



Glossary

A

Accent The manner in which people speak and the way words are pronounced in different parts of the world.

Act Major division of a play.

Acting An actor's assumed behavior for the purpose of projecting a character to an audience.

Acting areas Nine to fifteen divisions of the stage floor, used by directors when moving actors or placing furniture or scenery.

Actor viewpoint The way the cast members react to the audience and the situation.

Actors Males or females playing character roles.

Adapting Changing or cutting a literary piece.

Aesthetic appreciation The ability to recognize, understand, and value that which is pleasing, beautiful, cultured, and tasteful in the arts (theatre, music, visual art, and dance).

Aesthetic perception Insight into our world of images, sound, color, patterns, forms, and movements.

Analyze To study carefully or examine critically.

Animation Bringing something to life through movement and action.

Antagonist The character opposing the protagonist.

Apron The part of the stage extending past the proscenium arch toward the audience.

Arena stage A stage constructed so that the audience can sit on all sides; also known as "theatre-in-the-round."

Articulation The shaping and molding of sounds into syllables.

Artistic discipline Maintaining a balance between group cooperation and individual integrity.

Assistant director The person who helps the director with such duties as warming up the cast before rehearsal, checking roll, posting rehearsal schedules, writing directorial notes during rehearsal, running errands, and filling in as an understudy when an actor is absent.

Audience commitment Audience responsibility.

Audience etiquette Appropriate audience behavior at a theatrical event.

Audience focus A type of focus in readers theatre in which the characters focus on the audience.

Audience viewpoint The way the audience sees and responds to the cast members.

Auditions Tryouts for a production.

Auguste clown A rodeo or circus clown; a clown whose makeup is reddish brown instead of white. Makeup and costume usually consist of exaggerated designs and items, such as a huge painted mouth, accented

eyes, a huge bow tie, large shirt and pants, and large shoes.

Authentic evaluation An evaluation involving real-life situations and role-playing to test skills and abilities for the real world.

B

Basic makeup Cosmetics applied to the face or body using the actor's natural features.

Blackout Turning out all the stage lights at one time.

Blocking Planning and working out the movements and stage grouping for a play.

Blocking rehearsals Rehearsals for planning stage movement and groupings.

Body positions The angle of the actor's body onstage in relationship to the audience: full front, full back, one-quarter, profile, and three-quarter.

Breaking character Losing concentration or getting out of character. Using dialogue or behavior inconsistent with the part you are creating.

Breath control The amount of force you use in inhaling and exhaling.

Breathing The necessary process of inhaling and exhaling air to live.

Business Small movements and actions that do not require the actor to move from place to place.

C

Callbacks Additional opportunities for the actor to audition.

Camera shots Camera angles.

Casting Selecting actors to play specific roles in a production.

Character The personality an actor portrays in a scene or play that is different from his own personality.

Character clown A type of clown who uses makeup and clothes to represent a specific person or image; for example, a tramp, hobo, Keystone Kop, and so on.

Character makeup Makeup used to change an actor's natural features.

Character mask A mask representing a specific character.

Characterization Developing and portraying a personality through thought, action, dialogue, costuming, and makeup.

Characterized Divided into characters for readers theatre.

Choreography The art of planning and composing a dance.

Climax Turning point in the action of a play.

Clowning The art of entertaining others by providing laughter; requires the use of personal resources, and understanding of human nature, effective timing, and comedy techniques.

Comedy A play that presents its theme and characters in a humorous way. All characters come together at the end of the play.

Commedia dell'arte A form of improvisational theatre begun during the Renaissance, in the early sixteenth century.

Community theatre Not-for-profit theatre that uses local talent of all ages to produce plays. The theatre may hire a professional staff but use volunteer actors and backstage workers.

Concentration The ability to focus and pay close attention.

Conflict The problem or obstacles a literary character must overcome. Often a struggle between opposing forces.

Constructive criticism Helpful comments and opinions that are expressed in a positive way.

Cooperation The act of working together, getting along, and sharing responsibility.

