I’ve always wanted to be a famous author, so, not long ago, I wrote a story. Maybe you read it. It’s called First Place. Now, with a little bit of help, I wrote a play too! Since I know all the tricks, I can teach you how it’s done.

If you have ever written a story, you already know the basic steps to writing a play. You first have to decide three different things: the setting, characters, and plot. Each is important, and each one affects the other.

The setting describes when and where the play takes place. This is an important decision because it will change the way your characters interact. Think of how different your play would be if you set it in a scary castle, or in the jungle, or even on the moon! The time period and place can help you decide what your characters wear and how they act.

Now you have to create your characters. You not only have to choose their names but you have to answer other questions, too: How old are they? What do they like to do? What are they afraid of? What is their family like? What do they look like? The more answers you can come up with, the more real your character will become.

The plot describes what will happen to these characters. In the beginning, they have a problem that needs to be solved. The main characters spend most of the play trying to solve the problem.

If you have a hard time creating the plot, use the setting and characters you made up to help you figure it out. For example, if you decided the setting is on the moon, the problem could be that the spaceship broke down. Or, if you decided the main character is afraid of the dark, the plot could be about the night the electricity went out.

Now you have made all the important decisions. You know what’s going to happen. You know who it’s going to happen to. You know when and where it will happen. Looks like you are ready to start writing the script. This is where writing a play becomes very different from writing a story.
In a story, you write in sections, or chapters. A play is written by scene. Every time the characters go to a different place, a new scene begins. Stage directions explain where the characters are and what the characters do while they talk. These directions are written in italics, so you don’t get confused.

The first time you read a play, read the parts in italics out loud. Then you’ll know what each character should be doing.

A play is written in dialogue. Each character has lines to memorize that are in the script. When a new character is supposed to speak, that character’s name is written in capital letters. This makes the name stand out, but it is not read out loud.

Now that you know how a script is written, you’re ready to read my play! It’s called The Case of Missing Manny. It all happens on a movie set, and it’s full of movie stars and clues. Get ready for lights, camera, and action!