



HOLLYWOOD BOUND ACTORS

ACTING TERMINOLOGY 101

A-LIST – Usually refers to top-tier actors/actresses who are paid upwards of \$20 million per feature film; can also refer to producers, directors and writers who can be guaranteed to have a film made and released

ACTION! – The command from the director for the scene to begin. It also means that the camera is rolling.

ACTORS REEL – Video footage of on-camera productions the actor has been cast in. Can be footage from Films, TV Shows & Commercials.

A.D. – The Assistant Director.

AD LIB – Spoken words (sometimes witty comments) said out loud that are not in the script. They can also be given “off the cuff” when another actor forgets a line.

AEA – Actors’ Equity Association; also called “Equity”. SAG-AFTRA’s sister union which represents stage actors.

AFTRA – American Federation of TV and Radio Artists (the union). Covers radio, vocal recording and soap operas. Now merged with SAG (screen Actors Guild) renamed to SAG-AFTRA

ACTRA – Alliance of Canadian Cinema Television and Radio Artist

ADJUSTMENT – A direction or modification an actor makes in the playing of material. They are often instructions given by the director.

AFFECTIVE MEMORY – (Or “Remembered emotion”) Memory that involves the actor personally, so that deeply rooted emotional experiences begin to respond. His instrument begins to awaken and he becomes capable of the kind of living on stage which is essentially reliving.

AGENT – A person responsible for the professional business dealings of an actor, director, or other artist. An agent typically negotiates the contracts on behalf of the actor or director, and often has some part in selecting or recommending roles for their client.



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ALAN SMITHEE FILM – The pseudonym used by directors who refuse to put their name on a film and want to disassociate themselves, usually when they believe their control or vision has been co-opted by the studio (i.e., the film could have been recut, mutilated and altered against their wishes); aka Alan Smithee Jr., Allan Smithee, or Allen Smithee

ANTAGONIST – The main character, person, group, society, nature, force, spirit world, bad guy, or villain of a film or script who is in adversarial conflict with the film's hero, lead character or protagonist; also sometimes termed the heavy.

ARCHETYPE – A character, place, or thing, that is repeatedly presented in films with a particular style or characterization; an archetype usually applies to a specific genre or type classification.

AUDITION – A tryout for a film, TV or stage role. Usually auditions involve reading from the script, but can also require improvisation.

ASIDE – A part of dialogue that is directed directly to the audience or away from your scene partner as an internal thought. Very common in restoration comedies and Shakespeare.

BACKGROUND – The Extra performers. On the set, "Background!" is a verbal cue for the Extras to start their action.

BACK TO ONE! – The verbal cue for performers to return to the mark where they started the scene.

BANANA – Instructing the actor to move into a scene in a slight arc, or curved path, versus a straight line.

BEAT – A deliberate and slight pause (short on long) in dialogue or an action. Most normally in dialogue to emphasize emotion or thought.

BEAUTY SHOT – On TV soaps, the shot over which the credits are rolled.

BEST BOY – The assistant to the Chief Electrician, or Head Gaffer.

BIG HEAD CLOSE UP – Face and head fills the screen or lens; from bottom of chin to forehead.



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BIO – Short for “biography”. A resume in narrative form, usually for a printed program or press release.

BLOCKING – The movement of the performance. Where you walk, sit, cross the stage, enter, exit, etc. A director will usually ‘block’ a scene early in the rehearsal process. Blocking can range from being very general (enter here, exit there) or very specific (pick the pen up on this line, sit on the sofa at this line, etc.)

BOLLYWOOD – Refers to the burgeoning film industry of India, the world’s biggest film industry, centered in Bombay (now Mumbai); the etymology of the word: from Bo(mbay) + (Ho)llywood; unlike Hollywood, however, Bollywood is a non-existent place.

BOOKING – The job. You will be ‘booked’ for a job; this means you are hired. Usually refers to on-camera work.

BOOM – An overhead microphone, usually on an extended pole. The Boom Operator is the member of the sound department responsible for holding the boom pole, with mic attached, over and sometimes under the actors. Also usually responsible for placing radio mics on actors.

BOOTH – The area in the theatre with the light and sound boards. Usually in the back of the theatre facing the stage.

