

# *Theatre I-III*

From Simple Studies, <https://simplestudies.edublogs.org> & @simplestudiesinc on  
Instagram

## **Table of Contents:**

### **Part 1- Intro to Theatre/History**

- What is theatre?
- Where are its origins?
- Where and when is it used today?

### **Part 2- Basics of Theatre**

- Monologue vs Soliloquy vs Scene
- Stage directions
- Ranges of emotions
- Resume

### **Part 3- Famous Methods**

- Uta Hagen
- Stanislavski
- Chekhov

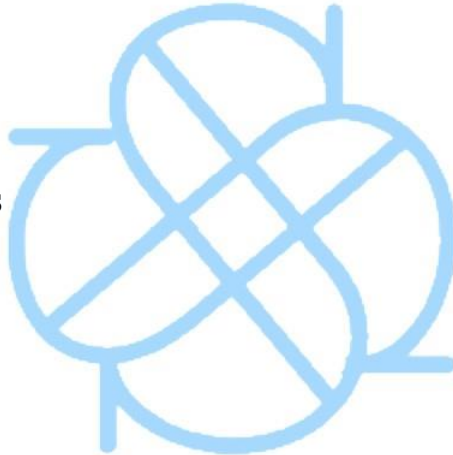
### **Part 4- Acting 101**

- Peaks of emotions
- Making choices
- Things to keep in mind
- Character development
- Scene partners

### **Part 5- Audition Etiquette**

- What to wear and bring
- Be prepared
- Slating

### **Part 6- Helpful Theatre Terms**



## Part One- Intro To Theatre/History

### *What is theatre?*

- A form of art and storytelling
- Can be interpreted in many different ways

### *History/origins:*

- The origins of theatre are greek.
- Began in the 6th century BCE
- Began in Athens, Greece
- Started as part of a festival to the god Dionysus
- Dionysus was the god of wine and fertility.
- Performed in decorative masks, allowing one actor to play more than one character
- The logo you often see representing theatre are two greek masks, one for comedy and another for tragedy.
- Comedic masks are smiling or grinning
- Masks in tragedies are always frowning
- Major part of Greek culture
- Originally, all actors were men
- Performed in outdoor theatres, on the slope of hills
- Thespis was the first actor.
- Two types of theatre: ***Tragedy & Comedy***

### ***Greek Mask Photos:***



Zaklina. (2020, March 26).  
Traveling in the Past Behind  
the Theatre Masks. Retrieved

### ***Tragedy:***

- Serious, often teaching a lesson
- Often performances took place as religious rituals
- Earliest tragedies sometimes only had one actor, switching masks to switch characters
- Plays had a chorus which would serve as the narrator
- In the earliest tragedies, the death of characters would have to be offstage, not seen by the audience



Cartwright, M. (2020, November  
24). Ancient Greek Tragedy. Retrieved  
November 27, 2020, from  
[https://www.ancient.eu/Greek\\_Tragedy/](https://www.ancient.eu/Greek_Tragedy/)

## ***Comedy:***

- Lighthearted, often made fun of politicians or other people
- Large choruses with up to 24 performers
- Extravagant, showy costumes
- Lots of shows ended up being named after it's the chorus, such as *The Wasps* by Aristophane
- First part of the show: The parados, chorus members performed lots of songs and dance routines
- Second part of the show: The agon, included plot turns, contests and debates between the principal actors, and improv
- Third part of the show: The parabasis, chorus members would directly address the audience



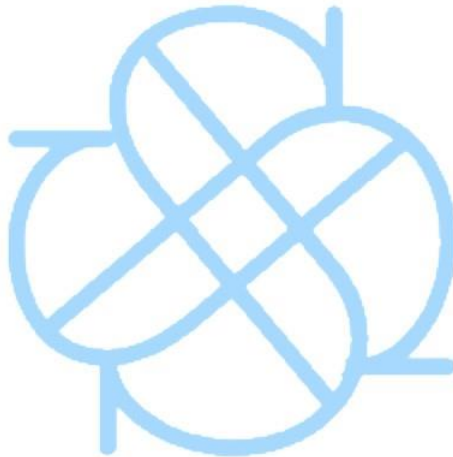
Edith Hall | Published in History  
Today Volume 65 Issue 6 June 2015.  
(n.d.). The Birth of Comedy. Retrieved  
November 27, 2020, from  
<https://www.historytoday.com/archive/fe>

