

NY Thespian Festival 2026

Information Packet



Questions? Concerns? Suggestions?

Reach out to nythespians@gmail.com

or DM on Instagram, [@nythespiansofficial](https://www.instagram.com/nythespiansofficial)

Registration for the NY Thespian Festival, “HamilTEN,” is now open!

NY Thespians is thrilled to invite you to the 16th Annual NY State Thespian Festival, a celebration of school theater in the Empire State! This year’s event will take place April 25-26, 2026 on the campus of Hofstra University on Long Island, just a short shuttle ride from three different LIRR stations.

The direct registration link can be found here:

<https://nythespians.regfox.com/ny-thespian-festival-2026>

There will be a video tutorial for registration on the NY Thespians website. However, please reach out any time if you have difficulties navigating the registration website.

Please note that registration closes March 6th. Workshop choices will open March 16th and close March 23rd. You and your students have the opportunity to take part in the following:

- **Workshops** in acting, musical theater, dance, directing, and technical theater
- **Thespy (formerly known as Individual Events)** - students can perform published work for feedback and awards! Categories include acting, musical theatre performance, musical theatre dance, light design, scenic (set) design, sound design, makeup design, costume design, costume construction, stage management, short film, playwriting, and theatre marketing (publicity). Check out the guidelines and rubrics [HERE](#). NY Thespians has put together checklists for each event [HERE](#).
- **All-State Musical** - Students and teachers can audition for the All-State Musical, “Heart of it All,” to be performed April 26th at Festival. Rehearsals will be online leading up to Festival. The audition link is open until February 6th. Submit [HERE](#). Submit both a musical theater vocal selection of approximately 32 bars, AND a monologue, no longer than 1 minute.
- **Play-in-a-Day** - students can opt in to be a playwright, director, actor, or crew for our second annual play-in-a-day showcase! With guidance from professionals, students will write, act, direct, and tech a short series of 10-minute plays. Staged readings will take place Sunday afternoon.
- **STO (State Thespian Officer) Workshop** - we are looking for incredible student leaders to plan next year’s festival, develop service and advocacy projects, and represent their corner of NY State!

Festival will take place April 25-26, 2026 at Hofstra University, 1000 Hempstead Turnpike, Hempstead, NY 11549. Please find a copy of the festival schedule in this packet for your perusal.

In addition, **we are looking for fabulous 75-minute workshops** geared toward middle and high school students and their teachers. We are also looking for **adjudicators to judge monologues, duet scenes, musical theatre performances, and technical portfolios**. We pay a \$75 honorarium for all workshops and up to \$50 for all adjudicators, depending on the task.

Volunteers are always welcome! If you know of anyone who might like to volunteer for a 3-hour shift, have them register at the following link. We provide certification of volunteer hours for current HS (age 15+) and college (age 18+) students. **VOLUNTEER LINKS:** [Friday, April 24th set up](#), Saturday/Sunday [April 25-26 general Festival tasks](#)

Drop-In Anytime Office Hours for questions regarding Festival, Thespy, or NY Thespians in general:

- Feb. 4, 7-8:15pm
- Feb. 19, 6-7:15pm
- March 7, 6-7:15pm
- [LINK TO ZOOM OFFICE HOURS](#)

Please take a look at the links below and feel free to forward them to friends or colleagues.

WORKSHOPS (deadline February 10): [LINK FOR WORKSHOP PROPOSALS](#)

ADJUDICATORS (deadline February 20): [LINK FOR ADJUDICATORS](#)

VOLUNTEERS (deadline March 25):

- **Pre-Festival, Friday, April 24th** - This is a volunteer opportunity for anyone who is available for a 3-hour shift Friday, April 24th from approx. 9am-6pm to set up Festival at Hofstra! [LINK FOR APRIL 24th HERE.](#)
- **During Festival, Saturday-Sunday, April 25th-26th** - This is a volunteer opportunity for anyone who is available for a 3-hour or 5-hour shift during Festival, Saturday, April 25th from approx. 7:30am-7:30pm and/or Sunday, April 26th from approx. 8am-8:30pm to work Festival at Hofstra! [LINK FOR APRIL 25th-26th HERE.](#)



April 24



April 25-26

SPONSORSHIP AND PROVIDING INFO/GOODS FOR ATTENDEE PACKETS (deadline March 25):
[LINK TO SPONSORSHIP and VENDOR TIERS](#)
[LINK FOR SPONSORS, COLLEGES, and VENDORS](#)
[FUNDRAISER LINK FOR NY THESPIANS PROGRAMMING AND OPPORTUNITIES](#)

Please reach out if you have any questions, nythespians@gmail.com!

