and wags tail.)

WRITING WILD: THE ADVENTURES OF JACK LONDON



CLASSROOM ACTIVITY THREE ANIMAL STUDIES

In *WRITING WILD* (with the characters of the Wolf and Buck) and in the “Call of the Wild” WORKSHOP, this year the Educational Outreach Tour is exploring the use of Animal Studies. Animal Studies is a technique that actors use if the role they are playing is that of an animal (for example, the musical *The Lion King* has exclusively animal characters), or incorporating animal characteristics into their character work. Using the technique of Animal Studies, have your students write a monologue from the perspective of an animal, which they will perform for the class while using their bodies and voices as best they can to represent that animal. The goal here is to have your students writing and performing from a very specific viewpoint, much like the playwright has done in *WRITING WILD*.

The following are the four steps you need to accomplish this exercise:

1. To begin with, have your students all choose different animals. If you have a large class, you can have some people be the same animal, but this activity works best with as many different animals as possible. Students can be bears or seagulls or even slugs if they want to! The sky is the limit.

2. Next, tell your students that they will be writing a one-minute monologue from the perspective of the animal they have chosen. The monologue should be a first-person (or in this case, first-animal) perspective monologue where the animal is telling us a story of personal triumph. This triumph can be escaping a predator or hunting down some prey. It can be about finding food during the winter when they thought they might starve or crossing a high, raging river. The subject matter of the monologues should be exciting and active, to give the students plenty about which to write.

3. Your students should also be thinking about performing the monologues as that animal. If someone has chosen a squirrel, ask him/her to study a squirrel in real life and use that information when acting out the monologue. For instance, the student may crouch on his back legs and eat something out of his hands while performing, like we see squirrels do with nuts. But they are not just limited to the physical aspects of the animal. Students can also use the voice. A student who has chosen a bear might deliver that monologue with a deep baritone voice, or a student performing as a snake might hiss out her words. Costumes and props can also be incorporated into performances.

4. Give your students enough time to research, write, and practice their monologues. They should also be memorized, so the performers are completely focused on acting the monologues, instead of just reading them. Set aside part of or a whole class period, and enjoy your day at the zoo!

WRITING WILD: THE ADVENTURES OF JACK LONDON



WORKSHOP ONE CALL OF THE WILD: ANIMAL STUDIES

Goals:

To show students how actors use Animal Studies to flesh out the characters they are playing.

To help students develop public-speaking skills by exploring improvisation.

To introduce students to some basic improvisation exercises and theatre games.

To help students step out of their comfort zones and feel more comfortable in front of their peers.

Supplies:

Furniture: Six chairs (or three benches) and a table.

A chalkboard or dry-erase board.

A trunk of costume pieces.

1 ● Warm-Ups – Sound Circle and 1-8

a. Sound Circle: A way for students to warm up vocally, but also to ease into the workshop. Students stand in a circle facing each other, and the first participant to go makes a sound (any sound). Then the person to his/her right, and continuing around the circle to the right, in a rapid-fire procession, repeats the sound. Then the person next to the first “sound master” voices a new sound, and that sound goes around the circle. It should pass around the circle quickly enough so that it sounds like an echo.

b. 1-8: A way for students to warm up physically, but also start to feel comfortable being silly. Start by counting down backwards from 8 to 1, while (one at a time) shaking out first your right hand, then left hand, then right foot, then left foot. Then you repeat the process, this time counting down from 7 to 1, etc.

2 ● Vocal Exercises – Call of the Wild

This exercise is a call-and-response exercise. The workshop coordinator will make an animal sound (roar, moo, cluck, etc.) and the group repeats that sound. Then the coordinator will ask for volunteers to make their own animal sounds, and the group will repeat those also.

3 ● Physical Exercises – Walk Like an Animal

In this exercise, students will try to move and make sounds like an animal. The workshop coordinator will call out an animal, and silently each member of the group will morph into that animal. Then, focusing just on themselves, the students will move around the space, trying as best as their bodies will allow, to move exactly like that animal. Then each actor, as he/she is moving, will make the sound of that animal over and over. Each actor will interact with her physical environment as that animal, and finally they will interact with each other. If time allows, the workshop coordinator can assign different types of animals in the same round to see how different animals interact with each other.

WRITING WILD: THE ADVENTURES OF JACK LONDON



WORKSHOP ONE: **CALL OF THE WILD: ANIMAL STUDIES** (CONTINUED)

4 ● **Game – Lions vs. Gazelles (Assassins)**

This is the game Assassins, but the assassins are now Lions, and the victims Gazelles. Students stand in a circle with their eyes closed and their heads down. Workshop coordinators pick a certain number of Lions, whose job it is to kill as many Gazelles as they can. After the Lions have been picked, everyone opens his/her eyes and begins to walk around shaking each other's hands. The way the Lions kill the Gazelles is to double-squeeze the Gazelles' hand when they shake them. The Gazelles then wait for a count of five, in no way indicating that they were killed or who killed them, and then they die a huge dramatic death. When one of the Gazelles thinks she knows who one of the Lions is, she can raise her hand and say, "I have an accusation." If the Gazelles are correct, the Lion has to die. If they are incorrect, the Gazelle has to die. The Lions are trying to kill all the Gazelles without getting caught, and the Gazelles are trying to catch all the Lions before they are killed.

