



Statue Stories Chicago: The Public Writing Competition Give the Brachiosaurus a voice!

Outside The Field Museum a *Brachiosaurus* awaits the gift of speech. What does he have to say for himself? Or is it herself? Are you the one to tell us?

Write a Monologue!

Monologos means “speaking alone” in Greek, but we all know that people who speak without thinking about their listener can be very dull indeed. Your challenge is to find a ‘voice’ for your statue and to write an engaging monologue in 350 words.

Get under your statue’s skin!

- Look closely and develop a sense of empathy with your sculpture.
- Invite your listener to feel with you: create shifts in tempo and emotion, use different tenses, figures of speech and anecdotes, psychological transitions, sensory details and even sound effects.

Finding your sculpture’s voice

Write in the first person and adopt the persona of your character:

- What kind of vocabulary will you use - your own or that of another era?
- Your words will be spoken so read them aloud: use their rhythm and your sentence structure to convey emotional charge and urgency.
- Read great monologues for inspiration, for example Hamlet’s *Alas Poor Yorick*, or watch film monologues, like Morgan Freeman’s in *The Shawshank Redemption*.

How are you going to keep people listening? Structure your monologue!

- How will you introduce yourself? With a greeting, a warning, a question, an order, a riddle? Grab and hold your listener’s attention from your very first line.
- Think of your monologue as a story, with you as both narrator and lead: how will you build a sense of development, suspense and atmosphere?
- Your final line is the most important of all: how will you say goodbye and make your exit?

Find out about your statue- Do some background research before you begin

Google around and become an expert on your statue. You’re sure to discover interesting facts, anecdotes, jokes or quotes to weave into your monologue.

The Subject: Skeleton of *Brachiosaurus altithorax* outside The Field Museum

What you see are fibreglass casts of the real bones of the *Brachiosaurus*. The *Brachiosaurus* roamed around North America around 154 million years ago. It walked on its toes, believe it or not! At around 25 feet long and 30 feet tall, it was a giant of the Jurassic Period. The *Brachiosaurus* was an herbivore, eating as much as 400 kilograms of plants EVERY day!

What's in a name?

The name *Brachiosaurus* means "Arm Lizard." This is because their forelimbs (or arms) were longer than their hind limbs, rare in the Jurassic Age!

What do I look like? Where am I?

Make no bones about it: I am scary looking! Many of the people looking at me will be children. Do you want to scare them stiff... or share my softer side?

My story!

My story is one of a lost and dangerous world. What would I do and say if I were alive today? Do I miss my homeland, or relish the new?

Some points to keep in mind:

- **The audience is not used to speaking to dinosaurs!** It's an unexpected experience and so, the piece needs to be engaging from the start.
- **Every word counts!** It's a short word limit, so avoid 'filler'!
- **The project sets out to reach new audiences:** people who like looking at public art and sculptures as well as people who didn't know they did! We hope for wide public appeal.
- **Use the physicality of the statue.** If a statue has a broken nose, you might want to refer to it.
- **Refer to the location and surroundings** of the statue. What's it doing in that place specifically? Does it explore the areas at night when nobody is around?

Have you found your story and your voice? Then get writing!

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