

Monologue Unit

The goal of this semester in Beginning Acting is to equip you with everything you might need in order to be successful at an audition. There are several important elements that you must be prepared with when heading into the audition room; a strong resume, an accurate but flattering headshot, an appropriate wardrobe, a professional but friendly demeanor, and of course, a well-suited audition piece. This is where we will begin our semester.

Over the next few weeks you will select a monologue, work through the text using the skills you acquired last semester, write a character analysis to better understand your character and ultimately bring your monologue to life. You will eventually use this monologue as your audition for our semester performance.

Calendar

Date	
Mon, 1/5	Introduction, Begin Monologue Selection
Wed, 1/7	Due: Two Monologue Options , Meetings to select monologue
Fri, 1/9	Due: 2 Copies of Typed Monologue following format , Begin work on monologue/ text-breakdown, Assign Memorization Logs/Character Analysis
Mon, 1/12	Due: Completed Text Breakdown , Monologue Work
Wed, 1/14	Monologue Work/ Character Analysis Work
Fri, 1/16	Monologue Work
Wed, 1/21	Due: Memorization Logs- Must be completely memorized , Monologue Work
Fri, 1/23	Monologue Work
Mon, 1/26	Due: Character Analysis, <u>First Graded Monologue Presentations</u>
Wed, 1/28	Monologue Work
Fri, 1/30	Monologue Work
Mon, 2/2	<u>Final Graded Monologue Presentations</u>

Monologue Selection Requirements

Your monologue selection must fulfill the following requirements:

- **1 ½ - 2 minutes in length**
- **Age appropriate**- *Would you realistically be cast as this role?*
- **Must come from a text (play, musical or film)**
- **Character must be speaking to someone**- *No story monologues or narration.*
- **Stay away from dialects/accents**
- **Stay away from "Character Pieces"**

Example Monologues:

Chapter Two

By: Neil Simon

JENNIE: You know what you want better than me, George... I know I'm not as smart as you but there's one thing I do know. I know how I feel. I know I can stand here watching you try and destroy everything I have ever wanted in my life, wanting to smash your face with my fists because you won't even make the slightest effort to opt for happiness—and still know that I love you. You mean so much to me that I am willing to take your abuse and insults and insensitivity—because that's what you need to do to prove I'm not going to leave you. If you want to test me, go ahead and test me. You want to leave, leave! But I will tell you something George. No matter what you say to me I feel so good about myself. I'm wonderful! I'm nuts about me and if you're stupid enough to throw someone sensational like me aside then you don't deserve as good as you've got.

Fat Pig

By: Neil Labute

JEANNIE: You know what everybody is saying around here, right? I know that you know. And it doesn't even faze you, huh? At all? It's not like she's... she's really fat, Tom! A fat sow and you know it. I can tell you're aware by the way you are acting, which is the puzzling part... I'm sure you thought this would hurt me right? She's fat, so does that mean that Tom secretly digs fat chicks, does it mean I'm fat? Huh?!? Is that what all this is about, getting back at me?!? It doesn't hurt me at all! NOT ONE BIT!!! It just makes you look like some creepy jerk and a totally odd... AHFFF! I don't care. I hate you. HATE-YOU. So, so much.

9 Elements That Make a Great Monologue

By Gwyn Gilliss | Feb. 19, 2013 | Backstage Experts

Actors audition for a new play with a "script," for a new series with a "side," and for a new commercial with "copy." Sometimes if the script isn't finished or the director requests it they'll do an improv for a role in a new film as did Daniel Day Lewis and Sally Field for their roles in "Lincoln." But once in a while, actors will be asked to do a monologue, especially when meeting with an agent. Monologues are always the most difficult auditions to pull off successfully so be prepared. Follow these winning strategies when choosing one.

1. **Select an entertaining one.** No one in the industry wants to watch an actor working really hard to impress them with their "acting" especially if the piece is boring or mediocre. Choose a monologue you love doing so we will love watching you.

2. **Find one that "fits you like a glove" so we believe you.** Know your type and range as far as being cast. Make sure the part is age-appropriate and physically accurate. It's

agonizing to watch a 25-year-old try to be 45 or a guy from Minnesota try to be an Italian Mafioso from Brooklyn or a plain Jane try to be a femme fatale. A monologue is the time to show WHO YOU ARE not add layers of dialects, character traits, a limp, or something outrageous to impress. Avoid props unless it is so essential to the scene that it won't work without one. If they can't tell you are acting, that's good acting.

3. Choose one that is serio-comedic – not just comedic or dramatic. Show us some change in emotion but keep us laughing. Serio-comedic monologues are my favorite choices. Start with a piece that is funny, quirky, and gets people to laugh and then "turn the screw." Hit them with something that's heartbreaking or touching. They're already in your corner and you've won them over! Be compelling to get them involved in liking you, loving you, and hiring you!

4. Work on one that has an "arc" or storyline. Avoid the "Johnny One-Note" monologues that show one emotion throughout. Boring. Tedious. There is nothing worse than watching someone rant and rave angrily at the audience for four minutes. We all love to hear stories with twists and turns. Bring us along with you.

5. Keep it short. Every agent I've ever met made up their minds about an actor in less than 10 seconds. After two minutes they change their mind and it goes the other way. Stay within their attention span, and you'll have more success.

6. Find one with an element of surprise. If the audience is three steps ahead of you, they get bored very fast. Shift gears suddenly and change your mood or voice. Find a way to keep us on the edge of our seats, wondering what will happen next. Everyone loves to be pleasantly surprised.

7. Choose one that is NOT full of foul language or rude sexual innuendos. The exception here is unless it is essential to the character, who in spite of the language is funny or quirky. But be careful. Well-written monologues like that are few and far between, and most actors aren't clever enough to pull them off. You run the risk of alienating everyone within earshot, and then looking like a mediocre actor on top of it. Choose good writing over something flashy to impress.

8. Discover one that shows YOU are a winner. When you leave the room, what will they think of you? What was your lasting impression? Will they cast you? Call you back or shrug? Most importantly, don't choose to play a loser, someone who whines, or is a victim. Everyone loves to watch feisty characters. They don't like to watch losers. Leave them thinking you are amazingly courageous – a pirate, a rebel, a survivor!

9. Avoid a recognizable one that a movie star did really well. You'll be compared to that star and you won't WIN. (Examples include Matt Damon in "Good Will Hunting" or Angelina Jolie in "Girl Interrupted.") Those monologues are done badly with actors who simply lack the personality, not talent, to pull it off. Don't go there. You are not Matt Damon or Angelina Jolie. Find a likeable character and do the monologue your way. Then you'll be a winner!