

Sheet1

Action - Used in two ways. In a play or film script, the dramatic action is what happens in a story, scene, or beat in the most fundamental sense. It is the spoke of both spiritual (inner) and physical (outer) action; that is, a saying is also a doing. To be "in action" is to be totally involved in the doing. In the Stanislavsky method, a process of an actor's psycho physical influence upon their partner (or upon their own self), aimed at the actor to perceive the festive essence of the stage circumstances and events. What follows is an actor's restive process, or act that involves the audience.
Actor Cultivation - "Actor cultivation must consist of enriching the actor's subconscious with varied abilities:freedom, concentration, serious work. An actor equipped with such a supply of means, will forge a near perfect creation from the material it receives. It allows an actor to merge with the character."
Actors' performance - The type of performance, characteristic of the method of fantastic realism. In Vakhtangov's practice, actors' performance is the life of the actors, doing their theatre work." The creative life of a Turandot actor was the one of a skilful master Performing their character. Altman did so according to the laws of the organic creative life onstage.
Ad Lib - to insert words of your own into a script, usually on the spur of the moment.
Adaption - An actor's unique way of resolving their creative task. Vakhtangov considered an actor's creative HOW the creative task and a part of every rehearsal or performance. "emotion can be expressed externally. This expression is called 'adaptation'; adaptations are characterized by the fulfillment of the tasks".
Affective emotions/sensations - In vakhtangov's understanding, an actor's creative passions, born out of the sensation of joy and festivity and internal motivation, any of the feelings they have ever experienced in their every day life. Vakhtangov's concept of affective emotions and sensations.
AFTRA - The American Federation of Television and Radio Artists. The union that covers radio acting and some television shows that are broadcast.
Agent - Someone who represents and markets actors. An agent normally gets a 10 percent commission on everything an actor earns. In film, the agent is the first step in initiating a professional film or television career.
Appraisal of the fact, shifting point of view on the fact - An actor's ability to take in a new fact, or an event occurring onstage. The process of appraisal can be subconscious or conscious. With subconscious appraisal, an actor spontaneously revives the essence of the fact. An actor can also strive to grasp the essence of what just occurred consciously by the method of analysis. Analytical technique might be used, and the richness of the reaction depend on the nature of perception. An intuitive perception allows an actor to react out of the fact. Intuition produces a response that is logical but not necessarily original and unpredictable. At the same time, subconscious appraisal allows an actor to react impulsively and react intellectually.
Apron - Part of the stage that extends into the audience. A stage with a large apron is often called a thrust stage.
Attitude - the way your character feels about something that has happened.
Auditorium - Seating area for the audience, also known as House, often divided into sections.
Automatic action - Stanislavsky's term for what we call a habit or reflex; something your character does without thinking.
Bar or Barrel - Iron pipe above the stage with lights and/or scenery are hung.
Beat - A unit of action with its own specific conflict and crisis. In each beat a character has a single objective. Beats are formed out of moments of action, saying "bit" of action, though it makes sense as a unit of rhythm (as in down beat) because the flow of beats is the primary rhythm of a scene.
Beat change - when one of the characters changes a strategy or objective, moving the scene in a new direction. A beat change results from a character's decision.
Believability - Something consistent with the created reality and style of the world of story and the personality of the character, whether likeable or not.
Blocking - establishing the positions and movements of the characters on the stage or in relation to the camera. Good blocking should express the character's objectives.
Border - A Curtain used to hide lights B. Curtain or plywood covering the front of rostra to extend the stage.
Call - The time an actor is to report for work. Missing a call is a serious offense. In the theatre, calls are posted on the call board; in film and television, they are usually posted on the production office.
Callback - There are usually preliminary auditions in the audition process from which a small number of actors are called back for a final audition.
Casting Director - Preliminary audition, especially in film and television, are usually conducted by a casting director who then selects the actors who are agents.
Cheating out - standing so that your face is turned slightly toward the audience or camera. Cheating out is more important on stage than on film.
Choice - When pursuing a need, your character may consider several alternative courses of action and then make a strategic choice that appears to be the best option about them.
Climax - the main event, which is the resolution of the underlying conflict of the story and therefore ends the suspense. Scenes normally do not end on a climax.
Continuity - In film and television, making sure that every detail of shot matches the shots that precede or follow it. An actor has to be aware of the responsibility of the script supervisor, and unsung hero who remembers details like this even days later.
Corpsing - Uncontrollable laughing or fit of the giggles from an actor on stage.
Costume Parade - In the theatre, the first showing of the costumes on the set and under lights for approval by the director.
Coverage - In film, a scene is often shot from a wide perspective called the Master; the camera is then repositioned for tighter shots called the master. Also the close-ups, which are the most demanding on the actors, are shot hours after the master and the actors must be careful to match the master.
Crisis - the event in a story after which the outcome becomes, in hindsight, inevitable. Before this point, the energy of the story rises in suspense. After the crisis leads to a climax, it is not the same thing as the climax and is often not the emotional high point of the story. A scene has a crisis in which the character's objective is threatened.
Cross - When the actor moves from point A to point B. Such movements need to be justified by some inner need. There are different kinds of crosses.

