



# **BRAINSTORM: THE BLUEPRINT**

**A GUIDE TO MAKING  
YOUR OWN PLAY ABOUT  
THE TEENAGE BRAIN**

**BY  
NED GLASIER,  
EMILY LIM, AND  
COMPANY THREE**

★



★  
DRAMATISTS  
PLAY SERVICE  
INC.



All Rights Reserved

BRAINSTORM: THE BLUEPRINT is fully protected under the copyright laws of the United States of America, and of all countries covered by the International Copyright Union (including the Dominion of Canada and the rest of the British Commonwealth), and of all countries covered by the Pan-American Copyright Convention, the Universal Copyright Convention, the Berne Convention, and of all countries with which the United States has reciprocal copyright relations. No part of this publication may be reproduced in any form by any means (electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording, or otherwise), or stored in any retrieval system in any way (electronic or mechanical) without written permission of the publisher.

The English language stock and amateur stage performance rights in the United States, its territories, possessions and Canada for BRAINSTORM: THE BLUEPRINT are controlled exclusively by Dramatists Play Service, 440 Park Avenue South, New York, NY 10016. **No professional or nonprofessional performance of the Play may be given without obtaining in advance the written permission of Dramatists Play Service and paying the requisite fee.**

All other rights, including without limitation motion picture, recitation, lecturing, public reading, radio broadcasting, television, video or sound recording, and the rights of translation into foreign languages are strictly reserved.

Inquiries concerning all other rights should be addressed to Macnaughton Lord Representation, 3 The Glass House, Royal Oak Yard, London SE1 3GE, England. Attn: Davina Shah.

#### NOTE ON BILLING

Anyone receiving permission to produce BRAINSTORM: THE BLUEPRINT is required to give credit to the Authors as sole and exclusive Authors of the Play on the title page of all programs distributed in connection with performances of the Play and in all instances in which the title of the Play appears, including printed or digital materials for advertising, publicizing or otherwise exploiting the Play and/or a production thereof. Please see your production license for font size and typeface requirements.

Be advised that there may be additional credits required in all programs and promotional material. Such language will be listed under the “Additional Billing” section of production licenses. It is the licensee’s responsibility to ensure any and all required billing is included in the requisite places, per the terms of the license.

#### SPECIAL NOTE ON SONGS/RECORDINGS

Dramatists Play Service neither holds the rights to nor grants permission to use any songs or recordings mentioned in the Play. Permission for performances of copyrighted songs, arrangements or recordings mentioned in this Play is not included in our license agreement. The permission of the copyright owner(s) must be obtained for any such use. For any songs and/or recordings mentioned in the Play, other songs, arrangements, or recordings may be substituted provided permission from the copyright owner(s) of such songs, arrangements or recordings is obtained; or songs, arrangements or recordings in the public domain may be substituted.

BRAINSTORM was performed in London, England, at the Park Theatre and the National Theatre between January 2015 and April 2016. It was created by Ned Glasier, Emily Lim and the company: Michael Adewale, Doyin Ajiboye, Sama Aunallah, Yaamin Chowdhury, Jack Hughes, Noah Landoni, Dylan Lubo, Gracia Kayindo, Romeo Mika, Kassius Nelson, Tyrel Phan, Serafina Willow and Segen Yosife. It was directed by Ned Glasier and Emily Lim, the production design was by Charlie Damigos, the lighting design was by Jo Town, the sound design was by Elena Peña, the movement direction was by Daragh O’Leary, the consultant neuroscientists were Professor Sarah-Jayne Blakemore and Dr. Kate Mills, the producer was Adam Coleman, and the company stage manager was Sarah Stott. The cast was as follows:

MICHAEL .....	Michael Adewale
DOYIN .....	Doyin Ajiboye
SAMA .....	Sama Aunallah
YAAMIN .....	Yaamin Chowdhury
JACK .....	Jack Hughes
NOAH .....	Noah Landoni
GRACIA .....	Gracia Kayindo
TYREL .....	Tyrel Phan
SERAFINA .....	Serafina Willow
SEGEN .....	Segen Yosife

BRAINSTORM was adapted for television as part of BBC's *Live from Television Centre*, produced in partnership with Battersea Arts Centre and Arts Council England.