5 ● **Improvisation – Safari (Hitchhiker)**

This is the game Hitchhiker, but we call it Safari because we want to focus on Animal Studies. There is a driver and five passengers (or depending on class size, maybe the driver picks up multiple people like on a bus). This exercise works best with chairs or benches (three rows with two people in each row) but can also be done sitting in the same formation on the floor. The game begins with the driver alone in his/her vehicle, talking and driving, the idea being that he is being filmed for a documentary about safaris. Then one by one the driver picks up different animals that are hitchhiking, except that these animals are people who have one distinctive trait of that particular animal (for example, the lion is always roaring, or the fainting goat is always fainting). When the driver picks up his first hitchhiker, whatever trait that first hitchhiker has, they both adopt. So if the first hitchhiker comes in and keeps fainting like the goat, both the hitchhiker and the driver both keep fainting while they are talking and driving. Then the second hitchhiker comes on with a new trait, and now all three players adopt the second hitchhiker's trait, and so on. When the vehicle is filled, then we reverse the process. The fifth hitchhiker is dropped off, and everyone reverts to the fourth person's characteristic, and so on, until only the driver is left.

6 ● **Scene – Two Animals Meet in a Park**

This improvised scene is the culmination of all the other exercises and games. It will ask the actors to integrate Animal Studies into character work in a traditional acting exercise. Starting first with improvised monologues and a simple action for one actor, we will then move on to scenes with two or possibly three actors. Each actor will be given an animal, a location, and an action (in the case of multiple actors, the location and action may be shared). While acting out the scene the actors will need to integrate at least one, though it can be multiple, traits from that specific animal into their character. For example, if the person's animal is a snake, he may choose to wind his way around the stage when he walks, and hiss when he talks. But these choices should be integrated more naturally into their characters, so that they are not as cartoonish as in the previous exercises. Also, costume pieces can be chosen by the workshop coordinators to help the actors get into character.

7 ● **Wrap-Up**

Talk to the students about what they learned from the lesson on which they just worked. Ask them if they have any questions.

WRITING WILD: THE ADVENTURES OF JACK LONDON



WORKSHOP TWO CREATE YOUR OWN ADVENTURE

Goals:

To facilitate the creation and acting out of student-created adventure stories.

To help students identify the basic elements of adventure stories, and stories in general, including character, action, and story structure.

To instruct workshop participants in some of the basics of creating performances and audience etiquette.

To introduce students to some basic improvisation exercises and theatre games.

To help students step out of their comfort zones and feel more comfortable in front of their peers.

Supplies:

A trunk of props to be used in the scenes (things outdoor-related, like a flashlight, shovel, helmet, etc.).

Suggestions for characters, locations and plot points printed out on 3"x5" cards.

If the schools can provide them, it would be great to have some chairs and tables, or any other rehearsal furniture.

1 ● Discussion

Discuss the importance of adventure/rescue stories, the elements in those types of stories, why they interest and fascinate us, and why they are especially relevant to us as Montanans. Talk about story structure, dissecting a popular film to illustrate the five parts of a story: Exposition, Inciting Incident, Rising Action, Climax, Conclusion. Talk about the importance of character, location, and action.

2 ● Warm-Ups – Sound Circle and 1-8

a. Sound Circle: A way for students to warm up vocally, but also to ease into the workshop. Students stand in a circle facing each other, and the first the participant to go make a sound (any sound). Then the person to their right, and continuing around the circle to the right, in a rapid-fire procession, repeats the sound. Then the next person to the right voices a new sound, and that sound goes around the circle. It should pass around the circle quickly enough so that it sounds like an echo.

b. 1-8: A way for students to warm up physically, but also start to feel comfortable being silly. You start by counting down backwards from 8 to 1, while (one at a time) shaking out first your right hand, then left hand, then right foot, then left foot. Then you repeat the process, this time counting down from 7 to 1, etc.

3 ● Game – Mountain Lions vs. Deer (Assassins)

This is the game Assassins, but the assassins are now Mountain Lions, and the victims Deer. Students stand in a circle with their eyes closed and their heads down. Workshop coordinators pick a certain number of Lions, whose job it is to kill as many Deer as they can. After the Lions have been picked, everyone opens his/her eyes and begins to walk around shaking each other's hands. The way the Lions kill the Deer is to double-squeeze the Deer's hand when they shake them. The Deer then wait for a count of five, in no way indicating that they were killed or who killed them, and then they die a huge dramatic death. When one of the Deer thinks she knows who one of the Lions is, she raise her hand and say, "I have an accusation." If the deer is correct, the Lion has to die. If the suspicion is incorrect, the Deer has to die. The Lions are trying to kill all the Deer without getting caught, and the Deer are trying to catch all the Lions before they are killed.