BLUE/GREEN SCREEN – Shooting in a studio against a large blue or green backdrop, which allows a background to be superimposed later on the final image. The actors must imagine the set they are on and be aware of the limitations of their movements.

BREAKAWAY – Specially designed prop or set piece that looks solid but shatters easily.

BREAKDOWN – A summary description of a script prepared by or for the casting director often including the names of the director, producer, network or studio, together with audition location and times, storyline and roles available for casting in a production.

BROMANCE – Showbiz slang for a ‘Buddy Film’.

BUMP – Added money, but different from an adjusted pay rate. A bump is a one time payment for additional services or items. If for example you are asked to change clothing you may receive a bump. This additional money is meant to compensate for your additional wardrobe or



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dry-cleaning costs. Another common example is when extras receive a bump for the use of their vehicle. If your car appears in a shot you may receive a bump.

CABARET – Entertainment held in a nightclub or restaurant while the audience eats or drinks at tables.

CALLBACK – Any follow-up interview or audition.

CALL SHEET – A sheet containing the cast and crew call times for a specific day's shooting. Scene numbers, the expected day's total pages, locations, and production needs are also included.

CALL TIME – For on-camera and theater. This is the time that you are called to be either at the theatre or on the set.

CAMERA LEFT – Actors or subjects are positioned (or asked to move) to the left side of the camera frame (from the operator's view/perspective). Screen direction is the opposite of stage direction. To move the camera left, the actor would move to his/her right side. Whereas on stage, an actor would move to his left for stage left.

CAMERA READY – Definition for anyone who is ready to appear in front of the camera. Actors are sometimes instructed to arrive on set "Camera Ready." This means you should arrive completely dressed, with your hair and makeup done, and ready to begin for the day.

CAMERA RIGHT – Opposite of camera left. Actor moves to his/her left side.

CASTING – The process of selecting and hiring actors to play the roles and characters in a film production, and be brought under contract; the lead roles are typically cast or selected by the director or a producer, and the minor or supporting roles and bit parts by a casting director.

CASTING DIRECTOR – The producer's representative responsible for choosing performers for consideration by the producer or director.

CASTING FACILITY – A studio or space used by one or more casting directors for holding audition taping sessions. Many casting directors have their own casting facility and others rent facilities for their auditions as required.



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CASTING NOTICE – Similar in format to a Breakdown, the casting notice is not restricted to agents only. They are distributed to actors, agents and the public, much the same as a posting in a newspaper.

CATTLE CALL – An audition open to many, many actors at once

CENTRAL CONFLICT – The oppositional force between characters that directly affects or motivates the action of the plot.

CHANGES – Outfits worn while performing.

CHARACTER ACTOR – An actor who specializes in playing well-defined, stereotypical, archetypal, off-beat, humorous, or highly-recognizable, fictional roles of a particular physical, emotional, or behavioral type, in a supporting role.

CHARACTERIZATION – The actor using their craft to explore and develop the specific qualities of a character.

CHEAT – The actor's adjustment of body position away from what might be absolutely "natural" in order to accommodate the camera; can also mean looking in a different place from where the other actor actually is.

'CHICK FLICKS' – Refers to films popular with women, but also used in a derogatory sense to marginalize films with heavy, sappy emotion and numerous female characters; aka tearjerkers.

CINEMATOGRAPHER – The expert responsible for capturing, recording or photographing images for a film, through the selection of visual recording devices, camera angles, film stock, lenses, framing, and arrangement of lighting.

CLOSE-UP (CU) – Camera term for tight shot of shoulders and face. See also Big Head CU.

COLD READING – For on-camera and theatre. Acting done with the script in your hand, unmemorized or partially memorized. Usually you will have less than one day to prepare.

COMPS – Complimentary tickets. Actors are usually given a number of comps to offer to their friends, agents & Casting Directors for the performances.

CONFLICT – An essential and vital element of acting that involves the obstacles and struggles (inner and outer) that a character must overcome to reach their objective.



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COOGAN's LAW – Refers to landmark legislation in the late 30s designed to protect a child actor's earnings, by depositing some of the minor's earnings in court-administered trust funds that the child receives when he/she reaches the age of majority; named after child actor Jackie Coogan.

