

Script Exercise for Actors – Pre Rehearsals

What are the given circumstances? - Anything put forward by the writer or the director that must be adhered to by the actor. For example ; dialects, costumes, scenery. Any physicality specified for a character by the writer, a limp, a tick, a sixth finger for example. Finally anything asked for by the director, from specific blocking to crying or yelling at a certain moment.

Action – ‘To get’ - What makes the scene playable. What you WANT from the other character. Phrased about the other character - i.e. "TO GET my mother not to remarry"

Beat change - occurs when a new piece of information is introduced or an event takes place over which the character has no control and which by its very nature must change what they are doing. It can be physical or emotional.

Break down scene - Beats,

WHAT YOU ACTUALLY NEED TO SAY

"WHAT ARE YOU TRYING TO GET FROM THE OTHER ACTOR - SOMETHING IMMEDIATELY ACHIVABLE IN THE SCENE - ACTION"
NOT WHAT ARE THEY FEELING

How trained actors prepare

Characterisation and the text

1) Read the text for STORY. Be clear on what is happening in the show, What is the action? What are the events of the show? What actually happens?

2) Read the text from the point of view of your character: “What am I doing?” or “What am I trying to do?” Look for obvious information : appearance, age, size, temperament, etc.

Don't make moral judgements on your character, or go into deep psychological motivations “Am I good?” “am I mean and nasty?”

3) Read the text to discover WHERE the action takes place. Fill out with your imagination the physical surrounds of each scene.
When you have discovered a rough idea of : Who am I? What am I doing? Where am I?

Then ask WHEN AM I and start to think more deeply about the background of the work

4) Read the piece for PERIOD ie historical location, when the text offers insufficient information enrich your imagination by: a) reading about the periods history and social life. b) looking at art from the period (architecture, painting, fashion).

c) listening to music. d) reading biographies of men and women who lived in that time.

5) read the work for GEOGRAPHICAL BACKGROUND (the country, urban or rural, physical surroundings, season, climate, weather).

6) read the text for POLITICAL BACKGROUND (does the show suggest a strong political background: if so, how does it effect the character in relation to eg. Authority, power, security, influence).

7) Read the text for SOCIAL BACKGROUND (class, social standing; what of society or social group does your character represent and what are the values and life style of that group).

Stanislavski summarised THE GIVEN CIRCUMSTANCES as : The story of the play: It's facts, wants, epoch, time and place, conditions of life, the actors and producers interpretations, the production, the sets, costumes, props, lights, effects, and all circumstances that are given to the actor to take into account as he creates the role. NB make sure your interpretation of the work does not clash with the directors view.

Reading the text for character

Read the text with great care to make certain your idea of the character is in fact what the author has written.

Collect all the facts in the following order...

a) everything that is said ABOUT the character when he/she IS present (note to whom it is said and in what circumstances).

b) everything that is said ABOUT the character when he/she IS NOT present (note to whom it is said and in what circumstances).

c) Everything the character says ABOUT HIM/HERSELF (note to whom it is said and in what circumstances).

d) Everything the character says ABOUT OTHER CHARACTERS when they ARE present.

Physical characterization. Ask yourself, "what do I look like?" and "What does it feel like to be me?" find in the text and your imagination the following...

a) Appearance - Height, width, weight, posture, physique Quality of voice
Quality of movement Clothes and accessories

b) Senses - What does you character like to see. Feel. Hear, etc Which sense predominates?
Which are under developed?

c) Temperament - Are you a person of "Thought" or "feeling" Have you any weaknesses, disabilities,

susceptibilities? What is your attitude to people and the things about you?

Vocal Characteristics read the text to discover

- a) The subject matter of your characters speech.
- b) The kind of images he/she uses, eg slang, jargon.
- c) The energy level of your speech.
- d) The phrase and sentence structure.
- e) The tempo of speech.
- f) Rhythmical patterns.