Members of Company Three who contributed to the early development of BRAINSTORM: Jahmai Allen, Samia Amao, Stanley Amisah-Andoh, Antione Azille, Kiki Bowen, Larissa Fonseca, Chelsea Green, KJ Gomez-Danso, Eliza Greenslade, Helawit Hailemariam, Sam Head, James Jani, Anisha Maxin Ngagba, Jéssica Noque, Kofi Odoom, Angie Peña Arenas, Corey Peterson, Jonathan Pontes-Betu, Olga Popiolek-Szulczewska, Tom Proctor, Pia Richards-Glückner, Megan Saunders, Soumia Sebbar, Georgie Stevens, Josh Shanny-Wynter and Roxlyne Quaye.

## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Company Three would like to thank Lyndsey Turner, Ben Power, Fran Miller and everyone at the National Theatre and the National Theatre Studio; Jez Bond and the team at Park Theatre; Jonathan Gibbs, Laura Campbell and everyone at Platform Islington; Jayne Gold and her Year 8 students at Elizabeth Garret Anderson School; current and former Trustees of Company Three; Izzy Madgwick; Robert Blakey; Angie Peña Arenas; Mattia Pagura; Guy Jones; Kwami Odoom; Jonathan Samuels; Camilla Greenwell; Fergus Dingle; Ruth Little; Jack Lowe; Beck Smith; Professor Vincent Walsh; Gary Horner; Salvador Bettencourt Avila; Will Oates; Ella Macfadyen; and Davina Shah.

Thanks to the Dame Alice Owen Foundation, Tuixen Foundation, Cripplegate Foundation, and Sumners Foundation for their continued and long-standing support of Company Three's work. Thanks also to the Shanly Foundation and all the individuals who have supported our work on *Brainstorm* over the past years.

Special thanks to the Wellcome Trust, who have been the principal funder of the development of *Brainstorm*.

Finally, extra special thanks to all the parents of the cast, without whose support *Brainstorm* would not have been possible.



## TABLE OF CONTENTS

The Blueprint .....	9
The Script Template .....	25
The Original Playscript .....	49





# **THE BLUEPRINT**

## OVERVIEW

*Brainstorm* is a play about teenage brain development, told through the real-life experiences of the young people who create and perform it. We've produced this blueprint because we want anyone to be able to make their own version.

The *Brainstorm* script is made up of two different types of content:

- *Scientific content* (information about the brain)
- *Personal content* (stories and experiences of the cast, which make sense of the science)

If you want to perform your own version of *Brainstorm*, first contact Dramatists Play Service (see details on page 2) to arrange a licence.

You will be provided with a template of the script in which you will find all the *scientific content* from the original script. Then use the blueprint which follows here to develop the *personal content* with your cast, incorporate it into the script template and arrive at a complete script for your own production of *Brainstorm*.

You can choose to work through the blueprint scene by scene, or use it more freely as a source of inspiration and ideas.

## STARTING OUT

We believe that young people have too many rules in their lives, so we only have three, which are designed to ensure all our work is safe, fun and productive. They are:

- Be kind
- Be brave
- Be yourself

In addition, we found these three ideas useful when devising *Brainstorm*:

- Keep it contemporary—this is a play that is set right now, in the world and time the cast currently live in.
- Acknowledge your audience—don't pretend that they're not there.
- Vary the tone—be careful that it doesn't become too sentimental.

## USING PERSONAL CONTENT

It is important to be sensitive and careful when using personal or autobiographical material in a play. Building the right atmosphere of safety, trust and support in which young people feel they can share is essential, and it is important to acknowledge with your cast from the very start that no one will be asked to share or perform anything that they don't feel comfortable with. Schools and youth groups should ensure that generating material is done in accordance with their own safeguarding policies.

*Brainstorm* is a play about brain development, but it's also about the impact that this has on teenagers' relationships with their parents.\* One of the main reasons teenagers' brains change is to enable them to become independent of their parents, and this can place huge strain on these relationships. Parents should be made aware of the subject of the play from the start, and they should be told in advance that they are likely to appear as characters in some of the scenes.