COPY – Usually refers to the script for commercial & V.O. auditions. Sometimes only one or two lines.

COSTUME FITTING – Just like it sounds. You will be fitted for your costume by the costume designer or assistant. Usually you will be measured early in the rehearsal process and fitted with your costume latter. This can be an especially long process for period costumes.

COSTUME PARADE – At some point in the rehearsal process the actors will all 'model' their costumes or costume for the director. He/She will then either approve or discuss changes with the costume designer.

COVERAGE – All camera shots other than the master shot; coverage might include two-shots and close-ups.

COVER SHOT – An additional or extra shot of a scene, shot in addition to the master shot. Shot from a different angle, lighting, etc., and used to enhance the master shot, or to better establish a scene, setting, etc.

CRAFT SERVICES – Your all purpose snacking table. Usually consists of junk food and your basic munchies. Sometimes known simply as "Crafty."

CRANE SHOT – A camera shot raised over or above the set or the action.

C.S.A – The Casting Society of America is a professional organization of Casting Directors working in theatre, film, and television. The C.S.A. is not a union or a guild, therefore every Casting Director working in these mediums is not necessarily a member of this organization.

CUE – The action, line, or phrase of dialogue that signals your character to move or speak. Hand signal by the Stage Manager.

CUE-TO-CUE – A tech rehearsal where to save time, action and text is cut out between cues.

CUT! – The verbal cue for the action of the scene to stop. At no time, may an actor call, "cut!"



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CUTAWAY – A short scene between two shots of the same person, showing something other than that person.

DAILIES – The prints of footage shot the previous day, often viewed by the director and producers at the end of each day to monitor progress. Also known as “rushes”. Can cause side-effects ranging from nervous breakdowns to over-confidence back at the studio.

DAY PLAYER – A “Day Player” is a category that the Screen Actors Guild uses for an actor who is contracted to perform for a single day only, as opposed to a longer-term contract.

DEADPAN – A specific type of comedic device in which the performer assumes an expressionless (deadpan) quality to her/his face demonstrating absolutely no emotion or feeling.

DIALECT – A distinctly regional or linguistic speech pattern.

DIALOGUE – The scripted words exchanged by performers.

DIRECTOR – The coordinator of all artistic and technical aspects of any production.

DIRECTOR’S CUT – A rough cut (the first completely-edited version) of a film without studio interference as the director would like it to be viewed, before the final cut (the last version of the film that is released) is made by the studio.

DOLLY – A piece of equipment that the camera sits on to allow mobility of the camera.

DOLLY GRIP – The crew member who moves the dolly.

DOUBLE – A performer who appears in place of another performer, i.e., as in a stunt.

DOWNSCALE – Term for actors and extras who appear dressed in regular nondescript or casual clothing. The opposite of Downscale is Upscale.

DOWNSTAGE – The front of the stage, towards the audience. (Theatre stages used to be raked on an angle tilting towards the audience. That is where the term originates.)

DRAMATURGE – A profession in theatre that deals mainly with the research and development of plays. The dramaturg often assists the director in the preparation of a production.

DRESS REHEARSAL – Rehearsal with all technical aspects and costumes and makeup.

DRESS THE SET – Add such items to the set as curtains, furniture, props, etc.



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DRY TECH – A rehearsal, usually without actors, when the director, stage manager and designers work out all the light and sound cues.

ELECTRICIAN – In film, crew members who place lighting instruments, focus, gel and maneuver the lights.

EMOTION – The agitation of feelings such as: sadness, power, fear, love, hate and joy. These can be followed by responses such as: rapid heartbeat, crying or shaking.

EMOTIONAL RECALL (or Emotional Memory) – The emotions from an actor's memory (long or short term) of personal experiences that are used to connect the actor to the character, and meet the emotional needs of the situation in the play or film.

ENSEMBLE ACTING – An approach to acting that aims for a unified effect achieved by all members of a cast working together on behalf of the play, rather than emphasizing individual performances.

EPILOGUE – A speech or short scene that sometimes follows the main action of a play.

ETHNIC TYPES – Referring to the race, nationality, or creed of the talent. Most often describes individuals that are not Caucasian.

ETHNICALLY AMBIGUOUS – Meaning a person's race is not easily defined by appearance.