## ***Famous Greek playwrights:***

- Sophocles (496-406 BCE): added a third actor and painted scenery to performance
- Aeschylus: (525 - c. 456 BCE): known for being innovative and creating sequels to his shows
- Euripides (484-407 BCE): known for realism and making the audience think and wonder

***Why is it important today?***

- Helps people see other's perspective
- Can be used as satire or to emphasize current issues
- Theatre can be used as entertainment; such as TV shows, movies, and musicals



## Part Two- Basics Of Theatre

### What is a monologue?:

- A monologue is an uninterrupted dialogue spoken by one character
- Contrasts a dialogue (dialogue is when two or more actors/characters are having a conversation)
- Oftentimes, monologues happen at the peak of a character's emotion
- A character is speaking at people, not with them
- Not a conversation, only one person is talking, though it can happen during a conversation
- **Soliloquy**: A soliloquy is a monologue where the character is talking to no one rather than another character. Often he/she is thinking out loud and doesn't address the fact that the audience is there.
- There are a few situations where monologues normally happen:
  - The character is angry and yelling at or lecturing another character
  - The character is ranting about something
  - The character is begging for something
  - The character is telling a story
  - The character is excited about something and describing it to another
- A character uses a monologue to express his/her feelings
- There are a few things a monologue must have: **Objective, Tactics, Obstacle**
- **Objective**- The characters motivation (what they are trying to get)
- **Obstacle**- What is in the way of them getting this
- **Tactics**- The ways the character tries to work around the obstacle to get the objective (the strategies they use)
- **Who They Are Talking Too**- When performing a monologue, you have to know who your character is talking too
- To make a good monologue, it might also have the following:
  - **High Stakes**- your character's objective should be something important
    - **Hook opening**
    - **A good closing**- it should be obvious that the monologue is over

- **Character development-** The character might change or realize something during the monologue
- **Balance past and present action-** Not everything should be in the past, the character should be talking about something happening in the moment, or reacting to something

- Monologue Example 1:

“Mom! I don’t get it, why can’t we have a puppy? A ton of my friends do. Sarah does. So does Ava. And I feel left out when they talk about their dogs, so I think we definitely need to have a puppy. It’ll be so cute! I know you said no earlier, but I don’t think that’s fair. You say it’s too much work, but I’ll do all of it! I can take it on walks, I can give it baths, I can feed it, I can do everything, all you have to do is let me. And I can even do extra chores. Will you buy me a puppy if I clean the dishes? Or how about I clean the dishes and I even do the laundry? Mom please, please, please, I’m begging you. Come on, please? Ugh, why are you never the fun mom? All my other friends' moms are really fun, but not you. Nope. Would it hurt you to be fun for once in your life? I’m going to my room, and I’m not coming out until there is a puppy waiting for me.

- *Objective:* Getting a puppy
- *Obstacle:* Her mom won’t let her
- *Who she is talking to:* Her mother
- Tactics:
  1. Guilt-tripping her mom by saying she feels left out
  2. Promising to take care of it
  3. Offering to do extra chores
  4. Begging
  5. Comparing her mom to her friends
  6. Going to her room

- Monologue Example #2:

Hi Mrs. Smith. Look, I know you said no retakes on the quiz, but I really need one, and you don't even understand how much I need one. I need one a lot. Like a lot. I promise I studied, I worked for hours! And I still failed it. It brought my grade in this class down to a D, and that just isn't fair. Can I please retake it? I can study even more, and I can prove to you that I work hard. I'll study for 3 hours a night. And I can retake it next week, or even this Friday. Or how about I retake it and we average the two grades together? Then I can at least get a B, or a C. Come on, it isn't fair. Samantha retook the last quiz, and I can't retake this one? It's obviously because Samantha's your favorite, right? And you'd do anything for her, but nothing for me. I bet you just don't want to have to grade my retake, well guess what, it would take 5 minutes to grade, and if I have a D in this class my parents won't let me go to my friend's house this weekend, and I've been looking forward to it for so long! I can't believe it. Please, I'm begging, please, Mrs. Smith please, all I want is to retake this test.