Copyright The registration of ownership of a literary or musical work.

Costume An outfit, including accessories and undergarments, worn by an actor in a production.

Costume crew The committee in charge of costuming the show.

Costume designer The person who designs or plans the costumes to be worn in a play or stage production.

Costume parade Actors modeling costumes under the appropriate stage lights. This parade gives the director and costume designer the opportunity to evaluate the costumes and make any needed changes before the production opens.

Costume plot A chart listing all characters, the acts or scenes in which they appear, and all garments, undergarments, and accessories needed.

Creative drama An improvisational, process-centered form of theatre in which participants are guided by a leader to imagine, enact, and reflect on human experiences.

Crew Committee of technicians who work behind the scenes creating the scenery, costumes, props, and so on.

Criteria Evaluation guidelines to use in judging or grading an activity.

Critique Opinions and comments based on predetermined criteria; used in an evaluation of a person or performance.

Cue sheet A chart or list for lighting or sound showing all of the changes that will occur during a production.

Cues The dialogue, sounds, movement, or business signaling an actor or technician to respond as rehearsed.

"Curtain" A verbal command starting or ending a scene.

Curtain call Following a performance, the appearance of the actors onstage to acknowledge the appreciation of the audience and to take a bow.

Cutting Reducing or condensing material for oral interpretation.

Cyclorama A large curtain covering the back and sides of the stage.

D

Designer A person who creates or plans a specific part of the production, such as the costumes, lighting, set, makeup, or sound.

Developing rehearsals Rehearsals in which the actors work under the director's guidance to prepare the show for performance; also called working rehearsals.

Dialect A pronunciation of words from different languages blended together to form a distinct language for a group of people.

Dialogue The conversation between actors on the stage.

Diaphragm The muscle located between the abdomen and the rib cage.

Diction A person's pronunciation of words, choice of words, and manner in which the person expresses himself or herself.

Director Person in charge of the artistic production of a play.

Double-cast Assign an actor to play two roles.

Drama A story written to be played out on the stage.

Dramatic play Children's creation of scenes when they play "pretend."

Dramatic structure The special literary style in which plays are written.

Dress rehearsal A rehearsal conducted as if it were an actual performance.

E

Emotions Strong feelings, such as joy, fear, hate, and happiness.

Ensemble A group of people working together cooperatively.

Evaluation An assessment of strengths and weaknesses.

Exposition Detailed information revealing the facts of the plot.

Expressive movement The ability to express feelings through physical action.

External traits Traits relating to a character's outwardly visible qualities.

F

- Feedback** Constructive comments or opinions.
- Filmed** Preserved on film as a moving photograph.
- First person** Indicates the speaker's point of view as "I."
- Flexibility** The process of varying inflections of the voice.
- Flexible staging** Any stage not classified as proscenium, arena, or thrust.
- Flipping the lid** Improperly manipulating a movable-mouth hand puppet, causing flapping of the upper jaw or head.
- Floor plan** A drawing of the stage setting as seen from above (bird's-eye view).
- Focus** In readers theatre, the place or people that the actors look at when they speak their lines.
- Folklore** Tales, beliefs, customs, and traditions that were passed down orally from one generation to another.
- Formal drama** Theatre that focuses on a performance in front of an audience as the important final product.
- "Freeze"** A verbal command given by the director to stop the dialogue and movement in a scene.
- Full-body puppet** A puppet worn over the puppeteer's head and body like a costume.

G

- Grand drape** The draperies covering the proscenium opening (picture frame), separating the audience from the stage.
- Grotesque whiteface** A type of whiteface clown whose makeup has exaggerated features.
- Group process** Two or more people taking a step-by-step course of action that takes place over a period of time and is aimed at achieving goals.

H

- Hand puppet** A puppet that fits over the puppeteer's hand, much like a mitten, and is manipulated by the puppeteer's fingers inside the puppet's head and hands.
- House** The section of the theatre where the audience sits; also called "out front."
- House crew** The group responsible for printing tickets and programs and managing the box office, audience, and physical theatre during a production.

