

EDUCATION ACTIVITIES

THEATRICAL TERMS
& CROSSWORD PUZZLE

STATE THEATRE
COMPANY SOUTH AUSTRALIA

**AD LIB**

The presence of mind by an actor to improvise when:

- 1) another actor fails to enter on cue,
- 2) the normal progress of the play is disturbed,
- 3) lines are forgotten.

APRON

A part of the stage projecting towards or into the auditorium.

AUDITION

An actor displays their talents in general by singing, dancing or reciting excerpts of script to a director and associates.

AUDITORIUM

The part of the theatre designed for the audience to sit (pictured above).

BACKSTAGE

A term applied to parts of the theatre behind the stage, such as the 'dressing rooms'.

BLACK BOX THEATRE

A simple performance space usually consisting of four walls and a flat floor where walls, floor and ceiling are painted black.

BLACKOUT

A total, sometimes sudden, extinguishing of the stage lights, often at the end of a scene or act.

BLACKS

- 1) Black clothing worn by stage management or production staff during performances.
- 2) Any black drapes or tabs, permanently or temporarily rigged. Used for masking technical areas.

BLUES

Blue lights used backstage during a performance that give minimal light.

BLOCKING

The process of roughing out the physical moves to be made by the actors throughout the play.

BOX SET

A scene representing three walls and a ceiling of a room, built by an arrangement of flats to form continuous walls, with practical doors and windows.

BUMP-IN/OUT

The process of moving all of a company's equipment in/out of a theatre. This includes scenery, props, lanterns, costumes etc.

CALLING THE SHOW

The process of giving verbal cues to the lighting, sound, fly operators and stage crew during the performance. Usually called from the prompt corner by the Stage Manager over cans.

CANS

A common name for the communications devices used backstage, usually consisting of a pack and headset.

CENTRE STAGE

The middle of the acting area.

COMPANY

The cast and crew associated with a particular show.

CUEING

The Stage Manager gives the crew a call for the cues (lighting cue, sound cue etc).

CUE SHEET

A list showing the various cues in correct order as they are to be carried out.

CURTAIN

A front of house curtain, which opens and closes at the beginning and end of each act.

CURTAIN CALL

At the end of a performance, applause by audience - the bows.

CYCLORAMA

A curved canvas wall, built around the back part of the stage. Used to give an illusion of space and distance, and for sky and cloud effects obtained by lighting.

DESIGN PRESENTATION OR 'DES PRES'

The final presentation of the design for a particular show.

DOCK

Area at the rear or side of the stage where scenery is stored when not in use or where materials are loaded from vehicles.

DOWNSTAGE

The acting area nearest the audience.

DRAMATIST

A playwright, composer or lyricist who takes an existing story and transforms it into a play or musical.

DRAMATURG

Works as an advisor/assistant to the director on the background and historical relevance of the play being produced. Also can act as a liaison between director and playwright, and can work on the text of the play (editing and revising scripts).

DRESS REHEARSAL OR 'DRESS'

The final rehearsal before the performance. The actors are in costume.

DROP

An unframed canvas backcloth commonly with scenes/backdrops painted on.

FALSE STAGE

A special stage floor laid a few inches above the real stage, to allow the running of steel cables to pull trucks across the stage.

FLAT

A part of modern scenery, consisting of stretched canvas or hardboard on a wooden frame. Can make walls of a box set, form a wall or can be flown in.

FLIES

The name given to the space above the stage, hidden from the audience, where scenery can be lifted clear from the stage or 'flown' by ropes (see below left).

FOLLOW SPOT

A light used by an operator so that the light beam can be moved around the stage to follow an actor (see below right).



FOURTH WALL

An imaginary surface at the edge of the stage through which the audience watches a performance. If a character speaks directly to the audience, or walks on/off the stage, this is known as breaking the fourth wall.

FRONT OF HOUSE

The areas of the theatre used by the audience – auditorium, foyers, cloakrooms, bars etc.

GREEN ROOM

Room adjacent to the stage or in the backstage area for the actors to relax.

MASKING

The blocking out of one actor from the sight of the audience by another actor, or black hard or soft cloth side of stage that hide the actors from the auditorium.

MUSICAL DIRECTOR OR 'MD'

The person in charge of the musical content of a show.