Sheet1

Cue - Anything that causes something to happen. For the actor, it refers to the line or event just before his or her character speaks or moves.
Cue to Cue - A frustrating form of technical rehearsal in which the actors are asked to jump from light cue to light cue. To be avoided if at all possible.
Cueing - the way in which one line follows another. In real life, we often overlap one another in speech and begin responding slightly before the other person has finished from take to take.
Curtain call - When the audience claps at the end of the play and the actors return to take a bow.
Cutout - Cloth cut out and shaped to make foliage or other irregular-shaped scenery. A cut out flat is the same, only made of wood.
Demonstration - Bertolt Brecht's idea that the actor does not become the character completely but rather demonstrates the character's behavior. The actor's passionate commitment to the ethical point being made gives the performance its own special kind of reality while ordinary indications of emotion are avoided.
Denouement - French for unraveling, that final portion of a story in which the loose ends are wrapped up.
Deputy - In an equity company, a member of the cast elected to serve as the representative of the actors to the management.
Doct - storage area for scenery, usually backstage.
Downstage - at one time, stages were sloped to enhance the illusion of perspective, so when heading toward the audience, actors were literally walking down the slope. Stages today are rarely sloped (or "raked"), we still use this terminology.
Downstage - see stage directions
Dramatic - When the outcome of an event is important and cannot be foretold, we say it is dramatic. The essence is in wondering "What will happen?"
Dramatic function - the job a character was created to do within the story. It can be related to plot, meaning, our understanding of the main character, etc.
Dress rehearsal - the final rehearsals that are conducted under performance conditions.
Dual consciousness - the actor's ability to be immersed in the character and the character's world, while still reserving a level of awareness of the actor's awareness in favor of the characters.
Economy - doing enough to fulfill dramatic function and believability of the character but avoiding extraneous details or effort.
Emotion memory (or recall) - The actor's application of a memory from his or her real or imaginary past to enrich his or her response to the present situation.
Empathy - the actor's ability to put himself or herself in the place of another person, both for purposes of observation and for applying the same to his or her own character.
Equity - The actors Equity Association (AEA), the main theatrical union for actors. <i>The Equity Rule Book</i> establishes the conditions under which actors are to be treated.
Exposition - Providing information about what has happened before in order to help the audience understand what is going on in a story or play. One old piece of advice is to "make exposition ammunition"; that is, your character must have a reason for providing expository information.
Extra - A nonspeaking actor who rounds out the reality of a scene. Professional extras in film are skilled workers who can repeat precise movements. They have recently merged with the Screen Actors Guild (SAG).
Eye line - In Film, the direction in which you are looking must match the spatial relationship established by the camera in the scene. Usually, the actor's eye line or may be pressed up against the camera. The director of Photography or the camera operator will guide you in providing the correct eye line.
Focus - Whatever you are concentrating on at any given moment, usually your objective.
Front-of-the-house lighting - lights shining from above the auditorium onto the front of the stage.
Functional traits - those traits that a character was given (or that you provide) to allow the character to believably fulfill his or her dramatic function.
FX - Short for sound effects. Effects in a play maybe labeled FX1, FX2, and so on by the DSM.
Gauze - filmy cloth, used to create different effects depending on how it is lit. When lit from above and in front, gauze is opaque. Lit from the side, something painted on the gauze to be revealed. Often used for magical or mysterious effects.
Givens - More completely, the given circumstances; the world and situation within which your character lives, especially as they affect his or her behavior.
Gods - the very highest galleries in a theatre.
Going up - Forgetting your lines. Although a terrible experience, forgetting your lines can sometimes provide wonderfully rich moments if you can anticipate the kind of freshness and authenticity the camera demands.
Green room - room backstage in which actors gather before and after performances. The first one is said to have been painted green.
Grid - Usually a steel framework above the stage from which equipment is hung.
Ham - Exaggerated overacting.
Head shot - the glossy 8x10 photograph an actor hands out along with his or her resume. The photograph should be attractive but not limit the actor's range.
House - area of theater where audience sits. House Left and House Right are directing terms which refer to left and right as the audience's perspective.
House lighting - lights above the auditorium which are normally dimmed when a show commences.
Improvisation - performing without a script. While most comedic improvisers are based on a scenario in which the actors have some idea of what is going to happen, in theatrical theatre, some directors use improvisation as a rehearsal device in which the actors explore their characters in situations beyond those of the script. More than at characterization acting.
Indication - showing instead of doing; that is, standing outside the reality of your character and playing the emotion or some quality of the character.
Indirect action - When some obstacle impedes direct action, a character may choose an indirect strategy, saying or doing one thing while really doing another.

