

Basic Theatre Terminology

apron—illusion of the first time

apron	the stage floor between the front edge of the stage and front curtain	ellipsoidal reflector spotlight (ERS)	a spotlight with an ellipsoidal reflector, usually hung from the auditorium ceiling to light downstage acting areas; also called a Leko
arena stage	staging in the center of a room with the audience sitting on all sides of the playing area; sometimes called theatre-in-the-round	external traits	characteristics that make up a character's physical appearance, such as posture, gestures, mannerisms, voice, and clothing
aside	words spoken by a character to the audience rather than to the other characters, who supposedly do not hear the speech	flats	pieces of canvas stretched over wooden frames or thin pieces of wood; painted and linked together, they create scenery such as walls and doorways
audition	a tryout for a part in a play	floodlights	lights that illuminate broad areas of the stage
backdrop or drop	a painted canvas or muslin curtain hung from a batten to form part of the scenery	fly space	the area above the stage where scenery, drops, and lights are hung when not in use
backstage	the area behind the scenery not visible to the audience	fourth wall	the imaginary wall through which the audience views the play
batten	a horizontal pipe suspended over the stage, from which scenery, lights, or curtains are hung; also called a rail	Fresnel	a spotlight with a step-lens that throws an efficient and soft beam, usually hung from the teaser batten to light upstage areas
blocking	the director's planned movement for the characters	full back/full front	facing completely away from or completely toward the audience
build	1. to make a costume from scratch 2. the increase of vocal intensity toward a climactic point	gelatins (gels)	transparent color sheets inserted into a frame in front of a spotlight or floodlight
casting	the process of selecting actors for various roles	going up	forgetting one's lines during a rehearsal or performance; also called blanking
cold reading	when an actor auditions for a role without having read the script beforehand	greenroom	a room where actors relax before and after performances
counter-cross	moving in the opposite direction—and out of the way—of another actor who is moving across the stage	house	another name for auditorium, the place where the audience sits
counterweight system	a system that uses lines, cables, and weights to raise and lower the battens that hold scenery, drops, and lights	house lights	auditorium lights used before and after the play and during intermission
cross	when an actor moves from one side of the stage to the other	illusion of the first time	the actor's ability to perform in a show over and over while making it appear that the dialogue and situations are happening for the first time
cyc or cyclorama	a curtain or wall that surrounds the back and sides of the stage		
dimmers	controls that change the level of lighting intensity		
downstage	the area of the stage closest to the audience		

continued