



College Audition Season Preparation

THE AUDITION

Simple: it is the means by which the actor shows the director what they can possibly do.

Act well, audition poorly - forget it !!!!!!!!!!!!!

They choose the actor on the basis of who can do the role, starting that process on the basis of a superior audition.

Auditor is looking for talent, personal stamina, positive professional attitude.

Your only goal is to get a call back.

PREPARATION NEEDED BEFORE CHOOSING THE SELECTION

Know who you are:

what kind of actor

what type of roles you do best

your age range and type

your liabilities and assets

whether you are a lead or character type

(your casting in HIGH SCHOOL is NOT a true measure of how you will be cast in the college or the real world)

Know the type of School/Theater for which you are auditioning. Know the School/Theater's philosophy; what is appropriate for the NYU, e.g., may not work for the FSU. Simply stated, don't audition with "Hamlet" if the School only does Neil Simon or only musicals.

GENERAL INFO

The monologue is a 2, 3, 1000+ character scene. The other characters just aren't speaking for the moment. However, they are reacting and are the most integral part of the monologue.

The monologue/audition is your showcase. It's what shows the best of you. It's the vehicle by which you show as much of your ability as possible.

SELECTING THE MONOLOGUE

THESE ARE GENERAL GUIDELINES, SAFE GUIDELINES. MANY PEOPLE DO THE OPPOSITE AND GET JOBS. THERE IS NO GUARANTEE, BUT THESE DO WORK IN YOUR FAVOR.

1. Be sure it is a monologue and not a scene
2. Edit, cut, and paste (fidelity to the playwright is not critical, except in classics)
3. Monologue must be self-explanatory (assume auditor has never read the play, even well-known plays)
4. Let opening line/lines set up the piece
5. The piece must have a beginning, middle, and end
6. Avoid inner directed monologues, be sure they are "other" or "outer" directed.
7. Don't worry about shopworn pieces (this concept is in the eyes of the beholder, you can never second guess what they think is shopworn and what is not), good material done well never bores
if "to be or not to be" is your best piece, go for it, but it better be amazing!!!!!!
avoid pieces that have become popular recently
avoid pieces directly linked to a star
avoid pieces that may come across offensively in today's politically charged climate
8. NO MORE THAN TWO MINUTES!!!!!!!!!!!! (no audition is too short). Director's choose usually within the first 15-30 seconds

9. Consider your audience in your selection and material
 - sex, obscene material or language, shock material can work against you
 - if you don't know anything about your audience, stay conservative, use common sense
10. Find pieces that deal with specifics not with plot
11. Opt for humor whenever possible
12. Avoid pieces which demand excessive physical movements
 - the piece should be able to played in any space
 - avoid pieces that are going to show how hard you are working
 - try to move me emotionally, not physically
13. Don't do heavy, climatic monologues
14. Avoid dialect pieces unless you can do the accent perfectly
 - have a neutral back pocket piece that shows you can do the dialect
15. Seek active characters with active objectives
 - stay away from passive or reflective pieces
16. The character at the end of the monologue should be different, or have changed from the character at the beginning of the monologue
17. Try to find pieces in which:
 - an important decision is made
 - an interesting character revealing event takes place
 - an objective is accomplished
 - a discovery is made
18. Don't write your own monologues
19. Seek characters with positive intentions
 - beware of monologues which whine, complain, or put down unless it is in a comic vein
 - protest pieces, social injustices, women's lib, can work against you (this doesn't mean a character can't seek monologues with universal themes or topics, such as life, death, birth, love, marriage, humor, greed, religion, etc.)
 - don't choose pieces that deal plot complications
21. When choosing comic pieces find one with humor throughout - instead of one with a punch line (you are acting not doing stand up comedy)
22. Choose material that you can connect with emotionally, physically, and intellectually
23. Look for playwrights that you feel comfortable with
24. Look in plays before 1970
 - read the whole play
 - find pieces that have a whole sense of the play
25. No animal torture stories
26. Always - physical type, vocal range, age should be somewhat close to what you are now
 - the auditor should be able to see you in that part
27. Make sure pieces are contrasting
 - a. Classic vs. Contemporary OR Comic vs. Dramatic
28. Suicide. Sadly real people commit suicide; I've known two people in the last year. Its not a topic for entertaining people. Does it need to be addressed? In the context of a show, yes. But as a monologue, it should be off limits. It brings everyone in the room down and it deals with a topic some people may not want to think about.