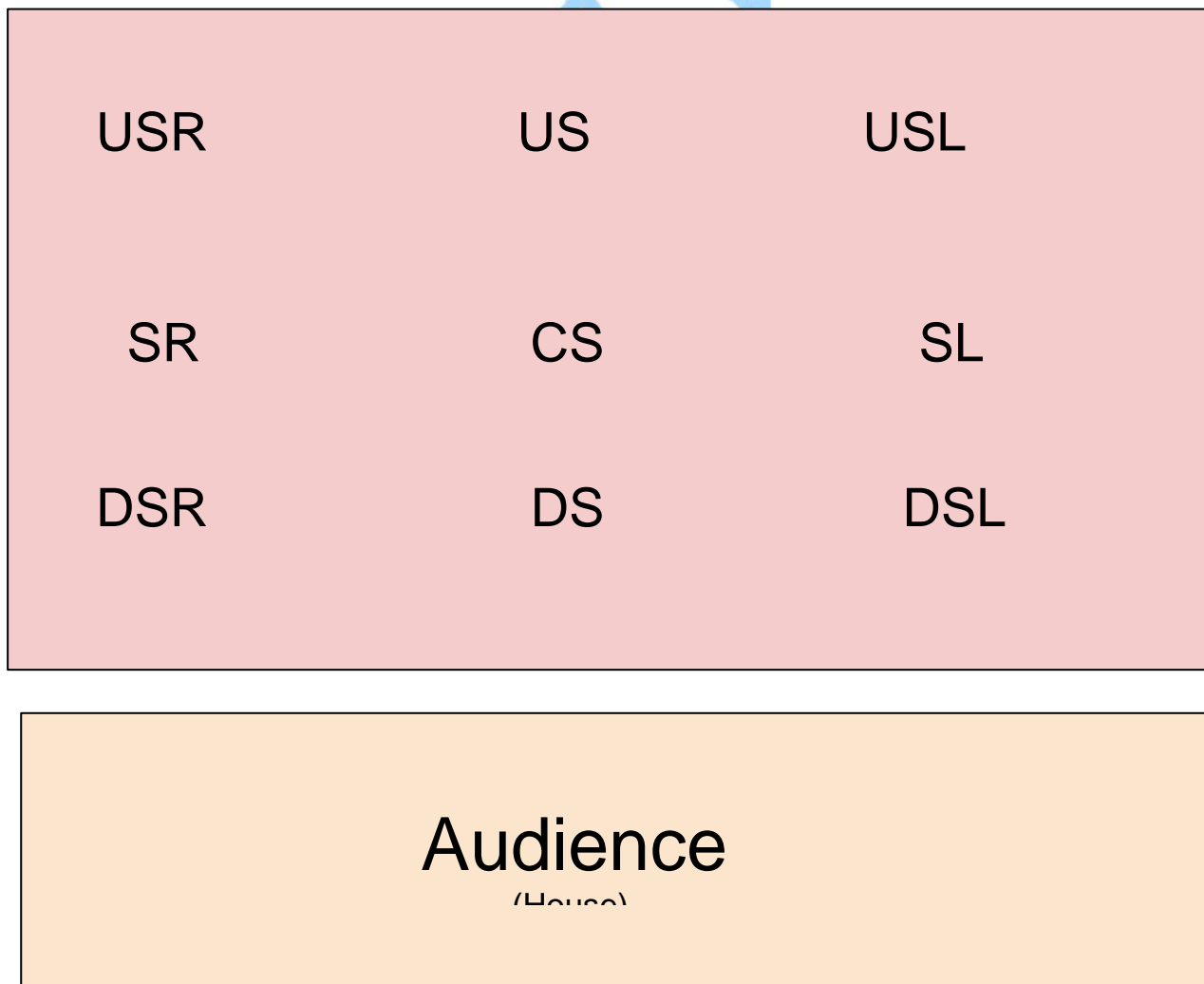
- *Objective:* retaking the test
- *Obstacle:* her teacher says no retakes
- *Who she is talking to:* her teacher, Mrs. Smith
- Tactics:
  1. Ask nicely
  2. Emphasize how hard she's worked
  3. Promises to study more
  4. Attempts to bargain and settle for averaging the two grades together
  5. Compares to a classmate named Samantha retaking a quiz
  6. Blames her teacher for not wanting to grade more
  7. Speaks up about how she won't get to go to her friend's house
  8. Gets angry at the teacher
  9. Begs