ORCHESTRA PIT OR 'THE PIT'

The sunken area in front of the stage where the orchestra plays during a performance.

OPPOSITE PROMPT OR 'OP'

Stage right, i.e. actors' right when facing the audience.

PLOT

- 1) List of preparations and actions required of technical crews during the performance.
- 2) The basic story thread running through a performance or play.

PROSCENIUM

The part of the stage in front of the curtain in a theatre with a proscenium arch.

PROSCENIUM ARCH

A frame present in some theatres that separates the stage from the auditorium. The curtain often hangs from/behind this arch.

PROMPT

To give an actor his/her next line when he/she has forgotten it.

PROP

An object used in the play that an actor may use – eg. magazine, hat, cup etc.

PROMPT SIDE OR 'PS'

Usually stage left (actors' left when facing the audience), containing the prompt corner. Often the side where the Stage Manager calls the show.

RAKED STAGE

A stage floor that is sloped from the front of the stage to the back wall.



REVOLVE

A turntable built into or on top of the stage floor on which scenery can be set and then turned into view.

SAFETY CURTAIN

A fireproof sheet that can be lowered in front of the curtain, designed to separate the stage and auditorium in the event of fire.

SPIKE OR SPIKING

Marks the position of an item of set/furniture on stage. Sometimes any securing of items to the floor is known as 'spiking'.

STAGE CREW OR STAGE HAND(S)

Member(s) of the stage staff who is responsible for moving props and/or scenery during the show.

STAGE DOOR

The door to the theatre through which the cast and crew enter and exit the theatre.

STAGE LEFT/RIGHT

Left/Right as seen from the actors' point of view on stage when facing the audience. i.e. Stage Left is the right side of the stage when looking from the auditorium. Stage Right = OP (Opposite Prompt) Stage Left = PS (Prompt Side).

STAGE MANAGER OR 'SM'

The member of the production team responsible for the smooth running of a performance. They attend rehearsals and meetings with other members of the production. During the performance the Stage Manager uses an annotated copy of the script to cue the actors and the various technical departments.

STRIKE

To clear the stage of scenery and other materials, or to remove a specific article.

SWING

A member of the cast of a musical (or a play with a large cast) who understudies multiple roles in the production.

TABS

A pair of curtains which overlap at centre and together are the full width and height of the stage. Front tabs are the stage curtain.

TABLEAU

A finishing arrangement or placement of cast at the end of a scene or act that is held as the lights fade down or the curtain falls.

THEATRE-IN-THE-ROUND

A play presentation in which the audience is seated all around the acting area.

THRUST STAGE

A type of stage that projects into the auditorium.

TRAP

A trap door opening into the area below stage which can be used for special effects, entrances or exits.

TRUCK

A low platform with wheels or castors on which a piece of scenery can be moved.

UNDERSTUDY

An actor who learns a part played by another actor and is ready to step into their shoes should they not be able to perform.

UPSTAGE

The part of the stage furthest away from the audience.

UPSTAGING

When an actor moves upstage of another and causes the victim to turn away from the audience that actor is 'upstaging'. It is also called 'upstaging' when an actor draws attention to themselves away from the main action by moving around or over-reacting/over-acting.

WHITE CARD

The initial design presentation for a show made to the wider theatre company or producers (outside the creative team on a particular show). Design is expected to develop further after this presentation.