29. My life sucks/Teenage angst. We all know that the teenage years are some of the worst. You could not pay me enough to go back to being a teenager. However, “my life sucks” is not the message you want to give in an audition. It does not sell your skills, it just tells us more of what we already know – you’re a teenager, this is really hard, and you’re really nervous/scared.
30. Sex. Sorry, you’re too young. I’m not here to proselytize, but if you are having sex, we don’t need to know about it. I specifically do not want to hear any type of monologue that tells me about a sex-capade and then asks me a rhetorical question about it. For example: “We were really going at then my mom walked in the door. I’m sure you remember what that feels like.....” NO! Inappropriate.
31. Abortion. It’s too controversial, it’s inappropriate, and it’s too dramatic.
32. “Haha look how funny I am.” Ok, so that’s not really a specific monologue, but I think you know what I’m talking about. This year it was some monologue about doing a comedy skit with a fake head strapped to your back or something along those lines. Not really that funny. You’re trying too hard; just be you. If you’re funny, then a simple comedic monologue will read funny.
33. Monologues talking about dead animals. Self-explanatory.
34. “F\$%^ that S&@#, I mean #\$!%” A monologue is not a contest to see how many times you can swear in one sentence. Does it happen in adult theatre? Yes. But you’re still in high school, sorry its just weird and it makes us feel awkward and embarrassed for you.
35. Anything from a current movie musical (The Greatest Showman) or a musical that just opened on Broadway. NO HAMILTON.
36. Excessive Screaming. It’s too much, we want to hear you talk, not scream.
37. Did I mention Suicide, Sex, and Swearing? Just making sure.
38. Anything that attempts to impress us. We watch thousands of auditions every year. There is no material out there that can impress us. The only thing that really impresses us is when a young person walks in the room, stays true to themselves, presents a simple, but well thought out package, and then talks to us afterwards with confidence, intelligence, and maturity. THAT is what we want to see.

THE MOST IMPORTANT CRITERIA OF A GOOD AUDITION IS THAT IT SHOWS YOU AT YOUR BEST. IT IS SUITABLE AND APPROPRIATE FOR THE PERSON YOU ARE, THE PERSON YOU WANT TO BE SEEN AS AT THE AUDITION.

PIECES NEEDED - See College Audition Prep sheet

WHERE TO FIND MONOLOGUES

- | | |
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| PLAYS | PLAY ANTHOLOGIES |
| RECORDINGS OF PLAYS | THEATRE MAGAZINES |
| FILM---TV---MOVIES---VIDEOTAPES | YOUR TEACHERS |
| OTHER ACTORS | WATCH OTHER AUDITIONS |
| ROLES COULD DO (CAN YOU PIECE ANYTHING TOGETHER) | |

HAVE A PLAY WITH YOU AT ALL TIMES-----BE CONSTANTLY SEARCHING!!!!

AUDITION DOs and DON'Ts

DON'Ts

Do not copy auditions from Youtube! You don't know if their choices are appropriate or in context. Do your own work!

Do not pick inappropriate material. Monologues about sex, suicide, rape, incest, rage, or loaded with numerous swear words are a really bad choice. We DO respect you as young mature adults. We will not deny that these

monologues can be powerful pieces of literature BUT usually only in the middle of the play they were written for. It can make us really uncomfortable to have a young girl walk into our audition, with a panel of almost all men, and start talking to us about having sex with a stranger (using the F word) and then asking us rhetorical questions about it (like “wouldn’t you do the same thing”). In the context of a play, ok. But in a room full of strangers you don’t know, sometimes kind of creepy.

Do not play a mentally challenged person. There are some monologues out there that feature a mentally challenged character who talks and uses body language consistent with a severe handicap. Trust me – DON’T do it. First of all, you never know who on that panel may have a handicapped son, daughter, spouse, parent, or friend. Second, it comes off as just plain bad taste. Third, it turns in to being comedic rather than serious as we all sit aghast trying to figure out why you made that choice. Again, its fine in a play, not an audition, unless you are auditioning for a play (i.e. Of Mice and Men) where that kind of character exists and you want to be considered for the role. Even then, be careful.