## EDITING

As you create content, you'll find yourself having to make tough choices about what to include and what to leave out. Be brutal! Only include content that helps the audience understand the play and the things we need to know about the cast. Try not to say the same thing twice. It will help if you and the cast agree from the start that any content that you cut is about the play, rather than about them personally.

## CASTING

Our version of *Brainstorm* was made with ten teenagers, but you could make your version with anything from six upwards. The wider the age range, the better—our oldest was eighteen and the youngest was thirteen.

\* When "parent" is mentioned in the blueprint or template, it can refer to any adult carer in the cast members' lives.

There are six key roles in the play. They carry the journey of the play and represent different elements within it. All other lines/actions can be carried out with any number of other performers. You may find that you can split some of the key roles between separate performers.

- *Oldest* is the oldest person in the company. They start and finish the play.
- *Youngest* gets teased for being the youngest person in the company.
- *Sprouting* explains the process of learning in the teenage brain.
- *Prefrontal Cortex (PFC)* impersonates their parent to demonstrate the “sensible” part of the brain.
- *Conflict* has an explosive fight with their parent that builds through the play.
- *Limbic* makes everyone have fun and take risks.

In this blueprint and in the script template, we have gendered these roles according to the original performers, but young people of any gender can play any of the roles.

## THE SCIENCE

The best way to understand the science in the play is to read the original *Brainstorm* script at the back of this book.

If you would like to do more research, there are hundreds of useful websites, articles, videos and podcasts online. We worked with leading adolescent neuroscientist Professor Sarah-Jayne Blakemore and we would recommend starting your research by looking up her excellent TED Talk, *The Mysterious Workings of the Adolescent Brain*.

The science is constantly developing, which is why we haven't included links here. Try and find the most up-to-date information.

It's really important that everyone in the cast understands the science: to introduce it, use your research or extracts from the script template and ask the company to reinterpret it. They might, for example, build a set of neurons and synapses out of pencils and rubber bands, or create a dance representing the Limbic System.

## DEVISING EXERCISES

As well as the specific exercises provided for each scene, the following exercises that we use a lot at Company Three might be useful.

### Interviews and Transcription

Interview the cast in small groups or one-to-one about their personal experiences of the ideas and themes in the play. Record the interviews and transcribe the most promising bits. Share and discuss.

### Free Writing

Set a starting point or topic and ask the cast to write freely in response, from their gut, without thinking about what they're writing and without stopping. It doesn't have to be neat, be spelt right or make sense.

The cast can write paragraphs with prompts such as:

- I don't understand why...
- Being a teenager is...
- My brain feels like...

Or lists with specific titles such as:

- Things in my bedroom
- Things my mum says to me
- Questions I'd never ask my parents

Find interesting ways of getting the cast to share their writing back to the group.

### Solo Tasks

Ask your cast to take away an idea and to spend a short time creating a solo response to it. This helps to create personal material that isn't compromised by collaboration. The response could be some writing, a scene, a song, a picture, a challenge, a debate—anything.

### Get Out of the Rehearsal Room

Our best ideas often come when we least expect them. If you can, find time to hang out as a company in less formal settings: go outside, cook together, go on a trip, do something totally unrelated to the play.

## THE SET

*Brainstorm* can be performed with a very little budget and with just a blank stage, if necessary.

We set our version of the play on a plain white platform surrounded by simple wooden furniture, representing a collage of different teenage bedrooms. The furniture contained hundreds of objects and items of clothing that could be found in teenagers' bedrooms. The objects and clothes were thrown all over the set before the Bedrooms scene.

The set included a wardrobe on which we projected the mobile-phone screen.

We strongly encourage you to come up with an original set design that works for your version of the play. If you choose to replicate our original design, please credit Charlie Damigos, the designer for the production.

## PROJECTION

A key part of our production was the ability to project a mobile-phone screen onto the wardrobe in the set. We connected an iPhone to an Apple TV box (this can be bought relatively cheaply or borrowed) and then fed the Apple TV through a projector.

