

Auditioning 103: A typical audition

© Nils Osmar 2018. All rights reserved.

BEFORE THE AUDITION

1. You see an audition **notice notice** that looks interesting.
2. Read it thoroughly. Don't email them to ask questions that are already answered in the audition notice.
3. You read the **plot summary** and **character descriptions**.
4. You find a character that fits your "specs," that you'd like to audition for.
5. You submit your headshot and resume (by email, or through a website).
6. When you email, ask if the **sides** are available to look at before the audition.
7. If you hear back: you set up an appointment.
8. If you don't hear back: forget about that audition and wait for the next one.

PREPARING FOR YOUR AUDITION

1. First, read over the sides and research the script.
2. Read the whole script, if it's available. Or at least skim it. It's your clue to who your character is and what the scene is about.
3. Do some script analysis, and figure out what's going on in the scene. What's happening? Where's it taking place? What's the energy? Who's your character? Why is she in the scene? What was she doing just before the scene started? What will she be doing after it ends?
4. Make some choices. What does your character want? i.e., what's his objective? (To cheer up a friend? To win back a girlfriend or boyfriend? To save someone who's in trouble? To kill someone? To drive them to suicide? To humiliate a rival?) Make the strongest choices you can, and commit to them.
5. Memorize the lines. Practice them. Treat the audition like a performance in front of a live audience.
6. Rehearse and practice. Ask a friend or fellow actor or acting student to rehearse with you. Or record the your cues and practice saying

- your lines in different ways, with different inflections and attitudes.
7. Record yourself auditioning and play it back.
 8. Practice with more than one scene partner and ask them to throw your some curves that you'll have to respond to.

THE DAY OF THE AUDITION:

HOW TO DRESS

We'll talk more about this in another part of the class. For now, just figure, wear something clean, that looks nice, that you're comfortable in. Business casual is usually fine.

WHAT TO BRING

1. Printed copies of your headshot and resume.
2. Always bring some extras.
3. Printed copies of the sides.
4. A clipboard or folder to keep everything organized
5. A colored marker
6. A writing pen

AUDITION ETIQUETTE

1. Drive over early. Don't be too early, but don't be late. 15 or 20 minutes early is good. If you show up late they'll assume you'll also be late for rehearsals and performances, and won't cast you. Plan on bad traffic and leave early.
2. Check in with a receptionist. Be courteous and professional. Some actors have lost roles by being rude to the receptionist, or to someone they think is the janitor, but turns out to be the casting director. "Your audition starts when you enter the building."
3. The receptionist may take your headshot and resume. If not, you can hand them to the casting director later.
4. You find a seat and wait to be called.
5. If you see actors you know who are waiting to audition, smile and nod but don't engage them in conversation. They're preparing. You need to do so too.

6. Turn your phone off while you're waiting. Don't take calls, text and tweet. Use the time you have to prepare, and stay focused.

THE AUDITION ITSELF

1. They call your name.
2. You go into another room where the auditors are waiting.
3. Hand them your headshot and resume (if the receptionist didn't take them)
4. Never enter the room in character. Just be yourself, and be friendly and down to earth. There are no exceptions to this, no times when you'll want to enter the room as the character.
5. Take the sides in with you, even if you have them memorized. Keep them in your hand at all times, in case you need them.
6. In a monologue audition, deliver the lines toward the auditors but don't look directly at them when speaking your lines unless they ask you to. Look a little above them or between them, and see the person you're speaking to there.
7. Just have fun with it, and trust your gut. If they give you some tips before you start, try to incorporate them into your audition.
8. In a sight read, one of the auditors will usually be there to read you your cues. (Sometimes they may ask another actor who's auditioning for another role to cue you, but usually it's an auditor.) In this case, it's fine to look right at the auditor who's cuing you, when speaking.
9. Remember that they're on your side. They want you to do well. It's much more fun for them to listen to a good audition, than a poor one.

WHEN THE AUDITION ENDS:

1. Smile, say thank you, say goodbye pleasantly, and leave.
2. If you have questions, ask them of the receptionist as you're leaving.
3. Thank everyone for their time, including the casting director and others in the room.

AFTER YOUR AUDITION

1. You may be offered a part outright
2. You may be asked to come to a callback
3. They may call and have questions for you, before offering you a part.
4. You may never hear from them at all. If this happens, it means you didn't get the part. So move on.
5. If you are not cast, that does NOT mean the audition was a failure. You've made contact, met a director, and if you made a good impression, that can make it more likely you'll get cast in another role in the future
6. Some actors drop the casting director a friendly email or even a postcard after an audition. (If you're really interested in a part, it's fine to mention this in the note.)

RANDOM TIPS

1. Stick to the script as written. Don't improvise unless the auditors ask you to. Generally speaking, you can add actions to a script but not words.
2. You may be asked to try the lines with a different energy than what you'd planned. So make definite choices, but be ready to let go of them if they ask for something different.
3. You may be asked to SLATE for the camera. If so, state your name clearly while looking into the camera.
4. You may also be asked to do left and right PROFILES and a BODY SCAN. (We'll practice these in class)
5. If the audition is being filmed, there will usually be a MARK on the floor for you to stand on. Or there may be a chair there for you to sit in. If it's not clear, feel free to ask.
6. When doing a filmed audition, the usual practice is to face toward the camera when delivering your lines but don't look directly into it. The imaginary person you're speaking to is slightly above the camera, a little off to the side.
7. Never audition if you're not interested in the part. (Auditioning can be really fun, but it isn't just "practice." It's a job interview, and you don't want to waste others' time.)

8. Remember that you can't control the result of your audition. All you can control is your performance. So don't about things you have no control over, like whether or not you are offered the role. Just do your best and have fun auditioning. An audition in which you weren't offered a part immediately, may lead to great things down the road.