

# A Glossary of Theater Terms

**Prompter** - The person who watches the script backstage during the performance of a play; he or she gives the lines to the actors, if they should forget.

**Props** - The properties or small objects used by the actors.

**Rehearsal** - The practice or repetition of a play in preparation for public performance.

**Resident Company** - A company of actors who play in a home theatre as compared to a Touring Company.



**Scenario** - The outline or story of a play.

**Scene** - A location or setting. A division within an act of a play.

**Scenery** - The large piece (flats, backdrops, furniture) that are placed on the stage to represent the location.

**Soliloquy** - Lines in a play spoken by one character alone on the stage, in which his or her thoughts are revealed.

**Script** - The manuscript or form in which the play is written; it contains the dialogue, stage directions, and time and place of each act and scene.

**Stage Manager** - The person in charge backstage; he or she helps the director during rehearsals and then takes charge backstage when the play is performed.

**Theme** - A topic or subject developed in a play; the subject on which the plot is based.

**Touring Company** - A company of actors who take their show on the road, as compared to a Resident Company.

**Understudy** - The actor who learns the part of another actor playing a major role; he or she is ready to go onstage in the unexpected absence of the original actor.

**Upstage** - The rear of the stage; the area farthest from the audience.

**Wings** - The side areas of the stage, out of view of the audience; the area where the actors wait for their entrances.



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# Why Do You Need To Know Theatre Terms?

Theatre terminology is the communication tool between directors, actors, and stage directors.

Without theatre terms such as downstage and dress rehearsal, for example, the director wouldn't be able to block a scene efficiently, or clarify timelines, and no one in the cast would understand what was going on.

Theatre vocabulary enhances an understanding of "The Big Picture" of a theatre production.

Here are the most important basic theatre terms you should know, so that you will be able to communicate clearly during your next play production!

**Actor** - A person who performs in a play, who assumes the role of a character.

**Backstage** - The area behind the stage, not visible to the audience.

**Choreography** - The design for a dance; written representation of the steps of dancing.

**Cue** - The signal for an actor to speak or perform an action, usually a line spoken by another actor.

**Curtain call** - The return of the entire cast to the stage after the end of a performance, when they receive and acknowledge applause.

**Denouement** - The final unraveling of the plot of a play; the solution or outcome.

**Dialogue** - The lines of the play spoken by the actors.

**Director** - The person in charge; the one who gives directions to the actors and assumes ultimate responsibility for the production.

**Double Cast** - To prepare two casts for a play, both of which will play the same number of performances.

**Downstage** - The front of the stage; the area nearest the audience.

**Dress rehearsal** - The final rehearsal of rehearsals of a play, when costumes are worn and all stage effects are complete.

**Intermission** - A recess or temporary stopping of action, usually about halfway through a play.

**Lines** - The dialog or words spoken by the actors.

**Playwright** - A person who writes plays.

**Production** - The total theatrical product, including the play, the actor, the direction, scenery, costumes, lighting, and special effects.

**Professional Theatre** - Theatre in which actors and all other employees earn their living.