For more information on how we used technology in *Brainstorm*, the National Theatre have made a short film about it, which you can watch at [www.companythree.co.uk/brainstorm](http://www.companythree.co.uk/brainstorm).

## INSTANT MESSAGING

We projected a WhatsApp group onto the set as another space in which the cast could have (and occasionally share) “secret” conversations. At the time, WhatsApp was widely used by teenagers and not adults, and it may be appropriate to choose another messaging system that is less familiar to the adults in the room. All that is required is that the cast members can all be part of a conversation in a single group. You may of course choose another way entirely to do this!

## MUSIC

We used “Cups (You’re Gonna Miss Me)” by Lulu and the Lampshades, “Dirty Old Town” by the Pogues, and “All Night Long” by Lionel Richie for certain moments of the play. Use of these songs is not required and you are encouraged to select your own music.

Please see the Note on Songs/Recordings at the back of this volume for more information on the use of copyrighted material in your performance.

## SCENE BY SCENE

Over the next few pages you’ll find a simple overview of each scene in the play, followed by practical exercises you can use to generate and write the personal content with your cast. This can then be added into the script template.

## BEFORE THE SHOW

As the audience arrives, they are given postcards on which they are asked to write a message to their teenage self, starting with the words, “You don’t know this yet, but...”

These are collected up, and a small number is selected to be read out in the final scene of the play.

## SCENE 1: INTRODUCTION

Oldest introduces the play and the basics of teenage brain development. Her monologue is interspersed with the arrival onstage of the other cast members—in ascending age order.

As each new person enters, Oldest tells us their name, their age and a fact or two about them. When the person playing Limbic enters, they might do something naughty or unexpected.

### **Sourcing the Facts for the Introduction**

- Ask your cast to introduce themselves to the group then introduce someone else to the group.
- Ask the cast to write facts about themselves then ask everyone to guess whose is whose.

Select the facts which help to seed themes and stories that emerge later in the play, e.g., puberty, growing up, interaction with parents (Parent Duologues), our relationship with our phones, learning, school.

The facts should be a mixture of fun, funny and personal. They should feel very current—they could even be changed every night. There may be moments of short (scripted) dialogue or response from other cast members.

### **SCENE 2: BEDROOMS**

The cast members describe their bedrooms to us in a series of short monologues. The scene is divided into three sections:

- A: Messy Bedrooms
- B: Private Space
- C: Bedrooms and Phones

The monologues are interrupted intermittently by parents calling to get the cast's attention. In one of these interruptions, we see the start of Conflict's argument with his parent, which builds through the play (see Parent Duologues and Stand-Off).

### **Generating Material for the Monologues**

- Ask your cast to record a video tour of their bedroom and share it with everyone else in rehearsal.
- Ask the cast to imagine their bedrooms in the rehearsal room and take one another on a tour.
- Ask the cast to free-write lists using titles such as "objects in my bedroom," "things my parents know/don't know about my bedroom," "things my parents like/don't like about my bedroom."



### **SCENE 3: SPROUTING**

Sprouting describes why the teenage brain is so good at learning and how some parts of it develop more quickly than others. The cast each demonstrate a skill via a YouTube tutorial.

#### **Creating the YouTube Tutorials**

- Ask the cast to share YouTube tutorials they watch or have made in the past—what are the common features? What makes a great video?
- Set everyone the task of filming their own YouTube tutorial at home and share them with the group in rehearsal.

Select key lines from each tutorial to insert into the script. The tutorials should reflect a range of interests and ways of learning.

### **SCENE 4: PREFRONTAL CORTEX**

The cast explain that the Prefrontal Cortex (PFC) is the “sensible” part of the brain that’s a bit like your dad (or mum). The cast become their parents by putting on an item of their clothing. They introduce themselves to the audience by telling us their name, who their child is and a fact or two about themselves. They end up having a dance party until PFC’s parent stops the fun.

#### **Building the Characters of the Parents**

- Ask the cast to do an observation exercise on their parents and record their findings to share back with the group.
- Run a drama workshop with the cast in role as their parents—how does each parent introduce themselves? How do they respond to the exercises?
- Run a series of improvisations with the parents in which they have to dance (e.g., a wedding, dance class, in private at home).
- Collect a list of parents’ favourite dancing songs—choose one to play into the scene for them all to dance to.\*

\* See Note on Songs/Recordings at the back of this volume.

