MEKANIMATOR SCRIPTMAKER USER MANUAL

The Mekanimator Scriptmaker is an online companion tool for the videogame *Play the Knave*. Use Scriptmaker to write your own game script for 1-4 characters. When you upload your saved script into *Play the Knave*, the script will appear as karaoke lines on screen.

This guide will show you how to use Mekanimator Scriptmaker and answer frequently asked questions.

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A. GETTING STARTED

To use Mekanimator Scriptmaker you must open up the website:
https://modlab.ucdavis.edu/scriptmaker/. This site tends to work best on Chrome or Firefox.
From the 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 way to save the scripts you create so that you can upload
them into the game later. Plan to have a way of moving the scripts from your device 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's works, we recommend the Folger Shakespeare Library Digital Texts found at
www.folgerdigitaltexts.org/, which are reputable, free, and open source. Download the selected
play in TXT format and then copy and paste the lines you want into Scriptmaker.

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 s**ection so others can see that you created this script.
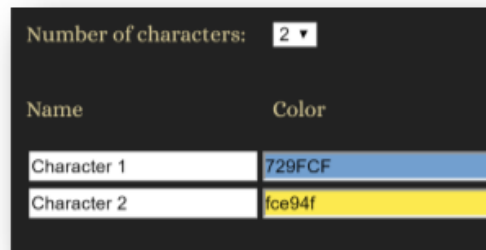
Image 1:

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. The default setting is 2.
   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.
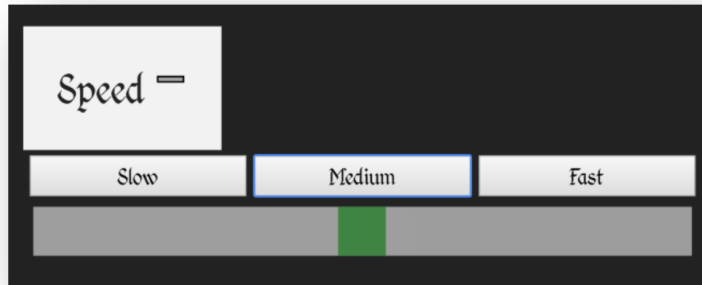
Image 2:

D. ADJUSTING TIMING

The **Speed** settings determine the speed your lines will appear on the karaoke screen. After you input 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 while they read. 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 input 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 you have have adjusted lines individually by manually inputting their timing, the automatic timer will override those settings. So do not click on the auto-timer buttons or adjust the green bar if you have already manually adjusted the duration of particular lines.

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. To give the line to one of your characters, select that character from the drop-down menu. If you want to script an action for your character to do, instead of a line for the character to speak, 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.

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

Image 4:
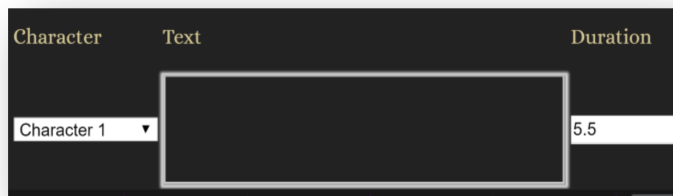
IMPORTANT:
Do not include stage directions within a text box assigned to a character. Instead, **put each stage direction in its own text box and set the timing for it manually.** If you include stage directions as part of a character's lines, the system will assume your stage directions are a character's 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 Scriptmaker.

1. Locate the **Test** tab at the top of the page. This will open a window 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].

> **TIP:**
> 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:
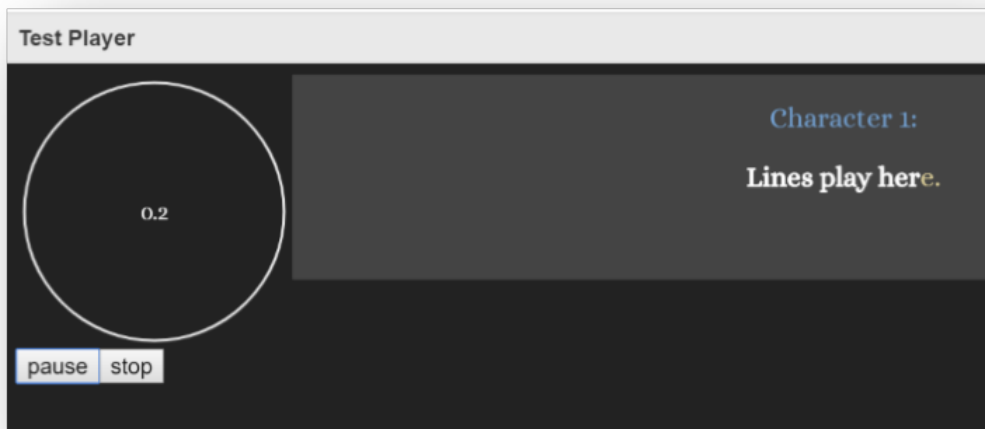

G. SAVING AND EDITING

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 device. [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.

3. To view or edit an already existing script that has been saved to your device, select the **Load** tab at the top of the page. This will open a window showing your device 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:
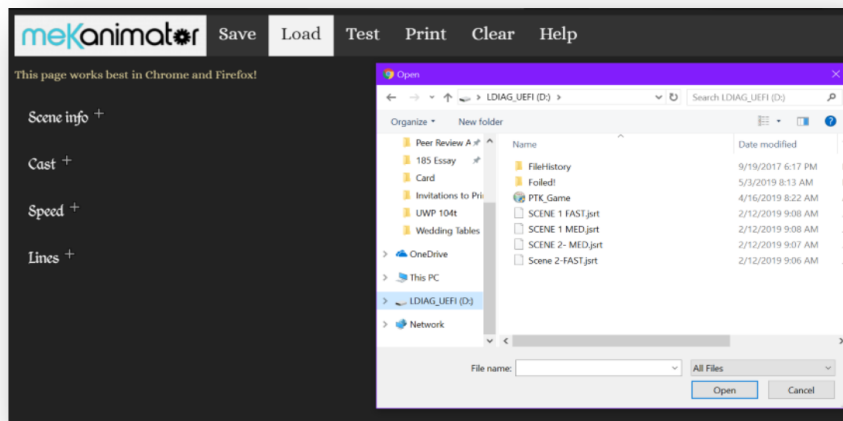
H. PRINTING

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:

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

> **IMPORTANT:**
> 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.	- 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.

<u>Acknowledgements:</u>