Basic Theatre Vocabulary

**Actor**: A man or woman who is cast in a role in a play or musical

**Ad-lib:** An action or dialogue created off of the prepared script

**Antagonist:** The person or force working against the protagonist, usually the villain

**Auditions:** Try- out for parts or positions in the play.

**Beats**: A unit of rhythm within a particular section of a play or scene that changes the character’s objective, tact or emotion

**Blocking:** Decision of direction and movement one area of the stage to another as given by the director

**Build:** To heighten the intensity of the action within the scene or the entire play.

**Casting:** Actors placed in particular roles based on the auditions

**Center Stage:** The exact center of the conventional stage.

**Character:** A role in a play or musical portrayed by an actor

**Cheat/Cheat In/Cheat Out**: To 'cheat' is to turn your face or entire body either out to the audience to be seen better without completely turning (so it still looks natural, but you are not completely in profile) or to face in to conceal something.

**Climax:** The highest or most exciting part in a play or scene.

**Cold Reading:** The reading of a script, usually at an audition, without any prior knowledge of the material

**Comedy:** One of two categories in the theater; this type is based mainly in humor, often with mistaken identities and miscommunications

**Costumes:** Clothing that is used to further the illusion of a character.

**Cross**: A move from one area of the stage to another.

**Cue:** Signal for actor to speak or move on stage, Usually the end of another actor’s line.

**Dialogue**: A verbal interaction between two or more characters in a play or musical

**Diction:** The correct pronunciation and articulation of words used so actors can be understood by the audience.

**Director:** The person in charge of bringing a production together

**Downstage**: Area of stage closest to the audience

**Dramaturgy:** The study of theater covering the four pillars, Historical, Dramatic, Political, and Social

**Dress Rehearsal:** The final performance before opening night where the entire cast wears their costumes.

**Fourth Wall**: the imaginary “**wall**” that exists between actors on stage and the audience.

**Gestures:** Movements made with hands and arms, used to emphasize points made in the dialogue.

**House:** The area of a theater where the audience sits

**Props**: Items carried on stage by actors

**Improvisation**: Performing on the spur of the moment with no script.

**Monologue:** A lengthy section of dialogue given by one character

**Pantomime:** Telling a story without the use of language

**Playwright**: The person who writes the play

**Plot:** The storyline of the play.

**Protagonist:** The main character or the hero/heroine in the play

**Run-through**: A rehearsal moving from start to finish without stopping for corrections or notes.

**Scene:** A small section or segment of the play

**Script:** The dialogue, stage directions, and text of the play.

**Stage Right/Left:** Sides of the stage determined by the actors point of view facing the audience. Symbolized in blocking as SR and SL

**Tragedy:** a play dealing with tragic events and having an unhappy ending, especially one concerning the downfall of the main character.

**Upstage:** Area of the stage furthest from the audience

**Wings:** The off stage areas located directly right or left of the stage.