IMPORTANT NOTES!

Things To Do:

We want to recognize all the hard work you've done so far this academic year!

- Please send up to five photos of people in your Troupe, school, or group to be included in our opening slideshow! Send to Sandy Qiu (slideshow coordinator) at sandy.qiu@nythespians.org. SUBJECT: Name of School/Group Slideshow
- Bring a tri-fold or posterboard that represents your Troupe, school, or group to be displayed in the lobby. This can include show posters, photos, costume sketches, classwork, script pages, ticket stubs, quotes, headshots - use your creativity!
- Make sure everyone in your group has filled out a photo/video release form for 2025-2026. Please bring them to the registration table when you arrive. (If anyone in your group has participated in a NY Thespians event this academic year, we already have a form on file.)
- (OPTIONAL)** Prepare for Thespys! Make sure all students who are planning to perform or present a Thespy are familiar with the format and [rubric](#). Checklists can be found [HERE](#). There are plenty of examples on the [THESPYS WEBSITE](#) or on the [EdTA School Theatre YouTube channel](#).
- (OPTIONAL)** Encourage students to participate in Play-in-a-Day as a writer, director, or performer! Student groups write, produce, and perform a play over the course of the weekend.
- (OPTIONAL)** Put together a team of 3-5 people for our [Improv Competition](#)! No experience necessary, but it does help to have familiarity with the games that will be played. An explanation of this event appears later in this packet. Winners get the opportunity to perform for all attendees.
- (OPTIONAL)** Put together a team of 4-6 people for our [Tech Challenge](#)! Groups of students from schools/groups compete in 4-5 backstage skills challenges, outlined in this packet.

Gender Expression Statement:

- NY Thespians is committed to fostering a welcoming, supportive space where everyone can be seen and valued in their entirety. This includes participants who identify as transgender, non-binary, gender non-conforming, or intersex. All identities are welcomed and celebrated at the NY Thespian Festival. We are dedicated to affirming respect, compassion, and acceptance for all, and we celebrate diversity with regard to all backgrounds and identities. Please let NY Thespians know if there is anything in particular we can do to support you at Festival.

A Note on Bathrooms:

- There are gender-specific bathrooms as well as gender-neutral bathrooms available at this year's Festival. Feel free to use whatever bathroom fits your gender expression. More updates will be added to this packet as they become available.

A Note on the Hamilton Musical:

- NY Thespians acknowledges that whereas Hamilton the musical has served as a catalyst for diverse casting and disrupted the status quo of the book writing of Broadway musicals, it is not without criticism. The musical does not tell the full story of Alexander Hamilton and the innate harm he caused to multiple communities, as well as his central role in the slave trade. Furthermore, multiple historical figures are inaccurately portrayed, indigenous voices are largely absent, and female characters are often defined by their relationship to male characters. NY Thespians hopes that this year's lead-up to Festival can serve to open conversations about historical theater, American history, and "who lives, who dies, who tells your story."



NY State Thespian Festival 2026

Middle School and High School Schedule of Events

[MS and HS REGISTRATION LINK](#)