WRITING WILD: THE ADVENTURES OF JACK LONDON



WORKSHOPTWO: CREATE YOUR OWN ADVENTURE (CONTINUED)

4● Theatre Exercise – The Martha Game ... Adventure Style

This is an improv game, the setting of which must be somewhere in the middle of an adventure. One at a time students run into the middle of the space and say, for instance, “I am a canoe.” They then make the shape of a canoe and freeze. The second person then runs out into the space and becomes something in relation to a possible adventure involving the first person by saying something like “I am the rapidly flowing river the canoe is in” and pretending to be the river and freezing. The third person runs out and becomes something in relation to the second person, like “I am the paddle that went overboard in the river” and freezes as a paddle in the river. The game continues until everyone in the workshop is on stage and frozen, whereupon the workshop coordinator will yell “Action!” and everyone will move as the object that he/she is.

5● Improvisation – Freeze Scene

This is the exercise Freeze Scene, but to make it more focused in general, and to get the students warmed up for the final exercise, the actions for each scene must be some sort of outdoor activity. In this exercise, two students come to the front of the group and improvise a scene. What they are doing in the scene comes from suggestions from the group and must be physically active and an outdoor activity (like rock climbing). The students will act out a scene where both of them are rock climbing. At some point either the workshop coordinator or someone from the group will yell “Freeze!” and the two actors will freeze right where they are. Then someone from the group must come up to the front, replace one of the two actors in the scene and stand mimicking the person he/she just replaced, but start a whole new scene that is not about rock climbing. For example, maybe the actor being replaced had his hands up in the air like he was trying to pull himself up, and the person replacing him decides this could also look like someone swinging on a rope, so she begins a scene about two people swinging on ropes out over a lake. The person who is stepping in to start the new scene should not tell the other person what she is planning to do. She should just start the scene and let the other person catch on. This game can go on as long as desired, time permitting.

6● Scene – Choose Your Own Adventure

This final exercise consists of scenes created by the students and then acted out for the group. Time permitting, you can either have multiple groups or just have one big group involving the whole class. The scenes should incorporate elements from both the introductory discussion and the previous exercises. The rehearsals and performances of the scenes should all have the following steps and elements:

- a. Break students into groups depending on the size of the class, and give them a set time they have to rehearse depending on how much time is left in class. Usually for a small group they’ll need at minimum twenty minutes for rehearsals and performances, but of course more time is always nice and may be needed for larger groups.
- b. Review the elements of adventure/rescue stories, parts of a story, and the importance of location, character, and action so students can integrate those ideas into their stories.
- c. Hand each group their location, character, and plot-point cards and tell them they should start rehearsing. Make sure you remind them that all effective rehearsals break into three parts: brainstorming/planning, rehearsing, and preparing their final performances.
- d. While groups are rehearsing, take them one at a time to look at the props they can use in their scenes. Groups cannot take the props with them into their rehearsals, but when they perform they can use them in their scenes.
- e. While groups are rehearsing, walk around and help them out with their scenes, making sure all the groups are staying on task, and letting them know how much time they have left to rehearse.
- f. When time is up, gather all the groups and have them perform their scenes one at a time. Make sure to remind the groups watching the scenes that they should use good audience etiquette while they watch the performances.
- g. If you have time, discuss the scenes when you are done. At the very least, make sure you ask the students to name their three favorite moments from the scenes that they just saw (excluding their own scenes, of course).

7● Wrap-Up

Talk to the students about what they learned from the lesson on which they just worked. Ask them if they have any questions.

WRITING WILD: THE ADVENTURES OF JACK LONDON



THEATRE ETIQUETTE

Dear Principals and Teachers,

Thank you for this opportunity to perform for your students. Our actors will give a curtain speech before the show about the play. However, because we want this experience to be as pleasant as possible for you, your students, and the performers, we ask that you also please take time to cover these basic theatre-etiquette rules with your students before they enter the theatre or performance space.

- 1.** Please remain seated for the entire performance. Please use the restroom before you are directed to your seat. This performance is less than an hour long, with no intermission.
- 2.** Please turn off your cell phone. Also remember that the use of recording equipment and cameras is not permitted.
- 3.** Please do not eat, drink, or chew gum during the performance.
- 4.** Please do not talk to the actors on stage, or to your friends, during the show.
- 5.** Laugh, clap, and have fun!

Please let the Stage Manager and actors know if you would like to have a 10-minute question-and-answer period for your students after the show.

Thank you so much for your support in creating the future's well-mannered and appreciative live performance audience members!