

Play the Knave



MEKANIMATOR SCRIPTMAKER USER MANUAL

The Mekanimator Scriptmaker program is an online tool developed to pair with the digital Shakespeare video game *Play the Knave*. The tool can be used to write your own game script, create characters, customize the look and speed of your script, and to save scripts to be used on the *Play the Knave* platform. When you upload your script into *Play the Knave*, the script will appear as karaoke lines on screen.

This guide will show you how to use every part of the Mekanimator Scriptmaker and answer frequently asked questions. For additional information about *Play the Knave*, please visit: www.playtheknave.org

TABLE OF CONTENTS

A. GETTING STARTED	3
B. SET UP	3
C. CREATING CHARACTERS	4
D. ADJUSTING TIMING	4
E. WRITING YOUR LINES	5
F. TESTING	7
G. SAVING AND EDITING	7
H. PRINTING	8
I. TROUBLESHOOTING	9

A. GETTING STARTED

To use Mekanimator Scriptmaker you must open up the website:

<https://playtheknave.org/scriptmaker>. This site tends to work best on Chrome or Firefox. From this site, you'll be able to make, edit, and save scripts for *Play the Knave*. These scripts will be formatted as JSRT files and are only editable within the Scriptmaker.

Unless you are creating scripts on the same computer you use to play *Play the Knave*, you will need to have a flash drive or some other form of external memory device (e.g. a USB drive) to save the scripts so that you can later upload them into the game later. Plan to have a way of moving the scripts from your computer to the game computer before using Scriptmaker.

You can input any text you wish into the script maker. If you are editing a script from an existing source, copy and paste the text from the electronic source. If you plan to share your work with others, be sure that you follow copyright restrictions for the source you are using. For Shakespeare works, we recommend the Folger Digital Texts found at www.folgerdigitaltexts.org/, which are free and open source.

B. SET UP

When you open the Mekanimator Scriptmaker site, you'll see a blank script.

1. Click on the **Scene Info+** box to expand the section. You will see **Description** and **Author(s)** fields [see Image 1].
2. Optional: fill out the **Description** field to identify the scene you're working on.
3. Optional: fill out the **Author** section so others can see that you created this script.

Image 1:



The image shows a dark-themed interface for the Mekanimator Scriptmaker. At the top, there is a white box labeled "Scene info" with a minus sign icon. Below this, the "Description:" label is followed by a white input field containing the text "description". Below that, the "Author(s):" label is followed by a white input field containing the text "author".

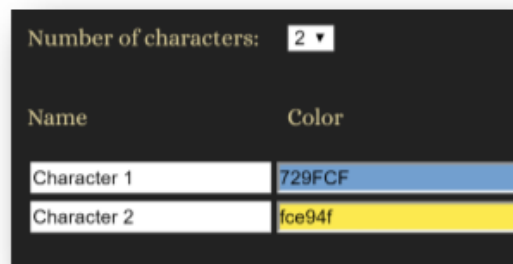
C. CREATING CHARACTERS

1. Click on the **Cast+** box. This will expand the section, allowing you to create your characters [see Image 2].
2. Click on the field next to **Number of Characters** and select the number of characters you want to appear in the scene.
3. Locate the **Name** field. In the boxes below it, change the default names (e.g. “Character 1”) to the names you want for your characters.
4. Locate the **Color** field. This will determine what color the character’s lines will be when they show up on the karaoke script in the game. We have pre-selected colors that show up well on the screen, but if you want to change these colors, just click on the colored box next to the character whose color you’d like to change. This will open up a pallet from which you can choose any color.

NOTE:

You can have up to 4 characters per scene.

Image 2:



D. ADJUSTING TIMING

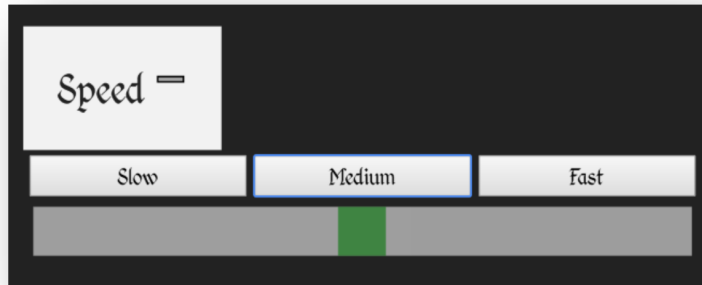
The **Speed** settings determine the speed your lines will appear on the karaoke screen. When you write your lines, you will have a chance to adjust the duration of each line individually if you wish. But it is helpful to start by setting an approximate speed for your scene’s lines.