EQUITY – Short for Actors Equity Association. The union represents stage actors.

EXT. (Exterior) – A scene shot outside.

EXTRA – Background performer, used only in non-principal roles.

EXECUTIVE PRODUCER – A producer who is not involved in any technical aspects of the filmmaking process, but who is still responsible for the overall production. Typically an executive producer handles business and legal issues.

EYE LINE – Eye line is the direction an actor should look off-screen to match a reverse angle or a P.O.V. (point of view) shot. It is best to give the actor an actual thing or spot to look at rather than a blank spot on an empty wall or an empty space in mid air.

FEATURED EXTRA – When an extra is clearly visible on camera and not just a blur in the background.



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FI-CORE – ‘financial core’ status is an option within the Screen Actors Guild (SAG-AFTRA) allowing actors to work both union and non-union jobs.

FIRST A.D. – First Assistant Director; person responsible for the running of the set. Gives instructions to crew and talent, including calling for “first team,” “quiet,” “rehearsal,” and “take five.”

FORCED CALL – A call to work less than 12 hours after dismissal on the previous day.

FOREGROUND CROSS – Action in a scene in which an Extra Performer passes between the camera and the principal actors; sometimes called a “wipe”.

FOURTH WALL – Refers to the imaginary, illusory invisible plane through which the film viewer or audience is thought to look through toward the action; the fourth wall that separates the audience from the characters is ‘broken through’ when the barrier between the fictional world of the film’s story and the “real world” of the audience is shattered – when an actor speaks directly to the viewers by making an aside.

FX (Effects) – Special Effects.

GAFFER – The Chief Electrician.

GOLDEN TIME – Refers to the 16th hour of a shooting day. When Golden Time begins, Union extras receive their base pay for each additional hour until released for the day.

GREENROOM – The actors’ lounge. Either in a theatre or production studio.

GRIPS – Members of the film crew who are responsible for moving set pieces, lighting equipment, dolly track and other physical movement of equipment.

HAND MODEL – A performer whose hands are used to double for others.

HALF HOUR – Actors will usually be given a ‘half hour’ call by the stage manager, meaning there is a half hour before the show will begin.

HOLDING – The designated area to which the Extra Performers report and stay while waiting to go on set.

HONEY WAGON – A towed vehicle containing one or more dressing rooms, as well as crew bathrooms.



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HOT SET – Any set or location that is being used for filming or taping. Even if the cameras are not rolling, a location can be considered “Hot” if all the props, lights, and camera arrangements are set up and ready. It is important to not disturb anything on a Hot Set as to maintain Continuity.

INDUSTRIALS – Industrial Film. Refers to films made for corporations. Training films, product education, Human resource training, etc. Work on industrials often involves memorizing a lot of technical writing.

INT. (Interior) – A scene shot indoors.

‘IN’ TIME – The actual call time or start time; also, return time from a break.

IMPROVISATION – Setting out to do a scene with no pre-planned or written idea. A process leading to spontaneous discovery that allows the actor to find real, organic impulses within themselves.

IMPULSE – A natural response that an actor responds to in the moment.

INDICATING – Showing what your character is feeling or doing without really feeling or doing, leading to a false and shallow performance.

INNER ACTION – A physical action verb chosen by the actor in the pursuit of an objective. It always begins with the word “to” i.e. to attack, to soothe, to tickle.

INNER MONOLOGUE – A character’s active, imaginative inner thoughts while the actor is playing a role.

INSTINCT – A compelling or powerful impulse.

INSTRUMENT – The actor’s collective working of the body, voice, mind, and imagination.

LEGIT ACTING – Refers to Acting for Theatre, Film & TV only. Not commercials.

LIGHT BOARD – Either manual or computer operated. Operates the stage lights.

LIGHT CUES – A change in the stage lighting.

LIVE INDUSTRIAL – Live performances for corporations, usually about products or services.

LOAD-IN – The process of bringing the set into the theatre, or building set pieces.

LONG SHOT (LS) – A camera shot which captures the performer’s full body.



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LOOPING – The recording or re-recording of dialogue for a previously filmed scene.

MARK – The exact position(s) given to an actor on a set to insure that he/she is in the proper light and camera angle; generally marked on the ground with tape or chalk.

