

GLOSSARY OF THEATER TERMS

Ensemble: A group of people working together to achieve a common goal

Character: A person in a play or any imaginary person, portrayed by an actor

Objective: What a character in a scene wants (Intentions, Motivations, Needs)

Action: What a character in a scene does to accomplish their Objective

Obstacle: Whatever tends to prevent a character from achieving their objective (can be physical, emotional, or psychological)

Tactic: The method a character uses to attempt to overcome an obstacle and achieve the objective (expressed as an action/active verb)

Conflict: Tension between characters, or within a character, that threatens the attainment of the character's objective

Status: The perceived relative importance of characters in a scene

Given Circumstances: Information about time, place, character history, background, etc., which informs the actions of characters in a scene

Beat: A portion of a script in which the objective of the characters remains constant. The end of a beat can occur because of a change in the given circumstances or because a character either achieves or gives up on an objective.

Dialogue: The information two or more characters speak to each other during the play

Monologue: The information that one person speaks, sometimes to the audience directly, sometimes to themselves as if they are thinking or talking to themselves.

Tableau: A group of motionless figures representing a scene from a story

Improvisation: The creation, exploration, or performance of un-scripted material

Focus: Mental and physical attention, either of the artists or the audience (take focus, give focus, throw focus)

Diction: The qualities of sound production which allow sounds to be shaped into words

Projection: The qualities of speech which allow it to be heard.

Relaxation: The ability to act without physical, vocal, or mental tension which comes from the actor as opposed to the character

Cue: A stage action or line that triggers another action or line by someone else

Cold Reading: An actor reading out loud the lines of a character from a script without extensive preparation

Off Book: When your lines are memorized and you don't use the script

Notes: Instructions from the director to the actors or designers, usually at the end of a rehearsal

MOVEMENT TERMS

Isolation: The ability to move one part of the body at a time

Center: The part of the body from which an actor's or a character's voice, moment, or impulses originate

Blocking: Where the actors are and where and when actors move during a scene

Open: Position yourself so the audience can see your entire body; "cheat out"

Upstage: Away from the audience

Downstage: Closer to the audience

Stage Left: The actor's left while facing the audience

Stage Right: The actor's right while facing the audience

Center Stage: The middle of the stage

Off Stage: When an actor is not on the stage

Cross: Move from one position on stage to another (counter, cross upstage)

Upstaging: Standing so a fellow actor must deliver their lines upstage; or, doing something on stage that takes focus from another actor