The default line speed is “Medium,” which gives actors time to read the lines carefully and dramatically, and also allows them time to think about movements and gestures to make. Novice readers might prefer “Slow” and very proficient readers might prefer “Fast.”

To change the default speed setting:

1. Click on the **Speed+** box to expand the field and reveal the slider bar [See Image 3].
2. You can click the boxes to select the “Slow,” “Medium,” or “Fast” option; this will move the green bar directly to those speeds. Or you can drag the green bar to choose a speed of your choice (e.g. between “slow” and “medium”)

Image 3:



Once you have created lines (see section E below), you will be able to adjust the timing of individual lines manually. To adjust an individual line’s speed:

1. Locate the field **Duration** adjacent to the line [see Image 4]
2. Type any quantity of time (in seconds). This determines how long this line will remain on screen before it disappears. The longer the duration, the slower the reading speed.

WARNING:

If have have adjusted lines individually by manually inputting their timing, the automatic timer will override those settings.

E. WRITING YOUR LINES

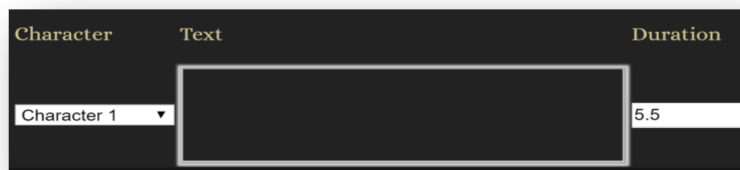
1. Click on the **+Lines** box to expand it.
2. Locate the **Character** field [see Image 4]. Click on the arrows to see the available characters. Select from the characters you created or select **Stage Directions**.

3. Click inside the adjacent **Text** box. Type or paste lines for the character you selected. If you selected **Stage Directions**, type your desired stage directions. You can also:
- Create a new text box by pressing **Enter** at the end of your line.
 - Create line breaks within a text box by pressing **Shift + Enter** for a hard return.
 - Delete an entire text box by first erasing the line and then pressing the **Backspace/Delete** key again.

NOTE:

Keep lines to no more than 1-3 lines per text box. Longer texts will otherwise cover the avatars on screen when you play the game.

Image 4:



The image shows a dark-themed interface with three columns: 'Character', 'Text', and 'Duration'. Under 'Character', there is a dropdown menu showing 'Character 1'. The 'Text' column contains a large, empty white rectangular box. Under 'Duration', there is a text input field containing the number '5.5'.

IMPORTANT:

Do not include stage directions within a text box assigned to a character. Instead, **put each stage direction in its own text box and set the timing for it manually.** If you include stage directions as part of a character's lines, the system will assume your stage directions are a character's reading lines, and the karaoke timer will not work effectively.

E.g. If you want two characters to fight, create a text box for Stage Directions and type:

[Romeo and Tybalt fight]

Next to the line, type in the number of seconds you want the fight to last before the next speaking line appears.

F. TESTING

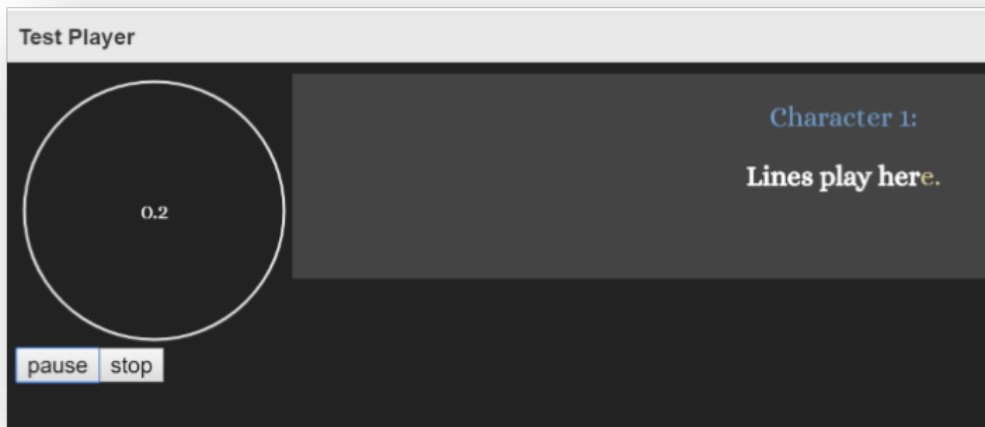
To try out your script before uploading it into the game and make sure the timings are as you want them, you can test your script within the Scriptmaker.