Select facts for each parent to use as their introduction. The focus of this scene should be on presenting accurate (and loving) portrayals of the parents, not mocking impersonations. The facts that the parents tell us could reflect their relationship with their child, their hobbies, their favourite things, etc.

## **SCENE 5: PARENT DUOLOGUES**

The cast recreate key arguments and conversations they have had with their parents. This includes Conflict's argument with his parent that continues to build during the play.

### **Generating Content for the Arguments/Conversations**

- Talk about different conversations the cast have had with their parents in which they have misunderstood each other.
- Make a list of things the cast's parents want them to do which they don't want to do.
- Ask the cast to look back through text-message conversations they've had with their parents.

### **Creating Short Duologues**

- Ask the cast to write duologues using this content with different word restrictions (e.g., a six-word scene, a two-line scene, a six-line scene, a ten-line scene). Focus on what each character wants.
- Ask the cast to improvise/perform these scenes:
  - Direct other people as the parent and yourself.
  - Play your own parent and have someone else play you.
  - Play yourself and have someone else play your parent.

The scenes you select should be a mix of angry, tender and funny. They should be varying lengths—some may be only a few lines long. In this scene each cast member should play themselves, with other cast members playing their parent. Some duologues could be delivered on the phone or by text message.

You might want to include the following “types” of conflict to ensure a good spread of content:

- A parent wants help with technology.
- A parent wants to know how school/exams are going.
- A cast member wants to stay out late.
- A cast member refuses to come out of their room.
- A parent wants their child to confide in them as a friend.

## **SCENE 6: BRAIN SCAN**

The cast take part in an anonymous survey revealing things about themselves that they would rather not reveal publicly and giving an insight into the deepest parts of their brain.

The survey takes the form of first-person statements (e.g., “I lied to my parents today,” “Sex scares me”) that the cast answer “yes” or “no” to.

### **Generating Content for the Statements**

- Ask the cast’s parents to fill in an anonymous form sharing what they’d like to know about their children’s lives.
- Ask the cast to write possible questions on pieces of paper that are then folded up, shared and read out anonymously.
- Ask the cast to write down secrets anonymously and turn these into statements.

### **Making the Survey**

- There are lots of ways to do this: challenge the cast to come up with ways to answer questions (you can use practice questions if you like) without revealing who has answered what.
- We used ten bedroom lamps with long dimmer cables bought from Ikea. We tangled the cables up, gave each cast member a switch and instructed them to turn their lamp on for “yes” and lamps off for “no.” The questions were projected onto the set but could also be read out live. We didn’t change the questions every night, but you could do.

## SCENE 7: LIMBIC SYSTEM

Youngest and Limbic tell us about the limbic system. Limbic interrupts Youngest's monologue and takes control of the play. He gets the audience involved in a rowdy game of "Never Have I Ever" and then leads the cast into a wild party.

During the party, Conflict is distracted, thinking back to the argument he had earlier on in Parent Duologues (he might receive a phone call or text which triggers this). He becomes more and more agitated and eventually explodes in an angry outburst.

### **Generating Statements for "Never Have I Ever"**

- Ask the cast to share the most dangerous/stupid/naughty/risky things they (or their friends) have ever done. This can be done anonymously by writing on pieces of paper and throwing them into a hat.
- Play "Never Have I Ever" as a company (be careful!).

### **Making the Party**

- Ask the cast to create tableaux of typical wild parties/raves that they have experienced or heard about. Use these to define choreography and events that take place during a party.
- As a company, plot the story of how the party unfolds (particularly charting Conflict's journey within it) and then loses control. A simple structure might be:
  1. Getting ready (while Limbic talks)
  2. Dancing
  3. Breaking the rules (pillow fights, pranking, throwing candy)
  4. Going too far (things start to get out of hand)
  5. Conflict loses it—angry explosion

## SCENE 8: STAND-OFF

Conflict loses control and shouts as if at his parent in the climax of an argument. Everyone shuts themselves in their rooms in a huff. One parent gently pleads with their child, who starts to tidy up. Another cast member tries to explain to their parent why they are the way they are.