DATE	TIME	ACTIVITY
Saturday, April 25th <i>NOTE A: The schedule is designed so that groups may depart as early as 4:15pm on Saturday</i> <i>NOTE B: There will be optional FREE puppet-building, mask-making, and medieval shoe-making activity stations at the hotel from 7:30-9:30pm.</i>	9:00-9:30am	Registration
	9:40-10:10am	Connection Circles A*, Play in a Day group, All-State Musical group
	10:20-10:50am	Welcome
	11:00am-12:15pm	Workshop #1, Thespy Session #1*** (MS only), Play in a Day writers' session, All-State Musical rehearsal, One Act Group A Rehearsal**
	12:15-1:15pm	LUNCH- on your own; Scholarship interviews; Play in a Day writers' session, All-State Musical rehearsal
	1:15-2:05pm	Keynote Speaker, All-Festival Activity; Play in a Day writers' session (if needed), All-State Musical rehearsal (if needed)
	2:15-2:40pm	Connection Circles B*
	2:50-4:05pm	Workshop #2, Thespy Session #2***, One-Act Group B rehearsal**
	4:15-4:35pm	Connection Circles C*, snack, Play-in-a-Day group, All-State Musical group
	4:35-5:35pm	<i>STO-led activities: Theatre Trivia, Karaoke, Broadway Boogie; One-Act Performance rehearsal (if needed), All-State Musical rehearsal, Improv Competition, Scholarship interviews (continued)</i>
5:45-6:30pm	<i>One Act Performances, Saturday Wrap-Up</i>	
Sunday, April 26th <i>NOTE C: The schedule is designed so that groups may depart as early as 4:15pm on Sunday, however, groups will miss receiving awards in person. If any groups receive awards after departure, they will be mailed to the school/organization in one package within the week</i>	9-9:30am	Check-in, Opening Ceremony, and Connection Circles D*; Play in a Day group, All-State Musical Group
	9:30-10:45am	Workshop #3, Thespy Session #3***, Tech Challenge Group A
	10:55am-12:10pm	Workshop #4, Thespy Session #4***, Play in a Day actors, Tech Challenge Group B
	12:15-1pm	LUNCH- on own; Play in a Day actors, All-State Musical rehearsal
	1:05-2:05pm	<i>Play in a Day and Workshop Performances</i>
	2:15-3:30pm	Workshop #5
	3:40-4:05pm	Connection Circles E*; Play in a Day Group, All-State Musical Group, snack
	4:15-5:40pm	<i>All-State Musical Performance</i>
5:45-6:30pm	Closing Ceremony and Awards	

*- Connection Circles are an opportunity for participants of different schools and groups to get to know each other through games and activities. They are led by Student Thespian Officers (STO). Participants will meet in the same Connection Circle each time.

** - The One Act performances are scheduled Sunday afternoon. Regional winners will be presenting their shows. If you are interested in performing at or hosting a Regional One-Act Competition, reach out to NY Thespians, nythespians@gmail.com Competitions take place on Saturdays or Sundays in November and December.

*** - Thespy's are "International Thespian Excellence Awards." These include performance and tech. A list of categories and rubrics are available [through this link](#) and on the NY Thespians website. Students may present in up to three different categories.

OPTIONAL ADD-ON T-SHIRT & HOODIE DESIGNS

Available for purchase with registration. T-shirts \$15, Hoodies \$35.

Styles are all on black.

Design on black. Front has the HamilTEN logo and "NY Thespians" in script.

DESIGN TO APPEAR HERE SHORTLY



NY Thespian Festival 2026 Pricing



[REGISTRATION LINK](#)

Registration	Thespian	Non-Thespian
Early bird student (Middle or High School)	\$110 until February 15	\$130 until February 15
Regular student (Middle or High School)	\$130 until March 6	\$150 until March 6
OPTIONAL Lunch add-on in the Hofstra Student Union cafeteria (buffet-style)	\$15 one day, \$30 two days	
Individual Events (up to THREE per person)	\$5	\$5 (but non-Thespians are ineligible for awards)
Troupe Director	\$25	N/A
Other admin, chaperone, or adult attendee	\$50	\$70

Changes	Cost
December 15-March 6	\$0 per change
March 7-March 16	\$10 per change
March 17-April 1	CONTACT NY THESPIANS, nythespians@gmail.com

Item	Cost
T-Shirt (unisex S-XXL)	\$15
Hoodie (unisex S-XXL)	\$35

Hotel Suggestions for April 24-26 (no hotel is endorsed or in partnership with NY Thespians) If you make arrangements at the following hotels, shuttles will be arranged to take your group to and from Festival - mornings Sat. April 25th and Sun. April 26th, evening Sat. April 25th	Star Rating	Contact
Hampton Inn Garden City , \$229/night + taxes, complimentary hot breakfast - two-night minimum. Click on the link to the right for the NY Thespians room rate (otherwise, \$239+/night)	3-star	LINK TO ROOM BLOCK -book through the link!- (516) 227-2720
Long Island Marriott , \$319/night + taxes	3-star	(516) 794-3800