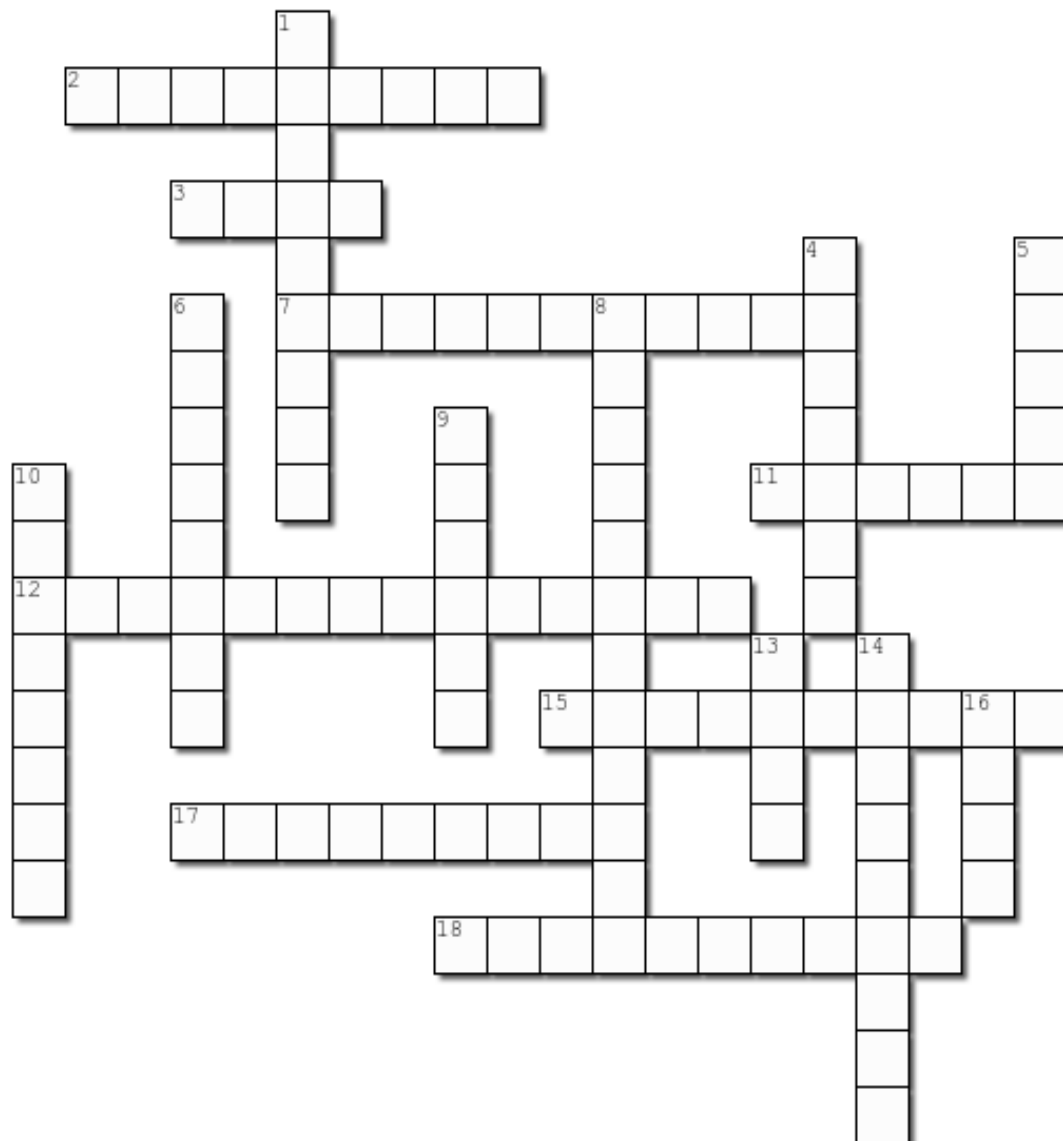
WINGS

Canvas covered flats placed at the side of the stage facing the audience. To be 'in the wings' means to be standing in the space behind the wings, out of sight from the audience where actors await their cues.

Name: _____

Theatre Terms

Complete the crossword puzzle below



Created using the Crossword Maker on TheTeachersCorner.net

Across

2. curved canvas wall used to give an illusion of space and distance
3. common name for the communications devices used backstage
7. type of stage that projects into the auditorium (6, 5)
11. black clothing worn by production staff during performances
12. term for the side of the stage on the actors' right when facing the audience (8, 6)
15. an actor who learns a part played by another actor
17. when an actor draws attention to themselves by moving around or over-reacting
18. if a character speaks directly to the audience or walks on/off the stage, this is known as breaking the... (6, 4)

Down

1. acting area nearest the audience
4. turntable built into the stage floor
5. canvas covered flats placed at the side of the stage facing the audience
6. a total extinguishing of the stage lights
8. member of the production team responsible for the smooth running of a performance (5, 7)
9. nickname for the sunken area in front of the stage where the orchestra plays (3, 3)
10. process of roughing out the moves to be made by the actors
13. object used in the play that the actor may use
14. term for the side of the stage on the actors' left when facing the audience (5, 4)
16. unframed canvas backcloth commonly with backdrops painted on

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