I

- Illusion** Something that looks real but is false.

- Imagination** The power to create ideas and pictures in our minds.
- Improvisation** A spontaneous style of theatre using unrehearsed and unscripted acting scenes.
- Improvisational** Nonscripted and spontaneous.
- Improvise** To ad-lib, or invent dialogue and actions without a script or rehearsal.
- In unison** At the same time.
- Inflection** The rising and falling of pitch. Inflection adds meaning, color, and rhythm to spoken words.
- Intermission** A short break in the action of the play for the audience.
- Internal traits** Inner, personal qualities, invisible to the human eye.
- Interpersonal relationships** The contacts a person has with many different people.
- Interpret** Act out a meaning of a selection and understand it in a unique way.
- Introduction** Information that an interpreter gives to the audience at the beginning of the presentation to help the audience understand the selection.

L

- Leader (or teacher) playing in role** A leader (or teacher) who actively participates in the creative drama process by playing one of the characters.
- Level** The actual head height of the actor as determined by his or her body position (sitting, lying, standing, or elevated by an artificial means such as a step unit or platform). Meaning is created in stage pictures by placing actors at different levels.
- Light crew** The technicians responsible for planning, preparing, and running the stage lights for a production.
- Lighting designer** The person who plans and puts into effect the lighting for a play or stage production.
- Lighting plot** A floor plan of the set showing the placement of basic lighting and any special lighting. This plot should also include a list of what lights are turned on and off and where the switches are located. These cues are marked in the light technician's promptbook for use in production.
- Line check** A test run of the show's dialogue to ensure that all lines have been memorized; also called a line rehearsal.
- Lip sync** Synchronizing movement of a puppet's mouth with the spoken words.
- Literary merit** That quality of a story that gives readers and actors a deeper understanding about the human condition and human spirit just through experiencing the story. Usually, the story's protagonist must face and triumph over internal and external obstacles.

Makeup crew The crew in charge of designing and applying makeup for each character.

Makeup designer The person who plans and designs the makeup to be worn in a play or stage production. Sometimes this person is also the makeup artist, the person who applies the makeup to the performers.

Makeup plot A chart listing the makeup needs for each character in a play.

Manipulation The way a puppeteer moves or works a puppet.

Mannerisms Unconscious habits or peculiarities.

Marionette A puppet manipulated by strings connecting a control rod or paddle to the moving body parts.

Mask A covering worn over all or part of the actor's face to neutralize or create a new character.

Masking Any materials such as curtains or scenery used to block an audience's view of the backstage area.

Mass media Communication that can reach large audiences.

Melodrama An exaggerated, fast-moving play in which action is more important than characterization. The "good guys" win and the "bad guys" are punished.

Mime The silent art of using body movements to create an illusion of reality.

Mimesis To imitate an activity.

Monologue A long speech spoken by one person, revealing personal thoughts and feelings.

Motivation An inner drive that causes a person to act a certain way.

Mounting the show Adding the finishing touches—such as scenery, props, and costumes—to a theatrical production.

Movable-mouth puppet A hand puppet with a movable mouth.

Movement The ability to transform ideas into action.

Narrative bridge Description of characters, actions, and settings provided by one or more narrators.

Narrative pantomime A creative drama activity in which a leader reads a piece of literature while the entire class plays the action in unison without words.

Narrator A storyteller.

Neat whiteface A type of whiteface clown whose makeup is in proportion and looks normal in size.

Neutral mask A white, featureless facial covering worn to neutralize the actor's own face.

Observation The power of seeing and taking notice.

Offstage focus A type of focus in readers theatre in which the characters look above the heads of the audience, into an imaginary mirror, focusing on the reflected image of the person to whom they are speaking.

Onstage focus A type of focus in readers theatre in which the characters focus on each other, as in traditional theatre.

Oral interpretation The skill of reading aloud to convey an author's message to an audience.

Oscilloscope An instrument that can be used to record voice vibrations and show voice patterns.