ADDITIONAL LOGISTICAL/TRANSPORTATION INFORMATION:

- FREE shuttle service from LIRR train stations to Hofstra - <https://www.hofstra.edu/public-safety/transportation.html>
- Parking at Hofstra (there is a large lot available for personal cars, vans, school buses, and charter buses near the venue): <https://www.hofstra.edu/public-safety/parking-traffic.html>

Lunch suggestions (off campus, if your group does not want the \$15/person buffet lunch option)

Restaurant/Eatery	Address/Location
Holy Burger - Uniondale	315 Oak Street, Uniondale, NY
Adobo Mexican Grill	976 Hempstead Tpke, Uniondale, NY
Pantano's Gourmet	1150 Hempstead Turnpike, Uniondale, NY
Jersey Mike's Subs	988 Hempstead Turnpike, Uniondale, NY
Napolini Pizza	325 Oak St, Uniondale, NY 11553
Papa John's Pizza	1204 Hempstead Tpke, Uniondale, NY 11553
Pizza Hut	760 Fulton Ave, Hempstead, NY 11550
Popeye's	780 Fulton Ave, Hempstead, NY 11550
Chipotle	1166 Hempstead Tpke, Uniondale, NY 11553
McDonald's	1110 Hempstead Tpke, Uniondale, NY 11553
Starbucks	1000 Fulton Ave, Hempstead, NY 11550
Friendly's	1826 Hempstead Turnpike, East Meadow
Energy Fuel	676 Stewart Ave, Garden City, NY 11530
Ralph's Italian Ices (dessert only)	1192 Hempstead Tpke, Uniondale, NY 11553
Insomnia Cookies (dessert only)	730 Fulton Ave, Hempstead, NY 11550



NY Thespians Registration Information (Registration closes February 15, 2026)



Registration is online through RegFox! That means you can log in and modify your registration on your own at any time up until March 6th. You may continue to make changes until March 16th for a \$10 fee per change. Please create a login for yourself when you finish registering for the first time. This will allow you to make additions, modifications, and changes. You will need to know the following to register:

PART 1: Lead Contact registration

- Troupe Director or Lead Contact information
 - Name of School/Organization, Troupe Number (if applicable)
 - Name of Troupe Director or Lead Adult
 - Pronouns
 - Email, phone number, address (personal or school/organization)
 - Meal option (for lunch on Saturday and Sunday - optional add-on)
 - T-shirt or hoodie add-on and size(s) (optional)
 - Accommodations (optional)
 - Has your school/group attended Festival before?

PART 2: Attendees (these are the additional students and adults attending. Add as many registrants as you have, including all chaperones. You can edit this at any time up until March 6th, after which time there is a \$10 fee until March 16th)*

- Registration Type (HS Thespian, MS Thespian, Non-Thespian, etc.)
 - Name of person (how they want it printed on their nametag)
 - Pronouns
 - Email address
 - Phone number (optional)
 - Meal option (for lunch on Saturday and Sunday - optional add-on)
 - Accommodations (optional)
 - Will this student be registering for any Thespys? Students can enter up to three different events. (see PDF file for details- these were formerly known as Individual Events)
 - T-shirt or hoodie and size(s) (optional add-on)

PART 3: Billing information (balance can be paid directly with a credit card OR offline through check, cash, or money order)

- Name to send invoice
- Billing address
- Email to send invoice
- Payment method (online or offline)
 - If paying offline with a check, cash, or money order, payment must be *received* by March 16th
 - Check/money order to be made out to “New York Thespians”

*all attendees will register for workshops when the portal opens March 16th. All workshops are first come, first served until filled. All attendees will receive an email link when workshops open. If an attendee has a special assignment (All-State Show, Thespy, STO assignment, etc.), directions to register for those assignments will be in their initial email



Thespys at NY Thespian Festival 2026



**Broadway has the TONYs, Hollywood has the OSCARS,
Thespians have the THESPYS!**

The International Thespian Excellence Awards, or Thespys™ for short, recognize the highest level of achievement in school theatre performance and technical theatre.

