

**Ohio University Division of Theatre – Professional Director Training Program**  
**PDTP Reading List, Part One**  
**100 Essential Plays**

Reducing the entire history of dramatic literature down to a list of the “one hundred best plays” is an exercise in futility. But a *fun* exercise in futility. It becomes particularly difficult when assessing plays from the last twenty or thirty years, so my choices are, even from my own perspective, somewhat arbitrary. (At least I didn’t put ‘*night, Mother* or *Crimes of the Heart* on the list, okay!) So, here’s my best shot (for now). Are they the 100 *best* plays ever written? Who knows. But they are inarguably among the most influential, the most anthologized, and in many cases, the most produced plays in the world. You should know them, every one.

**Classical Greece (4)**

Aeschylus	<i>Agamemnon</i>
Aristophanes	<i>Lysistrata</i>
Euripides	<i>Medea</i>
Sophocles	<i>Oedipus Rex</i>

**England (Medieval and Renaissance) (11)**

Ben Jonson	<i>Volpone, or The Fox</i>
Christopher Marlowe	<i>Doctor Faustus</i>
William Shakespeare	<i>Hamlet</i>
	<i>Henry IV, Part 1</i>
	<i>King Lear</i>
	<i>Macbeth</i>
	<i>A Midsummer Night’s Dream</i>
	<i>Othello</i>
	<i>Romeo and Juliet</i>
	<i>Twelfth Night</i>
	<i>The Duchess of Malfi</i>

John Webster

**England (17th and 18th Centuries) (4)**

William Congreve	<i>The Way of the World</i>
Oliver Goldsmith	<i>She Stoops to Conquer</i>
Richard Sheridan	<i>The School for Scandal</i>
William Wycherley	<i>The Country Wife</i>

**England (19th Century and Pre-WWI 20th Century) (4)**

George Bernard Shaw	<i>Arms and the Man</i>
	<i>Candida</i>
	<i>Pygmalion</i>
	<i>The Importance of Being Earnest</i>

Oscar Wilde

**England (Post WWI to 1960) (3)**

Noel Coward	<i>Blithe Spirit</i>
	<i>Private Lives</i>
	<i>Look Back in Anger</i>

John Osborne

**England (Post-1960) (7)**

Caryl Churchill	<i>Cloud Nine</i>
Joe Orton	<i>Loot</i>
Harold Pinter	<i>The Birthday Party</i>
	<i>The Homecoming</i>
	<i>Amadeus</i>
	<i>Arcadia</i>
	<i>Rosencrantz and Guildenstern are Dead</i>

Peter Shaffer

Tom Stoppard

**France (11)**

Jean Anouilh	<i>The Lark</i>
Georges Feydeau	<i>A Flea in Her Ear</i>
Jean Genet	<i>The Maids</i>
Jean Giraudoux	<i>The Madwoman of Chaillot</i>
Victor Hugo	<i>Hernani</i>
Eugène Ionesco	<i>The Chairs</i>
Molière	<i>The Misanthrope</i>
	<i>Tartuffe</i>
	<i>Phaedre</i>
	<i>Cyrano de Bergerac</i>
	<i>No Exit</i>

Jean Racine

Edmond Rostand

Jean-Paul Sartre

**Germany (5)**

Bertolt Brecht	<i>The Caucasian Chalk Circle</i>
	<i>Mother Courage and Her Children</i>
	<i>Woyzeck</i>
	<i>Faust, Part 1</i>
	<i>Spring Awakening</i>

Georg Büchner

Johann Goethe

Frank Wedekind

**Ireland (5)**

Samuel Beckett

Martin McDonagh

Sean O'Casey

J.M. Synge

**Italy (2)**

Carlo Goldoni

Luigi Pirandello

**Russia (7)**

Anton Chekhov

Nikolai Gogol

Maxim Gorki

Ivan Turgenev

**Scandinavia (4)**

Henrik Ibsen

August Strindberg

**Africa / South Africa (1)**

Athol Fugard

**Spain (3)**

Calderon de la Barca

Federico Garcia Lorca

Lope de Vega

**United States (Eugene O'Neill through 1960) (15)**

Philip Barry

Lorraine Hansberry

Lillian Hellman

George S. Kaufman & Moss Hart

Arthur Miller

Clifford Odets

Eugene O'Neill

Elmer Rice

William Saroyan

Thornton Wilder

Tennessee Williams

**United States (1960 and Beyond) (14)**

Edward Albee

David Auburn

Tony Kushner

Traci Letts

David Mamet

Suzan-Lori Parks

David Rabe

Sam Shepard

Paula Vogel

August Wilson

Lanford Wilson

*Endgame*

*Waiting for Godot*

*The Beauty Queen of Leenane*

*Juno and the Paycock*

*The Playboy of the Western World*

*The Servant of Two Masters*

*Six Characters in Search of an Author*

*The Cherry Orchard*

*The Seagull*

*The Three Sisters*

*Uncle Vanya*

*The Inspector General*

*The Lower Depths*

*A Month in the Country*

*A Doll's House*

*Ghosts*

*Hedda Gabbler*

*Miss Julie*

*"Master Harold"...and the boys*

*Life is a Dream*

*Blood Wedding*

*Fuente Ovejuna*

*The Philadelphia Story*

*A Raisin in the Sun*

*The Little Foxes*

*You Can't Take It With You*

*The Crucible*

*Death of a Salesman*

*Waiting for Lefty*

*The Iceman Cometh*

*Long Day's Journey into Night*

*The Adding Machine*

*The Time of Your Life*

*Our Town*

*The Skin of Our Teeth*

*The Glass Menagerie*

*A Streetcar Named Desire*

*Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf?*

*Proof*

*Angels in America, Parts 1 & 2*

*August: Osage County*

*American Buffalo*

*Glengarry Glen Ross*

*Topdog/Underdog*

*Streamers*

*Buried Child*

*A Lie of the Mind*

*How I Learned to Drive*

*The Piano Lesson*

*5<sup>th</sup> of July*