

CHOOSING MONOLOGUES

- Seek roles in your own maturity and emotional range and from material with which you are familiar and feel comfortable. This is not the time to challenge yourself with that role you've always been dying to play.
- Choose something that “speaks” to you, that you have a passion to communicate and ideally also may tell the auditor something about you as a person. It makes it a whole lot easier to do when you're nervous, or in less than ideal circumstances, if you really care about what you are saying.
- Never attempt an audition monologue without reading the entire play and understanding your character in the context of the play.
- Other than the really overdone ones, most auditors don't mind seeing ones they've seen as long as you do it well. It is better to do a well-written piece than an obscure piece.
- Pick something with a good hook at the top and something that can stand on its own (so that your auditors don't need to know the play in order to know what's going on). You may have to slightly edit the beginning and end of the monologue to help clarify the character's situation.
- Choose pieces that maximize your assets and minimize your weaknesses. Risk-taking is great, but gear your risk-taking to interpretation and presentation rather than casting. Above all, do what you do best!
- Avoid material that requires great depth or intensity of emotion. There is not enough time to achieve these emotional peaks effectively and honestly. In other words, if you are suddenly grieving your dead father or talking about the time almost got raped, it may seem forced.
- Beware of dull and passive pieces, which swell on character or plot exposition. Narrative story-telling and memory pieces tend towards inactivity. Choose material in which your character is actively involved in overcoming obstacles in order to fulfill an immediate objective or intention. Above all, select pieces that contain active intentions. What does your character want? What is he/she doing to fulfill that “want?”
- Avoid using one-person show material. It is not a stand-up act and the auditors don't want to see you acting like another actor who originated a piece of work. In other words, no Eric Bogosian or John Leguizamo or Anna Devere-Smith.
- Do not use original material. While you may well be the next great playwright, recruiters/auditors may be caught off guard, and spend the first minute of your audition trying to figure out where the piece came from.
- If you choose to audition with a role you have played in a production, (a practice considered unwise by most auditors), be sure to completely rework the monologue with your coach, for the audition situation. If not, you may be tempted to do it the way you did it in production, which may not serve your audition well.

PREPARING YOUR MONOLOGUES

INTERPRETATION Be sure you have a solid understanding of given circumstances, character, intentions, obstacles, and relationships for each of your characters.

ENVIRONMENT Relate to your environment throughout the audition. Establishing an environment (indoor, outdoor, familiar, unfamiliar, etc.) and relationships to other characters are two of the most useful, and most frequently overlooked, acting tools in an audition.

PRACTICE You may want to present “dry runs” in a variety of spaces in front of two or three people, both for critical feedback and for practice in auditioning in front of a group of people. In most cases you will not know the dimensions or type of room you are auditioning in until you arrive, so it is best to prepare for ANYTHING!

FOCUS Keep your imaginary partner on stage with you (downstage, please). Avoid putting the other character on the floor or to the side. Have and use your invisible scene partner. Communicate with them and make them present. Without them it's histrionic, generalized garble. And by no means use an auditor as a scene partner.

ADDITIONAL ITEMS Props and costumes would not be used. The focus should be on you, not on your added design elements.

TIME You do not want to worry about being cut off, so eliminate this concern now. Do your editing and cutting immediately as it is difficult to make cuts after you have memorized and rehearsed the piece. Don't try to remedy a long piece by “talking fast” or rushing your transitions.

CLOTHING Clean, neat, comfortable and relatively conservative clothing is always the best choice. Do not try to “costume” yourself, but avoid apparel that contradicts your character. (i.e. royalty in running shoes.) Make sure your hair is off your face. Dangling, jangling jewelry is distracting. Do you really need to assert your individuality by wearing your tongue stud? Generally a sweater or sport coat and slacks for men; a blouse and skirt/slacks, or a dress for women, works well. Rehearsal clothing, such as black everything, is not always recommended. The recruiters actually love to see color in your clothing choices! It also establishes your personality.

PRESENTING YOUR MONOLOGUES

One way to consider organizing the audition is to think of it as a three minute play entitled, "The Audition of (Your Name), Written, Arranged, Produced by, and Featuring Yourself." Your audition one-act contains approximately ten major "beats" or "units of action:"

1. Your entrance and salutation
2. Your Slate
3. Transition from yourself to character #1
4. Presentation of your first selection
5. Transition from character #1 back to yourself
6. Introduction of selection #2 or moment between
7. Transition from yourself to character #2
8. Presentation of your second selection
9. Transition from character #2 back into yourself
10. Thank you and exit

ENTRANCE AND SALUTATION Enter the room and say hello to the auditors. Smile and be politely confident. Assess the environment quickly to be sure you are comfortable. Find a spot about ten to fifteen feet in front of the auditors and plant your feet. Take a breath and begin your slate.

SLATE Be sure to slate your name and the name/character of your pieces. Say, "Hi, my name is (your name) and I will be doing (character) from (name of play) by (name of playwright). If you have more than one piece, you may either introduce both pieces at the beginning or individually before each piece. Speak loud and clear. It is a great time to judge the sound of the room.

TRANSITIONS Don't rush your transitions. This is a common problem, usually caused by nerves or inadequate preparation. Frequently, actors rush from an introduction into a monologue or from one piece to another without ever shifting gears. Any dramatic illusion is immediately destroyed.

THANK YOU AND EXIT Be sure to hold your final moment at the end of the audition, then relax and look at the auditors, say thank you and gracefully exit the room.

REMAIN POSITIVE & POLITE Never emotionalize, editorialize or apologize in word or deed for your audition. What may have gone wrong for you might have gone unnoticed by the auditors, and a negative reaction on your part could alert them unnecessarily. Remember - your audition begins with your entrance. Maintain a confident, positive persona. Don't be nasty if the stage manager mangles your name...a smile and a gentle correction is much better. Similarly if you are stopped, don't huff and puff and stomp off stage. Again, the smile, and a nice thank you is the wisest choice.