## ***Stage Directions***

- Used to direct actors on stage and write down **blocking**
  - **Blocking** is what the actors/characters are doing during scenes, and where they are going during scenes
- Stage directions are from an actor's perspective
  - Example: Stage Left is the actor's left while it's the audience's right.
- Upstage is away from the audience, downstage is towards the audience
- This is because of original theaters being built on hills, and the audience was at the bottom
- The wings are the entrances from backstage to the stage, where the actors enter from

## ***Stage Direction Diagram:***



### ***Stage Direction Abbreviations:***

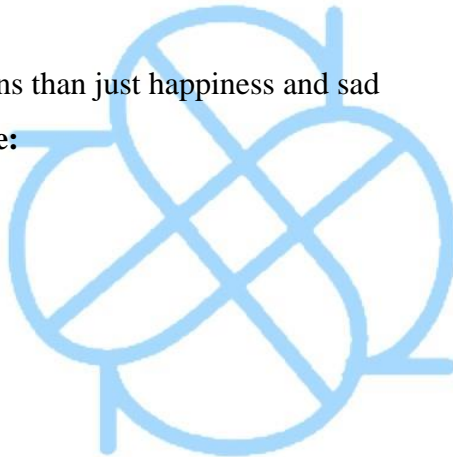
- ★ 2-3 Letters
- C = Center
- S = Stage
- U = Up
- D = Down
- R = Right
- L = Left

### ***Ranges of Emotions:***

- ★ There are more emotions than just happiness and sad

**Some other common ones are:**

- Excited
- Anxious
- Scared
- Embarrassed
- Tired
- Bored
- Mad
- Hungry
- Confused



**Emotions are different than personality traits, here are some examples of traits:**

- Optimistic
- Nice
- Caring
- Mean
- Stupid
- Smart

- Hardworking
- Lazy
- Greedy
- Personality traits are part of a character and stay the entire show unless the character changes or it's part of the character development
- Emotions are temporary
- Often, characters in scenes contrast each other
  - For example, one character is happy while the other is sad, or one character is lazy while the other is hardworking
- Actors have to understand the intentions behind the character
  - For example, the villain might not think of him/herself as the villain
- They have to think through the character's motivation

## Resumes:

- A list of relevant experience
- In Theatre, they are meant to only be one page long
- Directors and casting directors glance at them when you audition
- Theatre resume include:
  - Name
  - Physical Appearance: height, weight, hair color, eye color
  - Contact Info: phone number, email
  - Training
  - Roles you've played
  - Special Skills (dancing, accents, juggling, anything you can think of that might be useful)
  - Awards
  - If you are part of an acting union, list it
- Don't lie on your resume
- Because it is a one-page limit, if you have too much list the experiences most relevant to the job you're applying for
- Should be neatly formatted

**Example:**

**Sally Smith**

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Height: 5'4

Email: Sallysmith@email.com

Eyes: Brown

Phone: 123-456-7890

Hair: Blonde, Wavy

**Acting:**

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Newsies  
Mary Poppins jr.  
Shrek jr.  
Romeo and Juliet  
The Musicman  
Matilda  
Little Women  
Cats  
Honk jr.  
The Sound of Music.  
Les Miserables  
Almost Maine  
A Christmas Carol  
The Lion King jr.  
Willy Wonka  
The Wizard of Oz

Crutchie  
Jane Banks  
Young Fiona  
Nurse  
Ensemble  
Lavender  
Amy March  
Grizabella  
Mother Ida  
Ensemble  
Eponine  
Hope  
Ensemble  
Nala  
Veruca Salt  
Dorothy

Hometown Theatre  
St. James High School  
St. James High School  
Hometown Theatre  
George Middle School  
St. James High School  
Hometown Theatre  
St. James High School  
Hometown Theatre  
Hometown Theatre  
Hometown Theatre  
George Middle School  
George Middle School  
Hometown Theatre  
St. James High School

**Training:**

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Tap I  
Tap II  
Jazz I  
Jazz II  
Acting I  
Acting II