Do not showcase your weakness. Look, you’re young, we expect that you have weaknesses. We assume that once we accept you, you will arrive and we will start to find little imperfections here and there. But don’t showcase them in your audition. If you are a belter and don’t have a head voice, **then don’t sing a head voice song**. Have one in your book in case we ask about it (there’s a very good chance we will), but walking in with a super belter number and then a weak legit head voice piece just disappoints us and makes us start to think in ways you don’t want us to. Impress us first, and then leave it in our hands whether or not we’ll ask for your weak point. It’s a gamble that you could easily win, if you blow us away with your controlled belting and awesome acting, we may see all we need and accept you based off of what we saw and liked.

Do not try to figure out what we’re thinking or what we’re looking for. We don’t even know what we’re looking for. Yes, there is a certain talent level, a spark, a personal connection, but it’s not necessarily pre-defined in our head. I have often watched students in their dance audition, got excited about the spark they showed in their dancing, and then been disappointed as they walked into their audition and presented a finely tuned, almost technically perfect audition that left me impressed by their preparation but disappointed by the polish and lack of spontaneity and honesty in their performance. If we’re not way behind we will try to coach them through it, but it slows us down and gives us time to pick you apart instead of immediately buying into you. I have then seen other students completely unprepared but obviously coming to this with an honest love for the work, a strong connection to their inner story teller, and an eager urge to learn and be trained and we have accepted them. There is no perfect formula, just be who you are.

Do not wear shoes you can’t walk in. We have had so many girls come in this year with high heels on, asking as soon as they come in if they can take them off. If you want to do your audition barefoot, fine. But half the time I think its more of an issue about trying to pick awesome shoes and not thinking about the fact that you are going to be dancing for an hour and a half before you sing, which swells your feet, and makes the shoes even more uncomfortable than they usually are. Sassy shoes are great, but they’re not going to make or break the audition, please wear something comfortable and something you can walk gracefully in. This is not a fashion show, its an audition for budding actresses.

Do not cry in your audition interview. You travelled, prepared, and showed up for an audition in the hardest field to enter as an undergraduate student. Its usually a given that you want this really bad. If not, we can see it, the student doesn’t have to say a word, it will show in their appearance, dress, acting, dancing, and singing. So if we ask you why you want to do this, just be honest, we’re just trying to have a conversation. If you start crying because “you want it so bad”, it worries us. It makes us think “Is this person mentally stable? Can they handle the pressure?”

DO

Do pick age appropriate music. Mother and Father roles are bad choices. There are a lot of roles out there for teens and young adults, start there.

Do pick something you can absolutely nail under any circumstances. Your hotel may be dry the night before your audition. You could end up in a hotel room underneath a room full of teens on a field trip jumping on their beds until 4am. You could end up sick that weekend. Pick rep that is a guaranteed attention getter. If you want to have a sick package and a well package – fine. Just remember, we don't need you to absolutely blow us away with volume and range, we need you to show us who you are, and you need to convince us that we want to hear more. If you get us hooked, we'll ask what else you have in your book, have you make an adjustment, or start asking questions about you.

Do dress your age. You're young adults by your senior year. Dress that way. Don't dress like a "cougar", don't dress like a tween (unless that's what your selling as an actress), and don't dress like you're going clubbing. Do dress like who you are as a person. If that is jeans, a cute top, slight heels, earrings, bracelets, and a head band, then do it. We are interested in who you are as a person, feel free to dress in a way that shows us that.

Do be yourself in the audition room. Don't try to impress us with the perfect answer to our questions. There often is no perfect answer, we just ask you questions to make conversation and open a line of communication to see how our personalities mesh. You don't want to fake that part of the audition. If we don't click, you're going to probably be a very unhappy person for four years. If we do really click but you can't make that connection with other university faculty at other schools, that's something **you** really want to know.

FINAL THOUGHTS

At the end of the day you want to be accepted to schools where you will thrive and grow into a consummate artist. If we don't accept you, it doesn't necessarily mean you're not talented. Sometimes it just doesn't feel like the right fit. We may feel that your personality and ours may not mesh, we may feel the competition you'll face will be too stiff for you and you won't make it through the degree. You never know why we may say no, but unfortunately when literally seeing hundreds of people a year and only being able to take 24, schools have to say no to a lot of people. I'll speak for myself on this, but I've been on the rejection side many times before and it's not easy, I don't take rejecting people as an easy task. But it's what's best for everyone involved. So if you get that dreaded "NO" letter, move past it, get back in the game, and keep auditioning. You'll find where you are meant to be and you will be much happier in the end.