

PHOTOCOPIABLE

Appendix 10: Theater Vocabulary

Actor/actress: Actors (male or female) and actresses (female) are the performers who become other people in order to act out a story for an audience. Who are you in this play?

Audience: The people who watch a play. Sometimes they are called audience members. The audience members might laugh or take a deep breath during the play, but they do not interrupt the show.

Audition: An actor who wants to be in a play must try out for a part in an audition. During an audition, the director may ask the actor to read a monologue (a short speech spoken to the audience) or a scene with another actor. The director offers the part to the actor whom they think will play that role the best.

Backstory: The characters in a play represent people with a childhood, a family, and other details that are not in the script. Actors and directors sometimes imagine those details to help them decide how the characters will act. What is your character's history?

Blocking: Blocking involves the way characters in a play stand, sit, walk, and where they move, and who they look at. What will you do with your body during the play?

Character: A play usually has two or more characters. They want or need something to happen, and their actions and words tell the story of how they try to get it. Who is your character and what does he or she want?

Character arc: A character can transform during the course of the play or even within a single scene. They start out one way or with a specific attitude, and then events change them so they are different at the end.

Costumes: Costumes are the clothing the actor wears to look like the character. A character's clothing is part of that character's story. What clothing will best show your character's personality? What will you wear as this character?

Curtain (call): A curtain is the fabric that hides the stage, but it also indicates the end of the show. A curtain call is the bow you take at the end of the play.

Director: The director manages the actors and helps them tell the story by watching them practice and giving comments and support. How can you help the story come to life?

Lines: Lines are the words each character says in the play. The playwright creates the conversation among the different characters. How will you read your lines? Will you use an angry voice or a patient voice?

PHOTOCOPIABLE

Monologue: A monologue is a performance by one character. Often the actor is alone on stage and speaks directly to the audience. Who are you when you read a monologue? What is your relationship to the audience?

Objective: Every character wants something. This is your objective? What do you want in this scene?

Obstacle: An obstacle is something that gets in a character's way as he or she tries to achieve an objective. It might be another person, a lack of money, pride, or something else. What is getting in your character's way?

Offstage: An area where the audience can't see the actors. There can be many exits off the stage, each representing a different area or room. When actors leave the stage, stage directions will say they walk off or they walk off stage or even they exit. And which direction or door they go through. Sometimes a character who is not on the stage will speak from offstage. Stage directions say "heard from offstage or simply "off"

Your part: Every actor is a person in the story. Your part is the character you will play. (It is also called a role.) Which part will you play?

A playwright: A playwright is the person who creates the characters and writes the conversations. The playwright also decides where and when the story happens. What is the playwright's reason for writing this play?

Plot: The plot is the story of the play. It's the structure that shows how characters deal with a challenge, problem, threat, or hope. In a mystery plot, the detective solves problems to catch a killer. In a love story, the boy and the girl solve problems to be together. What is the plot of your play?

Program: The program is a piece of paper or booklet that audience members get when they take their seats. It can be very simple with just the title of the play, the playwright, the director, and the names of the characters and the actors who play them. A more extensive program can have more information about the actors as well as articles about the issues in the play.

Props (properties): Props are the things that characters use in the play. Sometimes you need objects to create the story. These might be a table, chairs, food, or a phone. They may be real authentic items or pretend. For example, you can use a plate as a steering wheel. What will you need to have on stage to make the story real?

Rehearsal: A rehearsal is when actors get together to practice the play with other actors. It's important to rehearse in order to create a good story. You work on saying your lines in a believable way, showing your relationship to other characters, and finding the right ways to move. What do you want to improve?

PHOTOCOPIABLE

Sketch: A sketch (sometimes called a skit) is an interaction between two or more characters on a stage. It's usually short and takes place at one time and in one place. How does one conversation tell a story?

Script: The script is the actual book with the play in it. Every actor has a script to work with and memorize. Actors highlight their lines and make notes. What will you write in your script to help you prepare your part?

Motivation: Every character has a reason for saying what they say and doing what they do. This is called their motivation. Actors make these decisions and write them in their script. Why do you want what you want?

Scene: A play has several scenes, and each scene represents a conversation in a specific place and time. How will you mark scene changes? Will you turn off the lights for a few seconds? Change the objects on stage? Or use signs to show the audience a different time or place?

The set: The set includes the objects, furniture and other details that show the place, time and even mood of the play.

Stage: The stage is the place where actors perform the story. You act on a stage, but you can also use it as a verb. What will your stage look like to the audience? Or how will you stage your play?

Stage directions: A script has notes that explain the scene. There are details about the location, the time, and other elements that are important to the story.

Stage right, Stage left, Upstage, Downstage: The directions are always from the actors' position. So stage right is the side of the stage on the actors' right (not the audience's) Upstage is the back of the stage, away from the audience, and downstage is the part of the stage closest to the audience.

Tension: In a play, characters are trying to get something, but they have obstacles. Tension is the conflict that keeps the story interesting. For example, how is one character trying to stop another character? Or how is your fear stopping you from doing something?