Sheet1

Inner Action - The inner process of reaction, attitude, need, and choice that results in outer or observable action. A believable performance connects it to an internal process.
Inner Monologue - the “stream of consciousness” of the character. As a training or rehearsal device, actors sometimes verbalize or at least think out loud.
Justifying - The process of connecting outer (visible or audible) actions to inner needs and processes. The script provides the basis for the actor to justify. In justifying, the actor puts his or her personal stamp on the performance.
Limelight - greenish light shed by burning lime in lamps that were once used on stage. It was so much brighter than other light sources at the time.
Lines - ropes of hemp or steel for raising and lowering scenery, usually by pulley.
LORT - The League of Resident Theatres; an organization that has negotiated a specific contract with Actors Equity governing the operation of theatres. The LORT system, which is the best growth experience an actor can have and is the traditional stepping stone from training to a professional career.
LX - short for light effects. Effects may be numbered LX1, LX2 by the DSM.
Magic If - Stanislavsky’s technique in which you put yourself in the given circumstances of your character as if you live in that world, then you can act naturally. This process results in metamorphosis or transformation, whereby the actor becomes the character, though without losing the dual control of the actor.
Mark - In film and television, a piece of colored tape that shows the actor where to stand at a specific moment in a scene. The actor must hit the mark.
Masking - cloth or flats hiding parts of the stage or backstage from the audience.
Matching - In film, they need to match details and emotional tone from shot to shot.
Moment - A brief period of time when something of special value is happening. We speak of “making the moment.” Can also refer to one’s own moment.
Motivation - The inner need that drives your character’s action, which usually comes from something that has just happened in the scene. Motivation drives you toward some objective in the immediate future because you can’t play motivation, only the action toward which it drives.
Need - Whatever your character needs that drives him or her to pursue an action to try to satisfy that need. We sometimes distinguish between a want and a need. A want is something you desire, but you don’t always know what we need to get what we want. For the actor, however, either a want or need will drive the action.
Objective - The goal your character pursues through action to satisfy a need. An objective is best defined using a transitive verb phrase such as “to get him to look at me with compassion.” The terms intention and task are often used to mean Objective.
Off Book - Memorizing your lines so that you can perform without the script. During the period immediately after going off book, it is expected that you will lose your sense of action.
Out(or in) - On stage, away from center(or toward center).
Pace - The momentum or flow of a scene. Pace is different from tempo, which refers to the speed of the action. Regardless of tempo, the scene must have integrity and purpose. Paradoxically, sometimes slowing the tempo of a scene improves the pace because the actors are forced to experience the moment.
Paraphrase - To use your own words in place of the words of the script, though with an effort to mean the same thing. Paraphrasing can sometimes be used in moments in which you “go up” on your lines. In film and television, a modest amount of paraphrase is sometimes tolerated as a way of producing a more natural performance.
Personalization - The indispensable process of making the characters’ needs, choices, habits, and actions your own.
