

Guidelines for Writing a DADS Pantomime

Below are DADS guidelines for writing a pantomime, to help you write a fantastic script with our tried and tested recipe for success.

Many of these guidelines were first written as constitutional rules since our creation in 1947 so you will be following in the footsteps of those that have been there, done that and got the t-shirt.

The guidelines allow plenty of room for creativity and new ideas. So requests to produce something outside of these guidelines are considered rare and require approval from the committee. Happy writing!

- Pantomime scripts must follow traditional panto format. For those who want to write something outside of this structure, DADS often produce a summer play/musical.
- There should be a minimum of 8 and a maximum of 12 scenes. You can include a prologue in addition to those scenes if you wish.
- There should be a minimum of 8 and a maximum of 12 songs / dance routines
- There should be a maximum of 18 named characters (Lead and supporting)
- Characters must include at least one of each of the following: a 'dame', a 'principle boy', a 'principle girl', a 'fool' and a 'villain'.
- Lead roles are defined as the 5-10 characters who appear the most on stage and should have a beginning, middle and end to their own arc in the story. This should include a principal boy and/or girl. All lead roles should all be introduced by scene 4.
- Supporting roles are defined as the remaining named characters who are less vital to the overall plot and therefore tend to appear less frequently or only once in the show.
- The pantomime must include the ability for a chorus to take part. This is anyone who is not in a lead or supporting role. This is because we do not turn anyone down who wishes to be involved in the production and this allows for flexible numbers of cast.
- The pantomime must include the ability for children to take part. Children are not allowed to perform every night therefore we operate a team system. There should be a maximum of 6 children in a team, should more than 12 children want to be involved a third team will be made.
- We advise songs to be a mixture of styles and eras, to help carry the emotion and connect with the audience. We advise that 80% of songs are well known by our demographic. For example, you could include one or two songs aimed for children, one or two classics that the older generation know etc.
- If you are unsure about songs, dances, set design and special effects. Please put TBC. (To be confirmed). A member of the committee can help make suggestions in these areas. All these elements will need to be decided before the pantomime is officially signed off.