

The Fourth Wall

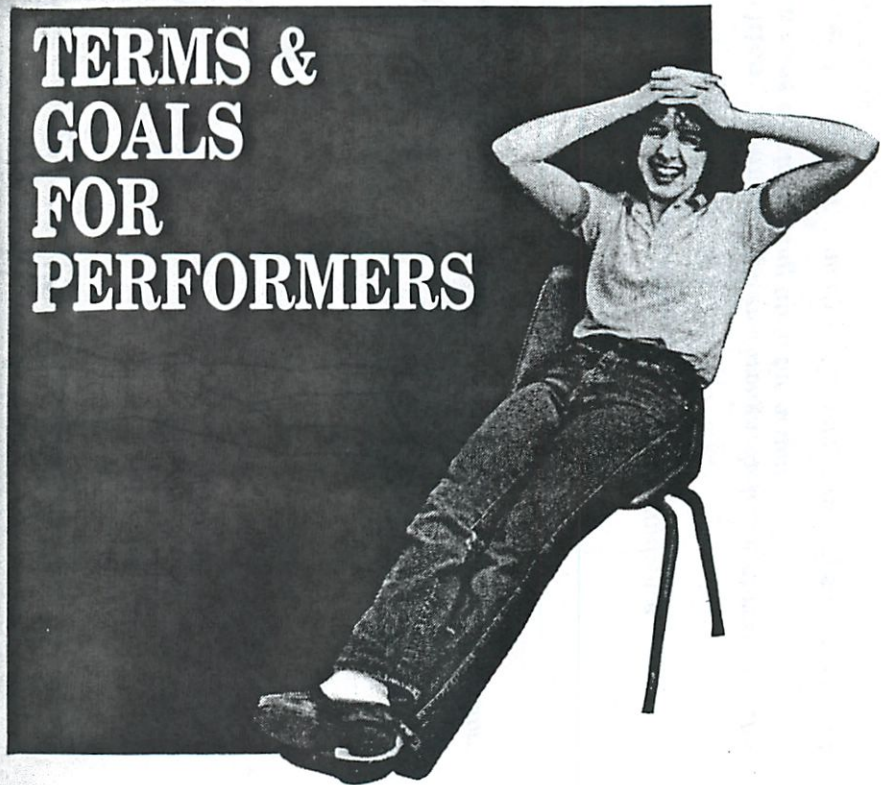
The fourth wall is the invisible wall through which the audience views the action on stage. Actors can look in the direction of the fourth wall as long as they can visualize that there is a wall, window, an object to focus on, etc.

When an actor makes eye contact with the audience or directly brings the audience into the story, the term "breaking the fourth wall" is used.

This is a technique that can enhance a performance, if it is done skillfully and deliberately. An actor should avoid breaking the fourth wall by accident.