Playable - What we call an objective or action that is useful in performance and contributes to the movement of the scene. The most playable objective is one that involves another character, as this will draw your energy outward and into the immediate future, bringing you into strong interaction with the other character.
Playing Through - Letting the action flow with good pace by keeping your awareness moving toward the future objective and avoiding faltering.
Plot - The sequence of events as the story unfolds. The actor needs to be aware of how each of his or her actions moves the plot forward and how the plot affects his or her character.
Priming - an undercoat of liquid called prime, or paint, used to prepare a flat before it is painted.
Projection - In the theatre, speaking loudly enough and with enough clarity to be heard and understood throughout the auditorium. Good projection is essential. When Michael Redgrave, already an accomplished stage actor, did his first take for a camera, he asked the director how it was. The director said, “You’re not projecting.”
Prompt - person who follows the play in the script and reminds an actor of his next words, if he forgets them. Not usually used in performance.
Prompt Book - The copy of the script kept by the stage manager that contains the blocking, the lighting and sound cues, and all the rest of the production. Some of Shakespeare’s plays were printed from his prompt books. In film, the script supervisor records every line.
Prompting - Giving actors lines when they ask for them. Actors usually call out, “Line”. Lines are given by the stage manager in the theatre.
Prop - Anything your character handles. In theatre, it is wise to begin working with rehearsal substitutes as soon as you are off book.
Public Solitude - Stanislavski’s concept of how actors, by focusing on their objectives, can “forget” that they are in public and thereby avoid a self-conscious performance.
Rake - the slope of the stage floor from upstage down towards audience. Allows actors to be seen better.
Reacting - Allowing yourself to respond to the immediate stimulus in the scene and allowing that stimulus to make you do what your character would do. Your partner provides it, rather than playing what you have previously played in your head.
Read Through - A rehearsal in which the entire scene or script is read aloud.
Reel - A videotape containing a compilation of an actor’s appearances on film. A reel may contain work in student films or classroom exercises.

Sheet1

Relationship - All characters exist in relationship to other characters, and we come to understand characters mostly by observing the way they interact. It is important to develop your character in specific relationship to the performances of the other actors in your scene.

Revolve - circular part of the stage floor that can be rotated by machinery below-stage. Often used for quick scene changes.

Safety curtain or Iron - iron or fireproof sheet lowered between stage and auditorium to prevent the spread of fire.

Stage cloth - cloth laid on the stage, or on the floor to create an acting area painted for effect or used to deaden sound.

Stage Directions - Instructions to describe fairly precise positions on stage. Authors may specify which position a character should move to.

Stage door - door, usually at the back or side by which actors enter the theatre.

Tabs - another word for the curtains. The curtains across the front of the stage may be called front or house tabs.

Thespian - actors are sometimes called Thespians after an Ancient Greek called Thespis, said to have been the first person to step out of the chorus.

Thrust Stage - see apron

Trapdoor - small area of the stage floor that can be raised and lowered by machinery underneath. Used for actors to make entrances from below.

Wings-areas at the side of the stage, masked by curtains or flats, from which actors make their entrances.