1. Locate the **Test** tab at the top of the page. This will open an additional box with the options to **Play** or **Stop**.
2. Click **Play** to watch the lines play with a timer, **Pause** to freeze the line, and **Stop** to end the test. [see Image 5].

IMPORTANT:

Remember that the actors delivering these lines will be moving their avatars at the same time as they read the lines. So if you want to get a true feel for how actors will handle your lines within the game, you should simulate playing conditions: read the lines aloud and move around as you recite them.

Image 5:



G. SAVING AND EDITING

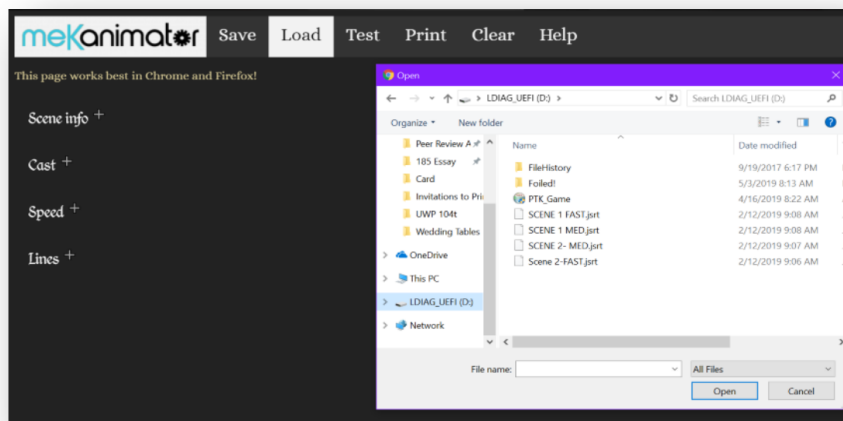
1. When you are happy with your script or at any time you want to save your work, select the **Save** tab at the top of the page. This will download a JSRT-formatted file onto your computer [see Image 6].
2. Rename the file (the default name is “scene”) and choose where you want the file to be saved. Make sure you keep the JSRT suffix at the end when renaming the file.

- To view or edit an already existing script that has been saved to your computer, select the **Load** tab at the top of the page. This will open a window showing your computer files. Navigate to the JSRT file that you would like to view or edit and select it.

NOTE:

Mekanimator Scriptmaker will load only files that are saved in JSRT format. If you try to upload a file in a different format (.txt, .doc, .pdf), you will get an error message.

Image 6:



H. PRINTING

If you would like to print out your script or have a digital version of it that can be read outside of the Mekanimator Scriptmaker system:

- Select the **Print** tab at the top of the page. This will generate a text text file (.txt).
- Choose where you want the file to be saved on your computer.
- Any basic text reader application (e.g. TextEdit) can open the file.

NOTE:

Your text version of the scene is just for your use. It cannot be uploaded to Mekanimator Scriptmaker or to *Play the Knave*. And any edits you make to this file will not transfer to the game or to Scriptmaker.

I. TROUBLESHOOTING

Many frequently encountered problems are addressed in the green boxes in the manual, so be sure to consult those carefully.

Problem	Solution
I made a mistake and want to start all over again.	You can clear the script by selecting the Clear tab at the top of the webpage. This will start the page over with a blank script. If you close the tab and reopen Mekanimator Scriptmaker, it will not save your script and will begin with a blank script as well.
I don't have an internet connection. Can I still use Mekanimator Scriptmaker?	No, you will need to have an internet connection to make and edit a script.
A script I already made won't load.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Make sure you are trying to load a JSRT formatted file. Other formats will not work.● Expand the Lines field to see if the script is there but just hasn't become visible yet.