CHAPTER I

TERMS & GOALS FOR PERFORMERS



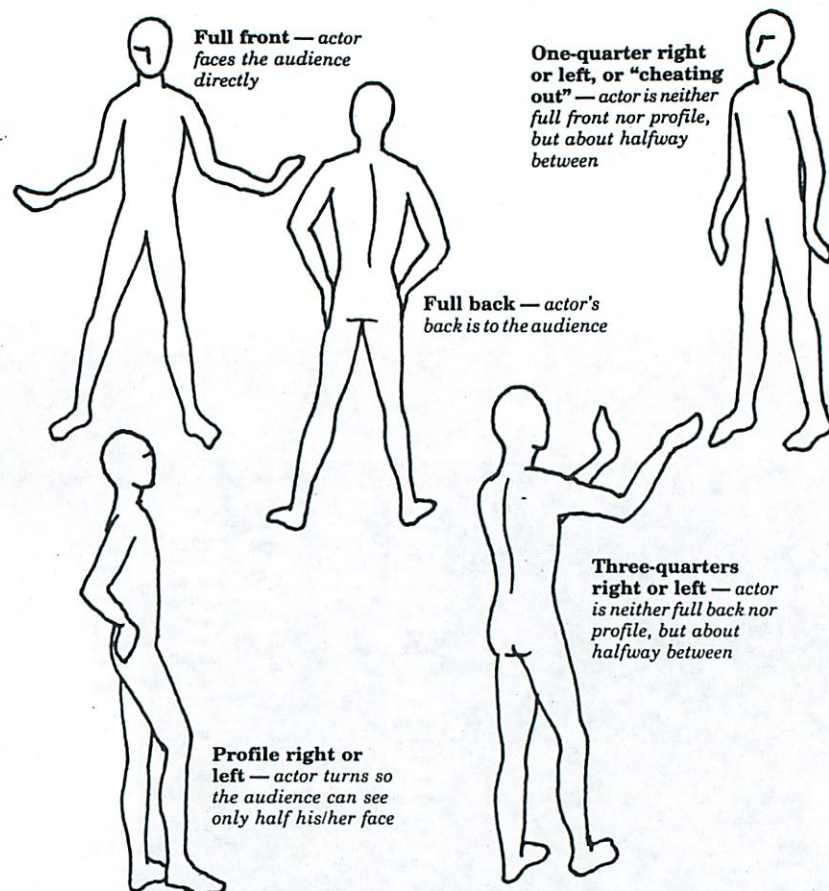
INTRODUCTION

Whether the group members see themselves as future stars or just participate as a hobby, using common theatre vocabulary and setting standards for performance make each session more satisfying. These terms and standards need not be introduced at once, but can be discovered through the activities themselves. Pantomime activities lead naturally to emphasis on visibility, and voice activities lead to the standards for a satisfactory stage voice.

Listed below are basic stage terms and performance goals.

STAGE TERMS

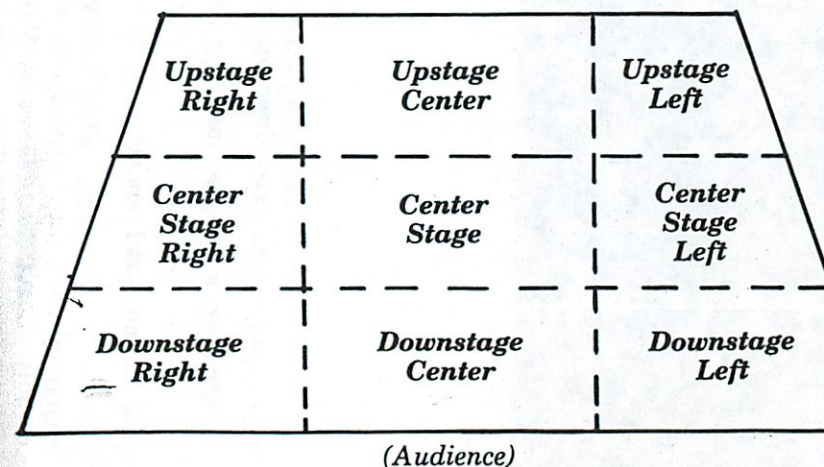
1. **actor, performer:** *The "real person" on the stage.*
2. **actor positions:** *Terms that describe how directly the actor is facing the audience, as shown following:*



3. **character, role:** The imaginary person, thing or animal the actor pretends to be on stage.
4. **cue:** A signal to begin action or dialogue.
5. **dialogue:** Spoken words on stage.
6. **downstage:** A movement or area **toward** the audience.
7. **duet scene:** A scene for two people.
8. **exposition:** Information given through dialogue during a scene that explains events leading up to the action.
9. **gesture:** A movement, usually of the arm, that helps to express an idea or feeling.
10. **hand prop:** a prop that can be easily handled. Examples include books, chalk, dishes, baseball bats. In pantomime, hand props are usually imaginary.

TERMS AND GOALS FOR PERFORMERS

11. **improvisation:** (often abbreviated **improv**) A scene performed with little or no rehearsal; it usually includes dialogue.
12. **monologue, solo scene:** A scene for one actor, who speaks his/her thoughts aloud or talks to an imaginary character or directly to the audience.
13. **pantomime:** A performance that communicates an idea or an act without using dialogue.
14. **set:** The actual pieces of furniture, platforms or other items (or the lack) on the stage.
15. **set prop:** A large prop, such as a piece of furniture, that is easily moved. Examples include chairs, tables, fireplaces, platforms. In pantomimes, set props like chairs are usually real; all others are imaginary.
16. **setting:** The imaginary place and time the stage area represents.
17. **sight cue:** A visual signal for actors to begin action or dialogue or for the audience to quiet down for a performance.
18. **stage areas:** For convenience, the acting area is divided into nine areas, as shown below.



19. **stage left:** A movement or area on the actor's left as he or she faces the audience.
20. **stage property:** (usually abbreviated **prop**) Any item used on stage.