Lara Dance Studio  
Lara Dance Studio  
Lara Dance Studio  
Lara Dance Studio  
Hometown Theatre  
Hometown Theatre

## Special Skills and Awards:

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DSM Acting Award  
British Accent

## Part Three- Famous Methods

### Stanislavski:

- Russian actor
- Developed the Stanislavski method
- Born in 1863
- Born to a wealthy family who loved theatre
- In 1897, he co-founded the Moscow Art Theatre
- Died in Moscow in 1938
- Started acting when he was 14
- He married Maria Perevoshchikova
- He was the founder of a society called the Society of Art and Literature in 1888
  - Directed and performed in productions there for nearly a decade
- Traveled to Italy to study in 1910
- He studied Elanora Duse and Tommaso Salvini and loved how natural their performances felt
- Created First Studio, where young actors would train, in 1912

### *His Method:*

- A technique designed to create believable characters
- Explores motivations
- Naturalistic
- Given Circumstances and The Magic If
  - *Given Circumstances* are everything you know and are certain about the scene/show
  - Who am I? Where am I? What time is it? Who is my family? What's my name? How old am I?

- Those are all part of the given circumstances
- Knowing them helps you understand your character, as they have an entire world, and they know all of those
- The Magic If
  - The *Magic If* asks actors to use the given circumstances in order to imagine what their character might do in any situation
  - Used to better understand the character
  - Can also help with improv
- He tells actors to draw emotions from memories and real-life experiences



Constantin Stanislavski. (2020, June 05). Retrieved November 27, 2020, from <https://www.biography.com/actor/constantin-stanislavski>

## Uta Hagen:

- A German actress/theatre teacher
- Has played many lead and ingenue roles
- Made her Broadway debut in The Seagull as Nina
- Born on June 12, 1919
- In 2004, she died from a stroke
- Born into an artistic family
- Her mother was a trained opera singer
- Her dad was an art professor
- Royal Academy of Dramatic Arts in London is a place where she studied
- Married actor Jose Ferrer
- Second husband was Herbert Berghof

## *Her Method:*

- A practical approach
- Took some of Stanislavski's work and made it her own
- Wrote a few books:
  - Respect for Acting
  - A Challenge For The Actor
  - A few famous theories
- **Substitution-** rather than trying to imagine what it would be like to be in the character's place, relate it to your own life
- For example, even if you haven't robbed a bank, but you've stolen a cookie from the cookie jar, relate your character robbing the bank back to how you felt stealing the cookie
- Be specific about what you're substituting
- **The Three Entrances-**  
When you're waiting to go on stage, anticipate your entrance

Don't be talking or thinking about unrelated things such as what you're going to eat for dinner

- Instead, be thinking through your three entrances from your character's perspective:
  - "What did I just do"
  - "What am I doing now"
  - "What is the first thing I want"
- It helps you stay in character and not have nerves before going onstage.
- **Endowment**- pretending an object is another thing or embellishing it
  - For example, pretending an empty cup is full onstage
- **The Fourth Wall** -
  - You will hear things like "don't break the fourth wall!" when you do theatre
  - The fourth wall is what your character sees where the audience is

The character has no idea the audience is there, so what do they see?

  - If they're outside, maybe they see the sky, or a hill, or some trees
  - If they are inside, maybe they see a couch, or a mirror, or a table
- Uta Hagen believes in preparation
- In substitution, Hagen has stated that the actor should not substitute with something they are uncomfortable talking about and exploring
- Like Stanislavski, she believes the actor should be focused on the character's objective
- **The Nine Questions**- Uta Hagen believes that actors should ask themselves the following questions about their characters:
  - Who am I?
  - What time is it?
  - Where am I?
  - What surrounds me?
  - What are the given circumstances?
  - What is my relationship?
  - What do I want?
  - What's in my way?
  - "What do I do to get what I want?"
- Actors should do this for every situation their character is in



- Be as specific as possible
- Some questions relate to when we learned about objective, obstacle, and tactics
- Helps to better understand the character



## Anton

Simonson, R. (2004, January 15). Uta Hagen, Legendary Stage Actress and Teacher. Dead at 84. Retrieved

