

Audition Etiquette

How to behave at an audition

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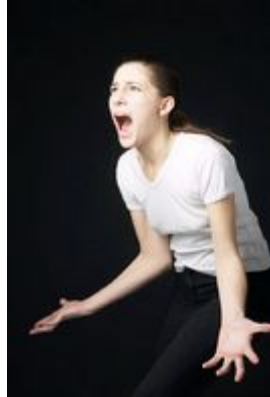


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Auditioning is difficult and nerve-racking. Many would-be actors find it hard to get through the audition process because they do not know the required etiquette. To make matters worse, actors rarely receive feedback on their auditions and therefore keep repeating the same mistakes.

Whatever you are auditioning for, there are certain rules that you should abide by. Of course, every drama school lecturer and every casting director have their own idea of what should be expected, but if you follow the advice below, you will present yourself as a confident and professional performer.

What to wear?

You will find many contradictory opinions about what, and what not to wear. The first thing to do is check the information that the college or company sent to you. Sometimes they will give you specific instructions, which should be strictly adhered to. If not, you should dress casually in clothes that do not detract from your character. For example, if you are reading for Lady Macbeth, it would be unwise to wear a Madonna T-shirt and put your hair in pigtails.

Audition dress code:

- **Wear plain clothes**
You want the casting director to watch your acting, not read your humorous T-shirt. Don't wear clothes with strong or colorful designs.
- **Wear appropriate colors**
Although a splash of color won't damage your chances (unless you've specifically been asked to wear "blacks"), you should think what is appropriate for your character.
- **Wear flat shoes**
A simple pair of rubber-soled sneakers is all you need. You can comfortably move in them and you will not damage any expensive dance floors. Never wear high heels for an audition. You'll almost certainly be asked to remove them.
- **No labels**
Designer clothes detract from your character work.

You are always being assessed

The audition starts from the moment you enter the building, so try to present yourself as professional and personable at all times. An audition isn't solely about your acting ability; it's also about your general character. The panel will be looking to see if you are the sort of personality that would fit their company or course.

Introduce yourself and your speech

Don't start your speech without first introducing yourself to the panel. Although the panel will probably know which character you are reading, it's good practice to reiterate the information because it prepares them for what they are about to see and focuses them on your acting ability. You simply need to say something along the lines of "Hello, my name is Joe Bloggs and today I'm reading Benedick from Shakespeare's *Much Ado About Nothing*."

Create a strong opening

Create a strong opening tableau for your audition piece, and hold it for a split-second before beginning. Many examiners will be looking to see how your physicality changes at this point, so be sure to demonstrate good characterization in your opening moment.

The first 10 seconds are vital

The casting director will make most of their judgments about you in the first 10 seconds of your performance. After this, they will be looking to see if you can sustain your performance.

Finish your speech professionally

Lots of actors stand in silence at the end of their audition speeches. This creates an uncomfortable moment for both the panel and the performer. To finish your speech professionally, simply freeze in character for a moment or two at the very end of your performance before returning to a neutral stance. Make eye contact with the panel and say "Thank you."

Know the play

Be prepared for questions from the panel. They may ask you questions about your character or the play as a whole.

Try not to use props

Your stage entrance needs to be as slick and clean as possible. A busy casting director may begrudge waiting for you to find a chair or table. Sometimes, they might even instruct you to do the audition without the chair and you'll have to adapt your speech on the spot. It's best not to use any props so that you can fully concentrate on your speech.

Dealing with rejection

Sometimes you will have to deal with rejection. If you take rejection with a smile and remain polite and positive, the casting director would be more willing to audition you for a future project. If you are defensive and aggressive, they'll be glad to see the back of you.

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