

## THEATRE TERMS

Ad-Lib	To make up words or dialogue on the spot, to speak at liberty.
Apron	Front part or area of the stage extending past the main act curtain.
Arena	Performance space with audience surrounding all sides of the stage.
Aside	For an actor to speak directly to the audience (not always meant to be heard).
Audition	Tryouts held for performers who want to be considered for roles in a production.
Backdrop	Painted cloth or set wall built to serve as a background for the setting on stage.
Black Box	Performance space that is small, created out of a room, painted all black.
Blocking	Stage directions and movements given to an actor by the script or the director.
Box (Unit) Set	A type of setting that is built on the stage to look like the interior of a house or room, having three walls and no ceiling.
Build	Rising intensity or climbing action that develops within a scene or entire play.
Business	Busy work for the actor while playing on the stage to establish character, setting, and situation.
Call	The time one must be at the Theatre or ready to go onto to stage.
Callback	A second, more specific audition where a director looks closer at given actors.
Catharsis	For an audience to have an emotional reaction while watching a performance where they purge themselves of their pity and fears.
Center Stage	The middle point of the performance space, symbolized by CS in blocking notes.
Cheat Out	A body position for the stage wherein the actor faces more towards the audience.
Chorus	A group of performers that make up the community of characters within a play, having few lines individually, and seen on stage as one entity.
Cold Reading	A first look at a script, seeking an actors interpretation of the text, without rehearsing first; used at an audition.

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Context	The circumstances that form the setting for an event, statement, or idea, and in terms of which it can be fully understood and assessed.
Crisis	The high point of action or conflict within a scene or a play.
Critique	Opinions and comments based on predetermined criteria that may be used for self- evaluation, or the evaluation of the actors, or a production itself.
Cross	To move from one point of the stage to another. Symbolized by an X in blocking notation.
Cue	A signal or line that prompts the next action or stage business during a performance.
Dialogue	Scripted conversation between two or more actors.
Downstage	The area of the performance space that is closest to the audience.
Dramatic Irony	Happens when the audience knows more information about the plot and situations in a play than certain characters do.
Dramatic Structure	The particular literary structure and style in which plays are written.
Dress Rehearsal	The final rehearsal(s) of a play before it opens to the public; utilizing all costumes, props, lighting, sound, and set changes.
Dry Tech	A rehearsal that is run without the actors, bringing together all the technical aspects of a show, following the cues in the order that they are executed.
Exposition	The background information of a story, usually told at the beginning of a play through narration or dialogue.
Flat	A constructed piece of scenery, usually made of wood and/or canvas, used to create a set wall or backdrop for a stage setting.
Floor Plan	A drawn picture of a set, as seen from a bird's eye view (from above), using geometric shapes to represent set pieces and levels.
Fly System	A system of rigging and ropes that is used to raise and lower scenery within on stage, operated by hand or mechanically from backstage.
Follow Spot	A concentrated source of light that illuminates a performer on stage, and stays with them as they move; most often coming from a spotlight instrument.

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Fourth Wall	The imaginary divide that separates the audience from the performance space.
Hold	A command called out by a director wherein the actors must hold their stage positions or take a pause in the action of the scene.
House	The area of a theatre where the audience sits or watches from.
Intermission	A designated break in a play. In cases where there is no intermission the audience will be warned in advance.
Main	The main act curtain or drape that hangs at the front of the stage, always found in a Proscenium theatre, and usually is of a royal color.
Masking	1. Curtains, drapes, or set walls that are used to block the audiences sight from the backstage. 2. Used in stage combat to block the audience's sight from certain moves.
Melodrama	A style of overacting that focuses on contrived action rather than realistic characterization or situations; dramatized for effect.
Supporting Role	A supporting character to a story, having less stage time and lines than a Principal.
Monologue	A speech performed by one performer, giving depth and insight into a characters thoughts or feelings; also called a soliloquy.
Orchestra Pit	The area, usually below the front part of the stage, where the orchestra is set up to play the music for a live performance.
Pantomime	To act out very physically without using words; a style of acting that is most often utilized in Children's Theatre.
Presentational	A style of performance where the characters or performers make aware of the audience's presence, often breaking the fourth wall.
Principal Role	A character part that is dominant in the plot of a play, having many scripted lines.
Properties	1. Used to enhance a scene or characterization, abbreviated-props. 2. Stage: large, stay on the set. 3. Hand: small, used by many actors. 4. Personal: used only by one actor, and stays with them.
Proscenium	The most common type of Theatre space, known for its framed arch that outlines the stage opening, having the audience facing one side directly in front.
Raked	A type of stage that slopes downward towards the audience, built at gradual angle.

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Sides	Selections taken from a script used for an actor to read a scene aloud (usually used at an audition for a cold reading).
Sight Lines	The audience's view of a performance space, being blocked from the backstage.
Spectacle	Large scenery or set pieces used for awe and illusion in a performance.
Spike	To mark the stage floor, usually with colored tape, where set pieces will rest.
Stage Combat	Movement that is planned out, or choreographed, to look like real fighting between characters within a performance.
Stage Manager	The head technician for a production; responsible for all backstage duties and jobs. Calls a show for cues and transitions, and keeps consistency accurate from show to show. Works very closely with actors, technicians, and the director.
Stage Right/Left	Sides of the stage that is determined according to the actors point of view facing the audience. Symbolized in blocking notation as SL and SR.
Strike	To take down a set or remove scenery or props from the stage; happens immediately at the end of a production run before the next show is brought in.
Subtext	The true meaning behind a spoken or scripted line, as interpreted by an actor.
Technician	One who works on a crew for a production, lights, set, sound, costumes, props, etc.
$\frac{3}{4}$ Thrust	Performance space where the audience surrounds three sides, and a very open stage; usually there is no main curtain.
Traveler	A type of curtain or masking (black) that hides the audience's view of the backstage.
Understudy	A performer who studies the part of another role, so that they might perform it in the absence of the actor who was originally cast.
Upstage	The area of the performance space that is farthest away from the audience.
Wings	The offstage areas directly to the right and left of the performance space.