## Chekov:

- Born in 1860
- Died in 1904
- Russian
- Died in Germany
- Not born wealthy
- In his memories, he didn't have a good childhood
- He supported himself through his last 3 years of school, as his father had moved the rest of the family to Moscow
  - He joined them in 1879
- Became a doctor
- Supported his family
- Slowly began his writing career, starting by writing journals and entertaining other people
- Later became a playwright, writing shows such as *The Seagull*, *The Cherry Orchard*, and *Uncle Vanya*



Murphy, J. (2020, June 23). Anton Chekhov. Retrieved November 27, 2020, from

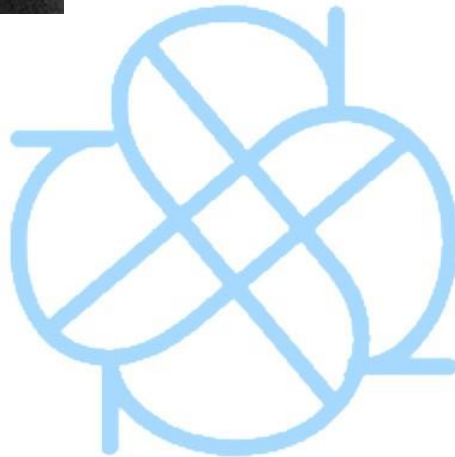
### **Michael Chevak:**

- Nephew of Anton Chevak
- Studied under Stanislavski at the Moscow Art Theatre
- Became director of the second Moscow Art Theater
- Fled Russia in 1928 and toured Europe as a teacher and performer
- His technique is a "psycho-physical" approach
- Connects the body to the imagination

- Connect emotions to physical things



Hunter, T. (2019, July 30). An Introduction to Michael Chekhov Technique - Dramatics Magazine. Retrieved November 27, 2020, from <https://dramatics.org/nurturing-imagination/>



## Character Development:

- As many great acting theorists say, you have to know your character
- You should know their personality traits but also why they have those personality traits
- You should know their moral code and values
- Their identity
- And experiences they've had that have shaped them
- You need to be aware of why they do the things they do
- You also need to know basic information about them:
  - Name
  - Age
  - Family Life
  - School/Job
- How do they want to present themselves?
- How do they not want to present themselves?
- What changes about them through the story?
- What is their objective?
- How do they speak?
- What situation is your character in?
- DO they want to be where they are?
- How do they "move"?
- Are there any internal or external crises they're going through?
- Who do they trust?
- Who do they not trust?
- Go scene by scene and list their emotions
- List their personality traits, and note if they change
- Highlight or circle your operative words in monologues and longer lines
- Operative words are the most important words in a sentence or phrase. It's the one word that they're stressing

For example:

- “My **brother** ate my cake!” stresses the fact she is calling her brother out, maybe she’s already annoyed about something he did or could be to yell at him. It emphasizes that the sentence is about her brother, and how her brother ate it
- “My brother ate **my** cake!” stresses how it belonged to her
- Sentences sound different and have different meanings based on operative words

### ***Making Choices:***

- The only wrong choice an actor can make is not making a choice
- Know what you’re going to do
- Don’t just improvise or do what you feel like at the moment
- In monologues, go through and mark where the character switches emotions
- Write down how you will show it
- Don’t flop your hands around randomly.
- Don’t start walking around without a reason to

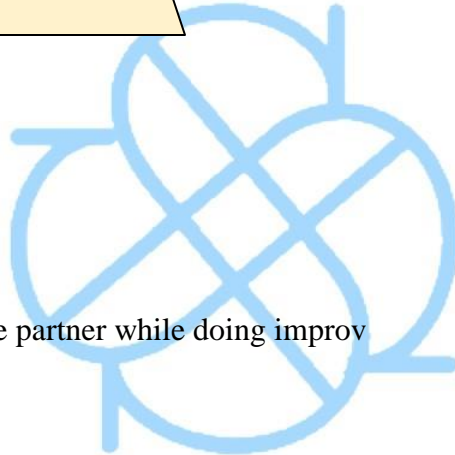
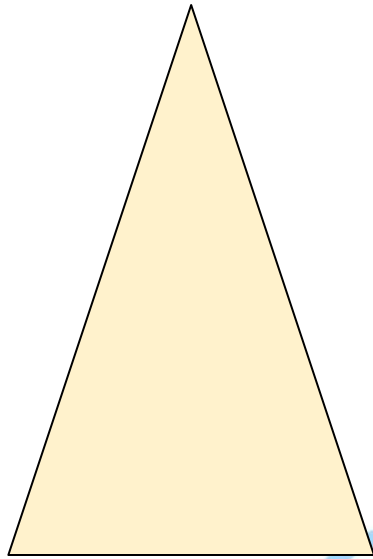
### ***Showing Emotion:***