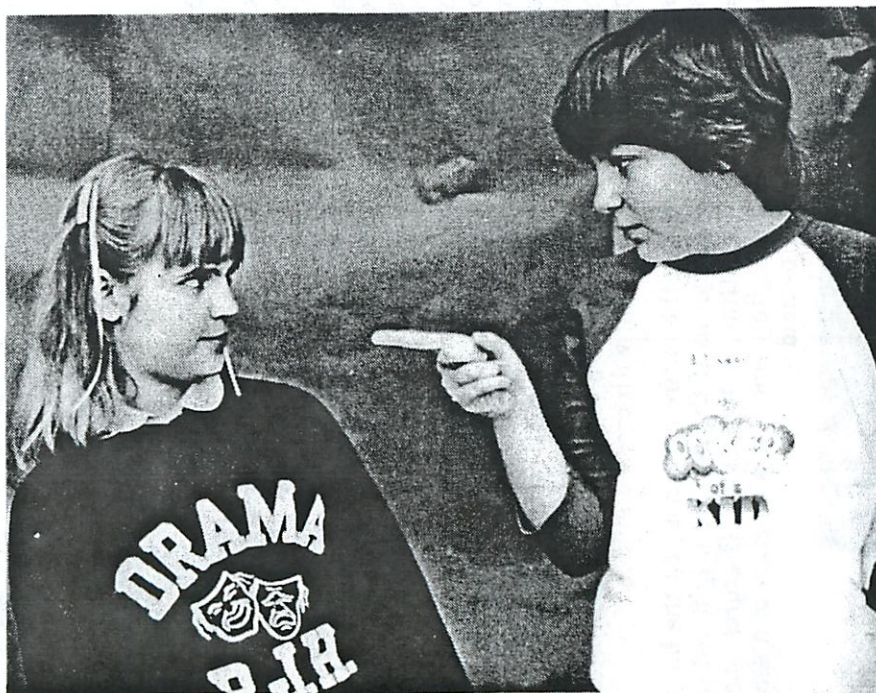
21. **stage right:** A movement or area on the actor's right as he or she faces the audience.

22. **upstage:** A movement or area *away* from the audience.

PERFORMANCE GOALS

1. **visibility:** If actors hope to communicate ideas to their audience, their bodies and faces must be seen; they must be visible. These techniques help:

- a. **hair:** Keep long bangs and hair out of eyes.
- b. **face and body:** Position these toward the audience as much as possible. In pantomimes, imaginary props can be placed between the performers and audience; real props can be placed to the side of the actors.
- c. **Cheat out, or open up,** as much as possible. Certainly, in real life, two people would face each other directly across a table, or they would cluster in a circle. On the stage, however, the table chairs would be angled out toward the audience, and the group would form a semi-circle or stand in an angled line. On stage, actors should try to use one-quarter positions instead of profile or three-quarter positions.



TERMS AND GOALS FOR PERFORMERS

- d. **gestures:** Use the arm farthest from the audience (upstage arm) for gestures or reaching. If you kneel on one knee, kneel on the upstage knee.

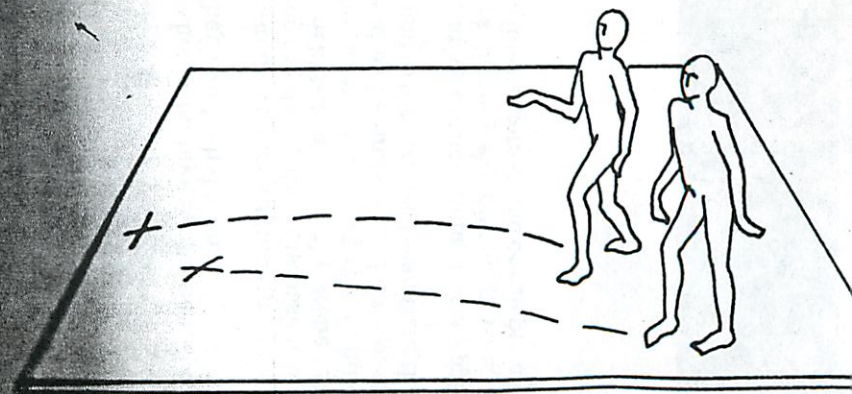


Wrong



Right

- e. **turns:** When you turn, turn so you face the audience during your turn.
- f. **crossing stage:** When two or more actors cross the stage, the actor closest to the audience (downstage actor) should slightly trail the other actor, so as not to block that actor, as shown below.