This educational program (formerly National Individual Events) gives Thespians — students who have been inducted into the International Thespian Society — the opportunity to receive constructive feedback on prepared theatrical material and technical designs. Students who achieve overall Superiors receive special recognition at Festival as well as a medal and certificate. All students who participate receive written feedback from two to three professionals in the field.

Students can opt to participate in up to three categories for \$5 each submission. If a Thespian is unable to attend Festival and wants to participate in Thespys, they can upload their performance and/or presentation to Open Water for \$10 each Thespy. LINK - [HOW to submit on OPEN WATER](#)

Open Water IN-PERSON submissions for performances and tech - [LINK](#) (closes 3/30)

Open Water VIRTUAL submissions for all categories - [LINK](#) (closes 3/30)

Please click the links below for specific requirements and rubrics. You may also access [COMBINED THESPY REQUIREMENTS HERE](#) and [RUBRICS BY CATEGORY HERE](#). Any other questions are likely to be answered through the official [THESPYS WEB PLATFORM](#) (including video examples).

GENERAL REQUIREMENTS FOR ALL CATEGORIES - see [NY THESPIANS CHECKLISTS HERE](#)

- All Thespys will be performed or presented LIVE
- Musical Theatre Thespys must have their music prepared to be played through a bluetooth, lightning, or ¼” audio-enabled device (students are encouraged to bring their own devices to play music)
- Can wear most any clothing, however, all black or dark clothing is preferred (students may elect to bring a change of clothes), NO PROPS, NO COSTUMES, NO THEATRICAL MAKEUP
- Stick to the allocated time for the category
- Follow all category rules and expectations

PERFORMANCE THESPYS (check out the approved publishers list HERE)		
CATEGORY AND TOTAL TIME ALLOTTED	RULES	RUBRIC
NEW Single Monologue, 3 minutes	Monologue Requirements	Acting Rubric
Contrasting Monologues, 3 minutes		
Duet or Group Acting, 5 minutes	Duet/Group Acting Requirements	
Musical Theatre Performance Solo, 5 minutes	Musical Solo Requirements	Musical Theatre Performance Rubric
Musical Theatre Duet or Group, 5 minutes	Musical Duet/Group Requirements	

Musical Theatre Dance Solo, Duet, or Group, 5 minutes	Musical Theatre Dance Solo, Duet, or Group Requirements	Musical Theatre Dance Rubric
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TECHNICAL THESPYS	
5-8-minute presentation of portfolio*, optional 4 minutes of Q&A with adjudicators	
CATEGORY	REQUIREMENTS RUBRIC
Costume Construction	Costume Construction Requirements and Rubric
Prop Construction	Prop Construction Requirements and Rubric
Costume Design	Costume Design Requirements and Rubric
Lighting Design	Lighting Design Requirements and Rubric
Makeup Design	Makeup Design Requirements and Rubric
Playwriting	Playwriting Requirements and Rubric
Scenic (set) Design	Scenic Design Requirements and Rubric
Sound Design	Sound Design Requirements and Rubric
Stage Management	Stage Management Requirements and Rubric
Theatre Marketing (publicity)	Theatre Marketing Requirements and Rubric
Short Film: Film, Documentary, or Animation	Short Film Requirements and Rubric

*An exception to the 8-minute time requirement is the Short Film category. Each short film must not exceed 5 minutes, plus 1 minute for credits (for a total of 6 minutes). There is no portfolio of design required for the Short Film category.

If you have any questions regarding Thespys, please reach out to nythespians@gmail.com



Play-in-a-Day Showcase at NY Thespian Festival 2026



Any student attending the NY Thespian Festival can sign up to participate in Play-in-a-Day. This is a creative event where students from all over NY State get together to write, direct, perform, and tech short 10-minute plays in one weekend. This is an activity that can be easily replicated at your school for a fun night of low-stakes theater or even a major fundraiser!