- Don’t always be basic
- There are other things to do to show happiness than just smiling
- It can affect posture, tone of voice, and more.
- For example, being angry isn’t just crying and yelling
- You could stand up taller to show superiority
- You could hold your hand in a fist
- You could cross your arms

### ***Peaks of Emotion:***

- Build up to your peak of emotion
- Maybe it’s where the character starts yelling or crying
- If your character is angry and about to start yelling, build it up to their breaking point where they yell.
- Do they try and hold their composure, or do they just go for it?
- If your character is sad, are they crying? Do they want people to see them crying?

- Let the audience watch the emotion grow and grow



### ***Improvising:***

- Never break character
- Never say no to a scene partner while doing improv

### ***Scene Partners:***

- It may be awkward to interact with someone on stage at first
- Get comfortable with each other and give each other 100% onstage every single time you run your scene
- Notice their acting tendencies, such as how their character moves
- Bounce off of their acting choices and energy
- Consider your character's relationship to them:
  - Do they like them?
  - Dislike them?
  - Look up to them?
  - Want something from them?
  - How long have they known each other?

- Do they trust each other?
- Be sure to talk to your scene partner and make some acting choices together to make sure the scene is the best it can be
- **Go with the blocking your director tells you. Never disobey him/her!**
- Eventually, you'll get comfortable with each other
- Remember, criticizing each other is not your job

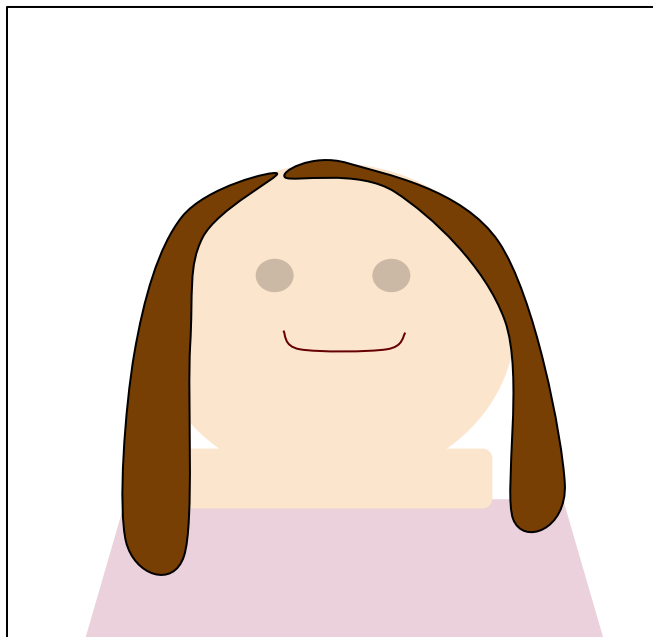
### ***Acting Tips:***

- **Never break character**
- The audience doesn't know if you mess up unless you say "whoops", break character, or apologize
- Learn your lines
- Listen to whoever's in charge if you
- **Practice and rehearse as much as you can!**
- Be dedicated and put effort into any project you do
- Always know what's happening in the show you're performing
- When learning a monologue, be familiar with the entire play it's from. It will help you with characterization
- **Think positive!**
- Always try your hardest
- It's okay if you mess up, just try again. There will always be another chance
- Every part is important to the show
- Set goals for yourself
- Get to know your scene partners if you can
- Don't goof off during rehearsals and classes
- It's okay to be nervous, but find ways to make yourself less nervous
- The audience isn't looking for you to fail. They want to watch a good show
- Be confident, fake it till you make it
- **You've got this!**

## **Part Five- Audition Etiquette**

## **Resume/Headshot:**

- Always bring a resume and a headshot to the audition
- Staple the headshot to the back of the resume, to where directors can flip the resume over and see the headshot
- A headshot is a good quality photo of you
- It is the shoulders up
- Directors look at them while casting to see who fits the role.
- The background should be simple and not distract from your face



< You should take a photo of your shoulders up.

