A prompt book is a copy of the script that includes notes on blocking, speech, set design, costumes, properties, lighting and sound. Student acting groups will create their own as they document the company’s approach.

Procedure:

1. The prompt book consists of a copy of the scene to be performed, a scene design, costume designs, stage directions, and character notes. The following directions are for students.

2. Write an introductory paragraph in the prompt book in which you explain the overall concept of the scene and how you plan to convey that concept or idea to an audience. The paragraph should answer the question: What are you trying to show?

3. Xerox the assigned scene, paste it onto loose-leaf paper, and put it into a 3-ring binder. The scene should appear on the left side of the binder; enter production notes on the right side.

4. Make cuts by crossing out lines. Explain why you have cut the scene as you did. How have the cuts clarified the scene or made it more dramatic? Would a modern audience would not easily understand them? Why? Note: Although cuts are permitted, Shakespeare’s words must appear in their original sequence without changes in their wording or sense.

5. Write in production notes for the way the scene should be played. These include:
   a. vocal pauses
   b. voice inflection
   c. tone of voice
   d. gestures and facial expressing not explicit in the text
   e. notes or diagrams of action and movement

6. Discuss how you want to stage the scene. Draw the stage set, or describe it in writing. Include an explanation of why you chose your scene design.
7. Design costumes for the characters that are appropriate for your concept of the scene. Include a drawing or description of the costumes and a justification for selecting them. If you do the scene in modern dress or in another time period, explain your reasons.

8. Each actor should write character notes for his/her part that includes the objectives throughout the scene. To find an “objective,” ask yourself:
   a. what does the character want?
   b. What is his/her motivation for doing what he/she does?
   c. What obstacles stand in his or her way?
   d. What happens when objectives meet obstacles?
   e. What distinctive elements appear in the character’s way of speaking? (e.g., Plain or elaborate language? Errors? Flowery language? Gestures? Moods?)

9. Analyze the character’s reaction to other characters and to what happens in the scene. Think about the meaning on the surface as well as secondary meanings of words
THESEUS
To you, your father should be as a god,  
One that composed your beauties, yea, and one  
To whom you are but as a form in wax  
By him imprinted, and within his power  
To leave the figure or disfigure it.  Th. emphasizes disfigure. 
Demetrius is a worthy gentleman.  Gesture? Cut off head?

HERMIA
So is Lysander.  H runs over to Lys, right. Puts hand on shoulder. 

THESEUS  In himself he is, 
But in this kind, wanting your father’s voice,  
The other must be held the worthier.  T walks to Demetrius who looks pompous. 

HERMIA
I would my father looked but with my eyes.  H runs to father. Holds out hand. He turns  

THESEUS  Rather your eyes must with his judgment look.  Sounds strict. 

HERMIA
I do entreat your Grace to pardon me.  Th. throws herself at his feet, d.l. 
I know not by what power I am made bold,  
Nor how it may concern my modest  
In such a presence here to plead my thoughts;  Long pause. Should she sound scared? 
But I beseech your Grace that I may know  Or should she be defiant? 
The worst that may befall me in this case 
If I refuse to wed Demetrius. 

THESEUS
Either to die the death or to abjure  Reaction: She is shocked.  Hand to mouth. 
Forever the society of men.  
Therefore, fair Hermia, question your desires,  
Know of your youth, examine well your blood.  
Whether (if you yield not to your father’s choice)  
You can endure the livery of a nun,  
For aye to be in shady cloister mewed,  
To live a barren sister all your life.  
Chanting faint hymns to the cold fruitless moon.  
Thrice-blessèd they that master so their blood  
To undergo such maiden pilgrimage.  
But earthlier happy is the rose distilled  
Than that which, withering on the virgin thorn,  
Grows, lives, and dies in single blessedness. 

HERMIA
So will I grow, so live, so die, my lord,  She should be strong but not shout. 
Ere I will yield my virgin patent up  Lysander walks over to her, right. 
Unto his Lordship whose unwished yoke 
My soul consents not to give sovereignty.  Sound very sure on this line.