Pantomime The use of mime techniques, acting without words, to tell a story.

Pantomimus All gestures used in support of a theme.

Paraphrase Put a story into your own words.

Performance evaluation An evaluation of a performance given before an audience.

Performance space An area set aside for a performance.

Personal resources Techniques and skills that we use to express ourselves emotionally, intellectually, socially, and physically.

Phrasing Grouping words to create a specific meaning.

Pitch The musical tone of a voice.

Planes Imaginary divisions giving depth to the proscenium stage. An actor moves through the stage planes as he or she moves downstage toward the audience or upstage away from the audience.

Play Story in dialogue form to be acted out by actors before a live audience.

Player-audience relationship The special interactive and "live" relationship that exists between the performers and the audience, connecting and bonding them into a team.

Playwright One who writes plays.

Plot The arrangement of the incidents that take place in a play.

Poetry Literature written in verse form, often in rhythmic patterns and in rhyme.

Point of view A position from which we perceive (understand) an object, person, or place.

Poise The effective control of all voice elements and body movements.

Polishing rehearsals Rehearsals used to correct problems that occurred in the run-throughs. The rehearsals give the actors the opportunities to fine-tune character believability, vocal projection, and "picking up cues."

Posture How we sit and stand.

Producer The person responsible for the entire production, including obtaining financial backing,

paying the bills, and hiring the director and creative staff.

Production techniques The methods used to stage a play and the methods used to produce television programs and films.

Program Printed sheet of paper or booklet that provides information about the production.

Projection The placement and delivery of voice elements used effectively in communication to an audience.

Promptbook Usually a loose-leaf notebook containing the script marked with all stage movement, entrances and exits, technical cues, and special instructions for the production. The stage manager is usually in charge of the promptbook.

Pronunciation The way sounds or syllables that represent a word are said and stressed according to the proper notation found in the dictionary.

Prop crew The crew in charge of stage properties (props).

Property master The person in charge of the stage properties, or props, for a production.

Props a. Stage properties or items that might be part of the stage decorations. b. Items used by the actors for stage business and characterization.

Proscenium stage A four-sided stage built like a box with one side cut away, enabling the audience to view the play as if it were in a picture frame.

Prose A composition written without patterns of rhyme or rhythm.

Protagonist The major character in a story.

Publicity crew The committee responsible for organizing and implementing all advertising for a production. Often in charge of ticket sales, this crew is sometimes combined with the house crew.

Puppet Almost anything brought to life by a human in front of an audience.

Q

Quality The voice element that makes one person sound different from everyone else.

R

Radio theatre The performance of a play or story on radio by readers using a script that is not memorized. This type of theatre is either broadcast live or taped for later use.

Rate The speed at which someone speaks.

Readers theatre A style of theatre in which two or more interpreters appear to be reading from a script.

Reading rehearsals Rehearsals for the purpose of reading and analyzing the script as well as discussing and understanding characterization.

Rehearsals Production sessions in which the actors and technicians prepare by repetition.

Relaxation Freedom from all bodily tensions.

Replaying Acting out again.

Respect Consideration for and acceptance of ourselves and others, including other people's property, backgrounds, and opinions.

Rhythmic movement The ability to move to a beat or pattern of beats.

Risks Actions that are different from the norm.

Ritual Repeated action that becomes a custom or ceremony.

Rod puppet A puppet constructed without shoulders, arms, or legs and manipulated by one or more rods.

Role-playing Trying on the role of others, or assuming the part of another person in society.

Royalty A fee required to produce a play or musical.

Run-throughs Rehearsals conducted without any stops.

S

Scene (1) A short situation to be acted out, as in improvisation, with a beginning, middle, and end.

(2) A subdivision of an act in a play.

Scenery Curtains, backdrops, or any structures constructed to transform an empty stage into a suitable background for a play.

Screenplay The script written for a movie or television show.

Screenwriter A writer who writes television or movie scripts.

Script A written copy of the dialogue that the actors will speak.

