

STAGE DIRECTIONS

The Theatre Lesson Plan Exchange

OBJECTIVE: Demonstrate mental and physical attributes required to communicate characters different from themselves.

MATERIAL REQUIRED: pencils, handout of stage diagram, handout of "Theatrical Logic"

Session Content

A. Basic stage directions

1. Explain that stage directions are direction given from the actor's point of view.
2. Stage right Stage left
3. Explain that Upstage and Down stage are called this because of the raked stage that was used in earlier centuries.

B. Stage area layout

Explain that the stage is usually broken into nine different areas:

Down stage
Upstage
Center
Up right
Up left
Right
Left
Down right
Down left

C. Body positions

1. Apply to the actor as he/she faces the audience.
2. There are five basic positions.

a. One Quarter: The body is a quarter turn from the audience. Most frequently used when two actor's "share" a scene. It allows the audience to see them easily. This is done by placing the upstage light parallel to the apron of the stage and the downstage foot turned toward the audience.

b. Full Front: The actor faces directly front. This is used to deliver important lines.

c. Profile: Two actors face each other with upstage foot advanced slightly toward center. This is used for intense scenes like arguing. It can be used for comic effect also.

d. Three Quarter: The actor turns away from the audience so all they see is one quarter of their face. This is used when it is necessary to "give" a scene to another actor on stage. It is also used to look at another actor who is upstage so they may "take" the scene.

e. Full Back: The actor turns his back to the audience. This is used only for special cases.

D. Stage directions and body positions worksheet.

1. Hand out worksheet.

2. The purpose of this worksheet is to allow students to plot six stage crosses. They must indicate to what area of the stage they are going and what body position they will end up in when they reach that area.

3. They begin by drawing the first body position in the stage area they are going to begin in. They can do this by drawing feet (like the example) or by writing which body position they are going to do.

4. They do this six times.

5. They will have to present their plots to the class when they are done.

REFLECTION:

Why is it important to understand stage directions?

Why are the body positions important?

EVALUATION:

Were students able to plot stage crosses on paper effectively so another could understand the instructions.

Were students able to present their stage crosses correctly?

Did the other students see and recognize the Stage area and the body position?