March 16-23, sign up:

- Students who want to write, direct, act, or be on crew sign up during workshop sign-up March 16-23. Everyone will meet together at 9:40am on April 25th.
- Any student attending Festival can submit ONE LINE that must be used by every playwright in their show. They can also vote on a prop that must be included.

Saturday, April 25th

- 9:40am: **ALL INVOLVED** will meet together and be randomly divided into teams of 1 playwright, 1 director, and equal numbers of actors; technicians will work together to support all teams. The line and prop that must appear in every show will be revealed. Teams will have 15 minutes to plan together.
- Workshop #1, lunch, and All-Festival time: **PLAYWRIGHTS** will be given dedicated writing time with support from the Play-in-a-Day team. These students will eat lunch together and take part in the All-Festival Activity in a special Writers' Room. They will then resume a regular Festival schedule beginning at Workshop #2.
- Activity time: **ACTORS and DIRECTORS** will meet to have a read-through of their scripts and begin blocking.
- Dinner Time: **ACTORS and DIRECTORS** will rehearse, providing notes for **CREW**. We are aware that some students may not be able to stay late for this rehearsal. Students may still participate, even if they are unable to attend this extra rehearsal time!

Sunday, April 26th

- 9am: **ALL INVOLVED** will meet together to go over any notes, changes, and ideas. Show performance order will be determined.
- Workshop #3: **ACTORS and DIRECTORS** will rehearse their scripts
- Lunch time: **ACTORS and DIRECTORS** will have their final rehearsal, providing notes for **CREW**.
- 1:15pm: Performances and accolades!



Improv Competition and Tech Challenge at NY Thespian Festival 2026



IMPROV COMPETITION:

Troupes/schools/groups may send teams of 3-5 students to compete in a series of improv games and scenes. All groups will receive feedback from adjudicators. One group will be selected to showcase a game during an All-Festival time.

Your group may choose to practice beforehand or just jump in the day of the event. All participants should at least familiarize themselves with the procedures of each game. The link to game choices and explanations can be found [AT THIS LINK](#). The run of the event is outlined below:

1. Warm-up with all teams:
 - a. 10 Things
 - b. Pass the clap
 - c. What are you doing?
2. Short Game, each team. Everyone will play two of these games. Each team gets to select their own games. Before the first round, each team introduces their team name and leader/host. Game options can be found at the link above
3. Long Game, each team. One game will be played. Each team gets to select their own game.
4. Tiebreaker Game (if necessary), any teams
5. Extra time = group games for all! Led by a volunteer

TECH CHALLENGE:

Troupes/groups may send teams of 4-6 students to compete in a series of five technical challenges. Each event is designed to demonstrate as closely as possible the techniques and practices used in the professional theatre industry.

Participants should feel free to ask questions of the adjudicators in each event to help clarify rules or procedures before they compete. However, that is not the time to ask to be taught how to do an event. Participants are also strongly encouraged to watch, cheer for, and support other teams during the competition.

Criteria and explanations of each event can be found [AT THIS LINK](#). The following is a list of this year's events:

- Light hang and focus
- Leg a platform
- Costume quick change and sew a button
- Set up a prop table and coil a cable
- Spike a set



New York Thespians

NY Thespians Photo/Video Release Festival 2025-2026

I hereby authorize the New York Chapter of the Educational Theatre Association (EdTA) and its designee(s) to photograph and/or video (full name of participant) _____ and/or use existing photographs and/or video recording(s) made of the above-listed participant in conjunction with NY Thespians and NY Thespian activities.

I also grant the New York Chapter of the EdTA the right to edit, use, and reuse said products for educational purposes, including use in print, on the internet, and all other forms of media.

I hereby release the New York Chapter of the EdTA and its agents from all claims, demands, and liabilities whatsoever in connection with the above.

SCHOOL AND/OR TROUPE: _____

If the participant is under 18:

PARENT/GUARDIAN NAME: _____

PARENT/GUARDIAN SIGNATURE: _____ **DATE:** _____

If the participant is 18+:

NAME OF PARTICIPANT: _____

PARTICIPANT SIGNATURE: _____ **DATE:** _____