



CHEAT SHEET: PREPPING FOR AUDITIONS WITH LOTS OF TIME

If you are lucky enough to be given a week or more to prepare for an audition – this is a very fortunate position.

There is so much you can do in that time, even around ‘life duties’ like family responsibilities and day jobs.

Ultimately, we want to be as prepared as possible for our casting – best prepared wins.

Here are 5 steps you can take toward audition preparation.

Read the script

A healthy understanding of the project you are prepping for starts with a focused reading of the material. Try not to do this on the hop. Consider yourself as a service provider preparing to propose yourself to a corporation for a big contract. Would you scrappily read the requirements and throw something together? No. You would likely spend time assessing all the needs of the contract and prepare a presentation that taps into each of these needs as you propose yourself as the right fit for the job.

Maybe find an allocated time and place where you can’t be disturbed. You may want to switch off all devices, get a hot drink, pad and pen and read the thing in one focused sitting.

Be aware of what Stanislavski called The Lure. This is the instinct you get when you enjoy something about the character you are reading for, the very first time you read it. Write down any aspects of their personalities or particular lines you like.

These first instincts are often instrumental and foundational to your development of the role later on.

Character lists

Having read the play once, you are going to go through it again 4 times (much more quickly). On each read you are going to compile a new list under the following titles:

1. What my character says about themselves.

Write every line that your character speaks about themselves.

2. What my character says about other people.

Write every line that your character speaks about other characters.

3. What other people say about my character.

Write every line that your character speaks about other characters.

4. Facts about my character.

Write down every indisputable fact about your character. This must be from the text, no conjecture. It can include entrances and exits. If in doubt, just write it down.

You now have a fully comprehensive understanding of the script, your role and how you relate to everyone else. This is time consuming but absolute GOLD for the actor.

Actioning

Next, we recommend that you take the time to consider what the character is doing to other characters in order to achieve what they want. The best way to do this is to consider each thought that your character has and select a verb or 'action' to go with it.

An example:

Hamlet - To be, or not to be, that is the question.

Hamlet is doing three things on this one line to change the audience. These are tactics/actions and they are in bold above each thought below.

Engage **provoke** **Affirm to**
Hamlet - To be, or not to be, that is the question.

Once you have written an action above each thought, you can play the action as a tactic as you practice the lines which will be absorbed into your body and imagination, making it available when you play the scene for real.

Objectives

Actions serve objectives, that is, an action is a tool (carried by language/the text) in order to achieve an outcome.

The outcome we are after is called an 'objective' which is essentially a goal or a task to achieve.

There are different types of objectives but for audition purposes, we should have one for each scene we are preparing.

The best way to phrase an objective is to place the outcome in the other person for example:

'I want you to agree to pay me my money back'

A less productive example of the same objective might be:

'I want my money back'

It makes sense still but does not cause you to work ON the other person because you are not seeking the answer in them. The first version demands that you get an agreement from them, as you can see – 'I want you to agree to pay me my money back'

Keep objectives clear and short so that you can hold onto them as you play the scene.

Learn the lines

Freedom in scenic relationships comes from freedom with the language. No matter how much we may hate it, we must attempt to learn the lines for an audition in order to bring our eyes off the page and into the scene.

As a loose rule of thumb, here are our line learning priorities:

Theatre audition: be at least VERY familiar with them. Feel free to have script in hand but be adept at 'scooping' the language off the page and serving it up to the other reader.

Screen audition: learn the text as fully as possible (if necessary, have the sides in hand for reference).

Theatre scripts can be longer and wordier than film and tv where the visual image is key. For this reason, it is not as expected for you to be completely off book for a theatre audition though, I would do my utmost to be as familiar as humanly possible.

Camera work relies so much on your thought life being clear which is often registered in the eyes, if you are staring at the text, the camera picks up nothing.