

RESOURCES

ACTIVE LISTENING	When an actor is present in a scene and reacting as their character would, as if they are hearing something for the first time.
ACTOR	A person who performs as a character in a play or musical.
ACTOR'S CHOICE	Character choices an actor makes that are not provided by the script.
ADAPTATION	The process of taking an existing story and finding a new way to tell it.
ATMOSPHERE	The environment, mood, and feeling onstage, often created by sound, lighting, design, and movement.
BACKSTAGE	The area out of view of the audience, which includes the wings and dressing rooms.
BEAT	1) A small moment of action within a scene. 2) A moment of silence and stillness during which a character reacts to something that has been said or done.
BEHIND THE SCENES	Anything that happens backstage or out of the view of the audience.
BLOCKING	The actors' movement in a play or musical, not including the choreography. The director usually assigns blocking during rehearsals.
BROADWAY	The theater district in New York City that is home to 40 professional theaters and is one of the world's greatest capitals of live theater.
BUNRAKU PUPPETRY	A traditional Japanese art form that began in the 1600s. Three actors manipulate a half-size human puppet in full view of the audience. The puppeteers typically dress in black, with one puppeteer controlling the right side of the puppet, one controlling the left, and one controlling the feet and legs. It takes decades to become a master puppeteer in the Bunraku tradition.
CALL AND RESPONSE	When a person or group – the caller(s) – performs a piece of music or dance, and another person or group – the responder(s) – reply with a movement or musical phrase.
CALLBOARD	A sign-in for actors and crew to help the stage manager know who is in the theater.
CARDIOVASCULAR EXERCISE	Vigorous movement which increases a performer's heart-rate and energy.
CHARACTER WORK	An actor's process through movement, improvisation, and relationship to discover and perform their character.
CHARACTER	A human (or animal) represented in a play. Each actor plays a character, even if that character doesn't have a name in the script. An actor may play many characters in a play.

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CHEATING OUT	Turning oneself slightly toward the house when performing so the audience may better see one's face and hear one's lines.
CHOREOGRAPHER	A person who creates and teaches dance numbers in a musical.
CHOREOGRAPHY	The dances in a musical, which are often used to help tell the story.
COLD READING	Reading a script aloud without having read it before.
COMPOSER	A person who writes music for a musical.
CONTRACT	An agreement between two parties.
CREATIVE TEAM	The author(s), director, choreographer, music director, and designers for a play or musical.
CRESCENDO	A dynamic marking that indicates the song should get gradually louder. A crescendo is represented in the score by the symbol " < ".
CREW	Short for "stage crew." A team of people who move scenery, handle props, or work backstage during a production.
CROWN MASK	A mask worn on the top of the head so that the actor's face is visible.
CUE	A signal that tells the cast or crew what to do next.
CURTAIN CALL	The entrance of the company at the end of the show to bow and acknowledge the audience's applause.
DECRESCENDO	A dynamic marking that indicates the song should get gradually softer. A decrescendo is represented in the score by the symbol " > ".
DESIGNERS	The people who create the sets, costumes, makeup, masks, puppets, lighting, and sound for a production.
DICTION	Clear articulation while delivering one's lines. Also known as enunciation.
DIRECTOR	A person who provides the artistic vision, coordinates the creative elements, and casts and stages the play.
DIRECTOR'S VISION	How a director understands and interprets a particular play; the overall concept for a production.

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DJEMBE	A West African drum made of wood and rawhide and played with bare hands.
DOWNSTAGE	The portion of the stage closest to the audience; the opposite of upstage.
DRAMATIC STRUCTURE	The plot structure a playwright creates comprising exposition, rising action, climax, falling action, and resolution.
DRESS REHEARSAL	One of the final run-throughs of a show, which includes all costumes, props, and technical elements.
ENSEMBLE	1) A group of people who work together to create a production. 2) The spirit of camaraderie cultivated while rehearsing and performing a show.
FLOOR MICROPHONE	A microphone which, placed on the stage floor and connected to the sound board through cables, picks up sound primarily from the area directly in front of it.
FOCUS	1) The part of the stage where the audience is meant to look at any given time. The director manipulates the focus using lighting, sound, sets, and blocking. 2) Concentration used by an actor when rehearsing and performing.
FOLEY ART	A method of creating sound effects using everyday items. Developed in the early days of film by a man named Jack Donovan Foley.
FORTE	A dynamic marking meaning "loud." Represented in the score by the symbol <i>f</i> .
FRONT OF HOUSE	Any part of the theater that is open to the audience, including the box office, lobby, restrooms, and concession area.
GIVEN CIRCUMSTANCES	Facts that the playwright provides about characters, settings, and situations in a play.
HANDHELD MICROPHONE	A microphone held in an actor's hand or placed on a microphone stand which sends a signal to a receiver connected to the sound board. Picks up sound predominantly from one direction.
HAND PUPPETS	A puppet that can be manipulated with one hand, which typically moves the mouth. Sometimes a rod is added to the puppet's arm, allowing the puppeteer to control the limb with his free hand.
HANGING CHOIR MICROPHONE	A microphone which, hung above the stage on cables and connected to the sound board, picks up sound from all sides.
HOUSE	The area of the theater where the audience sits to watch the show.