2. **energy and absorption:** Performers must attend to the imaginary events on stage, and block out off-stage distractions. Most adolescents know what it is like to become so involved in a game, a TV show, a conversation with their friends or a book, that they honestly do not hear their parents or teachers talking to them. The performers must bring the same degree of energetic, unshakable involvement to the imaginary events on stage. If the actors are caught up and interested in the on-stage action, the audience will be, too.
3. **energy and expression:** The same energy that allows performers to absorb themselves in the stage action should also add power to their vocal and physical expressiveness. In real life, gestures, facial expressions and vocal tones are often subtle and monotonous. Not so on the stage. The entire body should be emotionally involved. The stage is no place for performers to be chewing gum, staring off over the audience or standing with crossed ankles.
 - a. **gestures:** These involve the entire arm, not just the hand or forearm. Actors should feel as if the gesture originated from their very middle (waistline, bellybutton). Gestures should start definitely, end definitely and, for a fraction of a second after their completion, be held.



- b. **facial expressions:** These should be bigger and bolder than in real life. Like gestures, they can be held a bit.
4. **length:** Actors usually need minimum and maximum time lengths for their scenes. If a scene has been too short, elicit discussion about incidents that could have been included to make the scene fulfill the time limits. Point out to the actors that most radio and TV shows have strict time limits, and as beginners in the field, they should learn to automatically attend to the required scene length.
5. **exploitation:** This word has negative connotations, but it applies to the creativity of the performers: do they *exploit* the given situation or initial idea for all of its possible outcomes and developments?

Ms. Wulf
Intro to Theatre

Tips for Effective Pantomimes:

1) consistency: Objects that are mimed must remain the same size. Ex.) A steering wheel cannot shrink and expand.

2) exaggerated resistance: If an actor is pantomiming lifting a suitcase or pushing against a door, or any other action, the resistance of person against object must be exaggerated and made "bigger" than in real life. Actions should be more definite and sharp.

3) exaggerated expression and gesture: Facial expressions and gestures, such as laughter or crying, used to convey emotions must also be more exaggerated and "bigger."

As pantomimes become more developed they can be used to tell a story. Some suggestions to enhance the impact on the audience include:

1) Keep it simple: A complicated plot usually makes the action less clear.

2) Have a beginning (initial situation), **middle** (complications or conflict), and an **end** (resolution of conflict) to your pantomime story.

3) Be fantastic: It's okay to be more creative than realistic!

Not realistic theater.

Intro to a Scene/Skit

1/31/06

1. Set up (props)
2. Line up in a row - sight cue
3. Verbal intro (brief)
4. Get into position + begin

- Scene/Skit -

5. Freeze/Relax
6. clean-up

Like to a score/shift

1/2/21

1. Light up (new)
2. Light up in a new direction
3. Light up in a new direction
4. Light up in a new direction

Light up

2. Light up
3. Light up

Ms. Wulf
Brieanne Rogers
Intro to Theatre
Room 126 - Amphitheater

Get a folder + labels

WELCOME!!!

Course Overview

Intro to Theatre will introduce you to beginning acting techniques, basic theatre terminology, types of theatre, and some history. This is a hands-on course, so you will get to practice and demonstrate what you are learning.

We will begin with pantomimes, lots of improvisational activities, and relaxation techniques. We will then move on to performing skits and scenes, then presenting monologues, leading up to a one-act play.

Grading

Participation is the most important part of your grade. You will earn a varying amount of points each class, depending on the activities. Points are earned INDIVIDUALLY. Although you will be engaging in many group activities, each student is graded separately on overall class participation and more formal activities/projects. You will lose points if you are consistently unprepared, or behaving negatively. (This applies to the times when you are an AUDIENCE MEMBER as well as a performer/presenter!!!!)

Attendance is very important in this class - theatre can't happen without people! If you are excused absent, you must see me to make up missed work/activities.

Standard district grading scale:

A=	93-100%
B=	85-92%
C=	77-84%
D=	70-76%
F=	0-69%

CLASS EXPECTATIONS

You will need to bring a pen or pencil to class each day. You should have a folder or binder just for your Intro to Theatre materials.

- Be prepared
- Be respectful
- Be positive and energetic
- Be nice!