Self-confidence Belief in your worth and abilities as a person.

Self-image The way we see ourselves.

Self-talk Mental comments and opinions we repeat to ourselves constantly.

Sensory awareness The ability to use sight, sound, touch, smell, and taste to become conscious of the environment.

Set Usually large items used to stage a scene or play.

Set designer The person who designs the set for a production.

Set pieces Large portable pieces of the stage setting.

Shadow play Projecting shadow images on a screen.

Shadow puppet A flat, two-dimensional puppet designed to cast a shadow or form a silhouette on a white screen.

Side-coaching A method by which the leader talks you through an activity by making suggestions or giving you ideas.

Sight lines Imaginary lines defining the areas of the stage where the actors can clearly be seen by the audience.

Soliloquy A monologue usually delivered while the character is alone onstage, thinking aloud.

Sound Artificially produced sound effects or music as well as the amplification of voices so that they can be heard.

Sound crew The group responsible for planning and preparing all sound effects needed for a production.

Sound designer The person who plans and puts into effect the sound for a production.

Sound plot The plan of all the sound effects and music needed for a production.

Spectacle All visual elements of production, such as scenery, properties, lighting, costumes, makeup, stage movement, and dance.

Spectacle viewing A medium through which film is viewed with wonder and amazement.

Stage The area where the players perform; usually a raised platform.

Stage crew The group of technicians responsible for building the scenery. During a production, this crew is in charge of any scene changes.

Stage directions Information provided by the playwright to give the actors instructions on how to feel or what to do when certain lines are spoken. These directions, usually in italics, are set apart from the dialogue by parentheses.

Stage lighting Illumination of the actors and acting area; includes any special lighting effects.

Stage makeup Any cosmetic effect, including hair, that enhances or changes an actor's appearance.

Stage manager The person in charge of supervising backstage.

Stage picture An appealing and meaningful arrangement of performers on the stage; the picture that the audience sees onstage.

Stereotypical character A familiar character identified by an oversimplified pattern of behavior that typically labels the character as being part of a group of people.

Stock character An easily recognizable character. A flat, one-dimensional character with predictable actions.

Story The narration of an event or series of events brought to life for listeners by a storyteller.

Story dramatization A playing/acting process to interpret and share a story by using improvisation rather than scripts.

Storyteller A person who tells stories or tales.

Storytelling The art of sharing stories with an audience.

Strike Take apart the stage setting, remove it from the stage, and store all parts of the production for future use.

Subtext The underlying meaning or interpretation of a line, which is not indicated in the script but is supplied by the actor.

Suspend belief Pretend that what is happening onstage is real.

T

Technical rehearsals Rehearsals emphasizing the performance of the production's technical elements—prop changes, scenery shifts, light changes, sound effects, and so on.

Theatre The writing or performing of plays, as well as the formal study of the art form. Also, a building in which plays are performed.

Theatre arts The term used to cover all parts of training or instruction in the field of theatre.

Theatre conventions Established techniques, practices, or devices unique to theatrical productions.

Theatre safety Keeping the crews, cast, and audience free from harm, danger, risk, or injury.

Theatre teacher An educator who specializes in theatre arts or drama.

Theme The basic idea or purpose of the play. It ties together all the characters and events.

Thrust stage A stage that extends into the seating area. The audience sits on three sides of the stage.

Tragedy A play that deals with a serious situation in a serious way. The protagonist dies or is defeated at the end of the play.

Transition Description of what is happening while the actors pantomime the action of a story.

Trust The ability to risk expressing yourself in front of your classmates without fear of being ridiculed.

U

Understudy A person who learns a part in order to substitute in a performance should the original actor not be able to appear in the show.

V

Vista shots Faraway shots.

Visualizing The act of imagining and seeing pictures in the mind.

Vocal folds Muscular membranes in the larynx that produce sound.

Volume How softly or loudly a person speaks.

W

Whiteface clown A clown whose makeup is an all-white face with features of black and red added for detail.

Wings Offstage spaces to the sides of the acting area.