

Rehearsal Techniques

Rehearsals should be hard work, but fun—and the following activities provide students with ways to re-interpret, energize, find perspective, and have fun making their words fall into place.

WORKING WITH TEXT (PARTNERS)

- Read the text silently.
- Decide who is going to read which part. Read. Change roles. Go back to the original roles.
- Read the text in various ways: angrily, in whispers, melodramatically, as robots, slowly, quickly, sleepily, etc.
- Read the text again, pausing at the end of each line.
- Find the most important line that each person says, and read only those two lines.
- Use only movement and no words.
- Improvise the meaning of the text using your own words.

WORKING TO PREPARE A CHORAL READING (SMALL GROUP)

- Read the selection silently.
- Read the piece out loud in unison.
- Read the piece with one person reading the first line; the second person reading the second line; and so on.
- Read the selection in various ways: angrily, in whispers, melodramatically, as robots, slowly, quickly, sleepily, etc.
- Discuss what sounds good. Divide up the lines.
- Rehearse and refine. Decide how to stand. What is a strong beginning? What is a strong ending?

- Practice holding the ending so that the audience will know that the choral reading is over.

Rehearsal Checklist

- Do we know what we want to say?
- Have we tried different ways to say it?
- Is the space working for us or against us?
- Are the sight lines working?
- Should we use props to enhance the presentation?
- Are important moments rehearsed enough so that the audience will understand?
- Have we worked on layering our work so that it has some kind of form?
- Does the piece have a strong beginning? strong ending? effective rehearsed transitions?
- Is everyone involved?
- Does everyone look strong?
- Have we juxtaposed scenes so that they come together in effective ways?
- Can we adapt what we have rehearsed to the limitations of the performance space?
- What do we need to cut, change, omit to make the piece work?
- Can we all be seen?
- Can we all be heard?

DRESS REHEARSAL

A dress rehearsal is a performance. That is the way that it has to be treated. No stopping. No correcting. No breaking of concentration. Presenters wear what they are going to wear to perform. The stage is set up just as it will be during the presentation or performance.

It's best that students have two dress rehearsals. The first one is to get used to the space, and to adapt to the seriousness of it all. The second is to correct the details. If it is a mess, make sure you do a third.

Presentation Don'ts

- Don't speak too fast.
- Don't speak too slowly.
- Try not to use jargon, but if you have to, explain it.
- Don't talk down to your audience—don't insult their intelligence.
- Never have change or keys in your pockets. You do not want to have the sound of objects competing with your voice.
- Never wear a hat, unless it is part of your presentation.
- Don't stand with your arms crossed or your hands in your pockets.
- Don't put up your visual aids or distribute your handouts before you explain them. Introduce them as you are speaking.
- Don't keep visual aids up after you are no longer referring to them.
- Get rid of distracting accessories: take off your jewelry; tie back your hair or use product to control it; get rid of the pen, etc.
- Eliminate any distracting mannerisms you may have (e.g., moving your feet, playing with a ring or necklace, tucking hair behind your ear, cracking knuckles, etc.).