## ***What to bring:***

- Aside from your headshot and resume, there are some other things you might want to bring
- If there is a dance call, bring jazz and tap shoes as well as a hair tie or two
- Bring a water bottle, especially if it's a singing audition
- You might want to bring a folder to keep your headshot and resume in and then to store any other sheets of paper you receive

## ***What to Wear:***



- Depends on the type of audition
- Varies based on the director, so look at the audition notice.
- In general:
  - For singing/monologue auditions, wear something nice and presentable
- You don't need to show up in a ball gown
- It does need to be nicer than jeans and a T-shirt
- If you have long hair, have it out of your face and neat.
- Your audition won't be as good if you look sloppy
- **Don't** fidget with your hair or fidget unintentionally during your audition
- **Do not** dress as the character you're auditioning for
- Do dress in something that could help the directors imagine you as the character
  - For example, if you're auditioning for Flounder from The Little Mermaid, wear yellow
- Dressing as the character limits your casting possibilities
- It is also seen as desperate and over the top
- Wear something comfortable
- If you aren't comfy, it will affect your overall performance quality.
- For dance calls:
  - Clothes you can dance in
  - A leotard and tights
  - Leggings
  - Bring jazz shoes and tap shoes if you have them
  - Hair pulled back
  - If your hair is in your way, you won't dance as well

- Make sure you look neat and clean



Edith Hall |  
Published in History  
Today Volume 65 Issue 6  
June 2015 (137)

Srl, A. (n.d.).  
Ponytail holder:  
Artistic Gymnastics  
Cosmetics: Pastorelli  
Sport Artistic

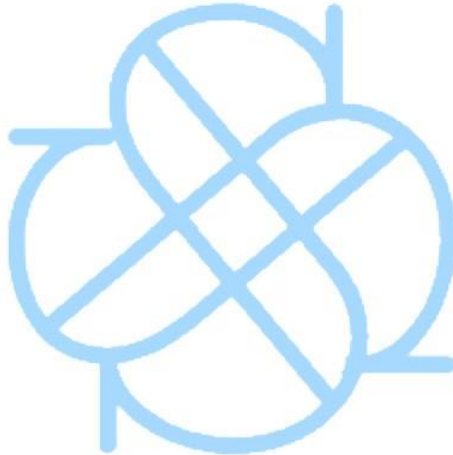


## ***Slatting***

- Before you do your song or monologue, you do a slate
- It's like introducing yourself
- You state your name as well as details about the piece
- Song:
  - Hi, my name is \_\_\_\_ and I will be doing (song) from (show) by (composer/lyricist)
- Monologue:
  - Hi, my name is \_\_\_\_ and I will be doing (name of monologue) from (play) by (playwright)
- Make eye contact with the audition panel during this part
- Remember, be confident, or at least pretend to be
- After you slate, begin your song or monologue
- If there is an accompanist, look at them to cue the music starting

***Things to Remember:***

- The audition starts as soon as you get there
- Act confident even if you aren't
- Don't apologize or make excuses
- If you say “sorry I’m sick today” or “ I’m normally better than that” they won’t like you more, they will just think of you as less confident



## Part 6 - Helpful Theatre Terms

- **Break a leg-** good luck
- **House-** Where the audience sits
- **Blocking-** Movement on stage and where the actors go
- **Choreography-** Dancing
- **Strike-** Taking apart the set
- **Set-** The furniture, structures, and scenery used in a show
- **Props-** The objects used in a show
- **Thrust Stage-** A stage where the audience sits on three sides
- **Understudy-** A cast member who knows all of the lead's lines and blocking in case they can't be at a show
- **Standby-** An understudy but never a member of the ensemble; only goes on stage if the lead can't make it
- **Opening Night-** The first show
- **Closing Night-** The last show
- **Cast-** The actors
- **Crew-** The technicians, director, and others involved in the production
- **Set change-** Changing the set from one scene to another
- **Blackout-** When all the lights go out in a theatre, normally to hide a set change
- **Choreographer-** Comes up with the dances
- **Curtain Call-** When the actors come out and bow at the end of the show
- **Raked Stage-** A stage that is higher at the back