### **Generating Content for Conflict’s Monologue**

- Ask the cast member playing Conflict to chart a real argument that they’ve had with one of their parents. Break it down into scenes or moments—build up, climax, consequence.
- Ask them to free-write as a stream of consciousness all the things they felt in the climax of this argument. These might be things they did say, or never said.
- Ask them to create physical expressions of their emotions in the climax of the argument.
- Pair another cast member with Conflict in the role of his parent so that they can improvise both sides of the argument as it climaxes. Then take away the parent’s voice.

### **Generating Content for the “Because…” Monologue**

- Ask the cast to free-write a list of all the things their parents say to them all the time.
- Ask the cast to write the question “Why am I like this?” at the top of a piece of paper and write a list of answers that begin with the word “because…”
- When constructing the final monologue, you might choose to use one person’s response or an amalgamation of lots of responses.

We used “Cups (You’re Gonna Miss Me)” sung live by one of the cast members to underscore part of this section. This was suggested by a cast member. If you’d like to use singing, find something that is relevant to this moment in the play and to your cast.\*

\* See Note on Songs/Recordings at the back of this volume.

## **SCENE 9: RISKS**

The cast members are still isolated, shut up in their rooms. They communicate without physically speaking to the audience (e.g., via projected WhatsApp messages), explaining that the combination of all the messy changes happening in their brains fills them with huge potential. They share examples of positive risk-taking to demonstrate this.

### **Generating the List of Risks**

- Have a discussion about teenagers who have changed the world—insert these into the explanation.
- Ask the cast to share personal examples of positive risks that they have taken—moments where they have had to be particularly brave, stepped outside their comfort zone or done something significant for the first time.

If you cannot project phones onstage, experiment with different ways of communicating the lines in the scene without speaking.

## **SCENE 10: YOU SAY TO ME, I SAY TO YOU**

Conflict delivers a monologue to his parent explaining how he feels about his brain and the changes he is going through.

The rest of the cast show placards written specifically for their parents which express things they want to say to them but can't.

### **Generating Content for the Placards**

Ask the cast to write a personal letter to one of their parents. Work one-to-one with each cast member to understand what the most important phrases and sentiments are within the letter. Divide these into a series of short sentences (one phrase per placard) over approximately ten placards each.

The content should be honest, tender and funny without being overly sentimental.

## SCENE 11: YOU DON'T KNOW THIS YET

Oldest reintroduces the cast by name. She delivers a short monologue contrasting what she knows about her past, her present and her future. The cast read out some of the “You don’t know this yet, but…” postcards that the audience filled out before the play started. This reconnects the audience to their teenage selves and to the teenagers onstage.

### Generating Content for the Monologue

- Ask the cast to write a description of what their life will be like when they’re eighteen. Share these and discuss them.
- Ask the rest of the cast to interview the cast member playing Oldest about how they imagined their life would be at their current age when they were thirteen and how different the reality is (e.g., they thought they’d have their own flat but they’re still living with their mum).

## MORE INFORMATION

For more information about our version of *Brainstorm*, including videos, photos, resources, reviews, go to [www.companythree.co.uk/brainstorm](http://www.companythree.co.uk/brainstorm).

## CONTACT US

We’d love to hear about your journey as you make your own *Brainstorm*. Please feel free to share your process, photos and thoughts with us:

- Email: [hello@companythree.co.uk](mailto:hello@companythree.co.uk)
- Twitter: [@company\\_three](https://twitter.com/company_three)
- Instagram: [@companythree](https://www.instagram.com/companythree)





**The play doesn't end here...**

To purchase this play and thousands  
of others, visit [www.dramatists.com](http://www.dramatists.com).

**DPS**  
DRAMATISTS PLAY SERVICE

---

LEGENDARY HOME OF BOLD NEW VOICES,  
TIMELESS CLASSICS,  
AND OVER 80 TONY AWARDS AND PULITZER PRIZES

EST. 1936

---

[www.broadwaylicensing.com](http://www.broadwaylicensing.com)