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HOUSE MANAGER	The person who manages the front of house and makes sure the audience is safely seated before the show begins.
IMPROVISATION	Performing extemporaneously, without a script. Improvisation is a useful tool for developing character, staying “in the moment,” and remaining in character should something go wrong on stage.
ISOLATIONS	Exercises that focus on a particular muscle group. Often used during warm-ups.
LAVALIER MICROPHONE	A small, wireless microphone worn on the actor’s body to amplify the voice, which sends a signal to a receiver connected to the sound board. This type of microphone is typically wireless and unidirectional, meaning it picks up sound from in front of the microphone only.
LEGATO	A musical term meaning fluid or smooth.
LEVELS	The positioning of performers’ bodies on stage. Actors, dancers, and choreographers use low, middle, and high levels.
LIGHTING DESIGNER	A person who designs the lighting for a play.
LYRICIST	A person who writes the lyrics, or sung words, for a musical. The lyricist works with a composer to create songs.
LYRICS	The words of a song.
MARIONETTE	A puppet operated by a series of strings attached at the head, arms, and legs of the puppet. The puppeteer controls the puppet by pulling on the various strings from above.
MEDALLION MASK	A mask worn around the actor’s neck like a necklace.
MODIFIED BANRAKU PUPPETS	A modification of Bunraku puppetry, allowing one actor to manipulate the puppet’s legs with her own and the puppet’s arms with her own.
MONOLOGUE	A large number of lines spoken by a single character. When spoken alone onstage or directly to an audience, a monologue often reveals the inner thoughts of a character.
MUSIC DIRECTOR	A person who is in charge of teaching the songs to the cast and orchestra, interpreting the score, and maintaining the quality of the music in the production.
NARRATION	Spoken lines that describe what is happening in the story.
NOTE	1) A musical sound with a particular pitch. 2) A suggestion given by the director to an actor.

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OBJECTIVE	What a character wants.
OFF-BOOK	The actor's ability to perform his or her memorized lines without holding the script.
ON ITS FEET	When students or actors experiment with blocking or activating content after looking over an activity or scene.
PHYSICAL WARM-UPS	Exercises performed by an actor to physically warm up the body.
PHYSICALITY	An actor's use of his body and movement to create a unique character.
PIANO	1) A musical instrument that often accompanies a musical theater rehearsal or performance. 2) A dynamic marking that means "soft" and is represented by the symbol <i>p</i> in the score.
PLACES	A cue that signals all cast and crew to get in their assigned positions for the beginning of a show or scene.
PLAYWRIGHT	The author of a play.
PLOT	The chain of events that occur during a play.
PROJECTION	Speaking and singing loudly enough to be understood by the audience.
PROP	Short for "property," any item an actor holds or carries during a performance.
PULLING FOCUS	When something or someone pulls the audience's attention from the intended focus of a scene.
PUPPET	An inanimate object manipulated by someone to portray a specific character.
QUALITIES OF MOVEMENT	Attributes or characteristics of a motion, or series of motions. Often used to describe dance.
RAISE THE STAKES	An actor or director's choices that heighten the urgency of a situation.
RAKED STAGE	A stage angled toward the audience.
READ-THROUGH	An early rehearsal at which the cast reads their parts from the script without blocking or memorized lines.
REHEARSAL	A meeting during which the cast learns and practices the show.

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RHYTHM	A series of beats carefully arranged to form a pattern or phrase.
RITUAL	Something a person does habitually for a certain reason.
SCENE	A section of a play in one particular location and time.
SCRIPT	1) The written content of a play, including dialogue, stage directions, music, and lyrics. 2) The book that contain those words.
SET	The entire physical environment onstage, which may include backdrops, flats, furniture, props, and projections.
SET DESIGNER	A person who designs the set.
SHADOW PUPPETRY	An ancient form of storytelling with roots in Southeast Asia, particularly Indonesia. A shadow projected onto a screen by shining a light behind a cut-out silhouette of an image. Often, small dowels are used to articulate the movement of the puppet.
SITZPROBE	The first rehearsal in which a show is performed with the orchestra.
SOUND BOARD	An electronic board or computer that controls the microphones, sound cues, and any other audio used in a production.
SOUND CHECK	Testing and balancing the sound levels of microphones, speakers, and performers before a performance to ensure that the audience will hear everything clearly.
SOUND DESIGN	A person who creates the aural world of the play, or how the play sounds to the audience.
SOUND EFFECTS	Sounds used to help an audience understand the setting and action of a play.
SOUNDSCAPE	A theater-education convention in which students create the sounds of an environment using their bodies and voices.
STACCATO	A musical term used to identify short, detached notes.
STAGE DIRECTIONS	Unspoken text in the script that describe the action or intention of the play.
STAGE LEFT	The left side of the stage from the actor's perspective. The same side of the theater as house right.
STAFF MASK	A mask affixed to the top of a staff, which is held in an actor's hand.

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STAGE MANAGER	A person responsible for keeping all rehearsals and performances organized and on schedule and for calling sound and light cues during the show.
STAGE RIGHT	The right side of the stage from the actor's perspective. The same side of the theater as house left.
SUPER OBJECTIVE	A character's main goal in a play. Scar's super-objective is to become king.
TABLE READ	The first read-through of a play with the full cast.
TABLEAU	A frozen stage picture made up of students' or actors' bodies, that tells a story.
TECHNICAL REHEARSAL	A rehearsal in which all technical elements are incorporated into the production. Also called "tech."
UNDERScore	Music that plays under dialogue or during a scene change.
UNDERSTUDY	An actor who learns a role and can perform it in the event the cast actor is unable to do so.
UNISON	When a group of people move or sing together as a unit.
UPSTAGE	The part of the stage furthest from the audience.
USHER	A person who shows the audience to their seats and distributes programs.
VOCAL RANGE	1) The span of notes a singer can safely sing, spanning from the lowest to highest note. 2) The span of notes sung by a character in a musical.
WINGS	The area to the side of the stage just out of the audience's view.