MASTER SHOT – A camera shot that includes the principal actors and relevant background activity; generally used as a reference shot to record the scene from beginning to end before shooting close-ups, over-the-shoulders, etc.

MATCHING ACTIONS – The requirement that the actor match the same physical movements in a scene from take to take in order to preserve the visual continuity.

MEAL PENALTY – All film productions should break at least once every six hours to allow for cast and crew meals. If production does not halt for meals at least once every six hours then Union actors and extras are entitled to a “meal penalty” payment for every half hour over the six hours you are not fed.

MEISNER TECHNIQUE – An acting program that uses (among other things) repetitive and in-the-moment exercises first devised by Sanford Meisner of the Group Theatre. The technique emphasizes “moment-to-moment” spontaneity through communication with other actors to generate behavior that is “truthful under imaginary circumstances.” Meisner also emphasized using the actor’s imagination to create emotional reality—the creative “as-if”—over the personal, emotional experience philosophy championed by fellow Group Theatre member Lee Strasberg.

METHOD ACTING – A generic term used to describe the acting philosophy of using personal emotional experiences in acting, as first introduced to the Western world by Stanislavsky and furthered by members of America’s Group Theatre in the 1930’s. When used today, “The Method” most often refers to the deeply personal emotional work taught by followers of Lee Strasberg, one of the Group Theatre members, and can be summed up as: “Training the subconscious to behave spontaneously.”



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MOCKUMENTARY – A fictional, farcical film that has the style, 'look and feel' of a documentary, with irreverent humor, parody, or slapstick, that is deliberately designed to 'mock' the documentary or subject that it features.

MONITOR – Usually for theater only. This is the person in charge of checking actors in, giving them sides and deciding the order that actors will read.

MONOLOGUE – A scene or a portion of a script in which an actor gives a lengthy, unbroken speech without interruption by another character.

MOS (Mit Out Sound/Motion Only Shot) – Any shot without dialogue or sound recording. Also sometimes called S.O.C. , silent on-camera.

MOTIVATION – The Why? The reason a character pursues a particular objective or super objective.

MND MEAL (NON DEDUCTIBLE MEAL) – A 15 minute meal break provided to actors by the production company to bring actors in sync with crew break time. It must be completed within 2 hours of performers' call time.

MUST JOIN – You will be referred to as a "must join" if it has been 30 days since your first SAG booking. You **MUST** join the union for your next union job.

'NAME TALENT ONLY' – Meaning only celebrity Actors.

NCOPM – The National Conference of Personal Managers Inc. is the nation's oldest trade association of personal managers who provide professional management of talent engaged in entertainment, media and performing arts.

OBJECTIVE – A character's pursuit of a specific goal in a scene. Also referred to as the intention or driving question.

OBSTACLE – The conflict and stumbling blocks to a character's struggle in pursuit of an action or objective.

OFF BOOK – You have your character's lines completely memorized. Usually you will have a deadline by which you need to be memorized or 'off book'.



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ON BOOK – With the script in your hand. Usually refers to the time you are working with the script but not yet memorized.

On/Off/Off-Off Broadway – On-Broadway productions are staged in New York City’s official theater district, between Sixth to Eighth Avenues and 41st to 54th Streets. These theaters have 500 or more seats. Off-Broadway designates professional theaters with 100 to 499 seats, and off-off Broadway is one with less than 100 seats.

ON-CAMERA – Refers to anything on camera – tv, film, commercials, industrial film.

ON HOLD – A casting director will put you ‘on hold’ when you are wanted by the client for the job but not formally hired yet. You may not take other jobs that would conflict with the production dates during this time.

OFF-CAMERA (OC or OS) – Dialogue delivered without being on screen.

OUT OF FRAME – An actor outside the camera range.

“OUT” TIME – The actual time when you are released after you have changed out of wardrobe and make- up.

OVER-THE-SHOULDER – A shot over the shoulder of one actor, focusing entirely on the face and upper torso of the other actor in a scene; generally shot in pairs so both actors' expressions can later be edited together.

OVERDUBBING – In studio singing or voice work, the process of laying one soundtrack over another.

P.A. – Production Assistant.

PACE – The speed at which you pick up your cue and deliver the next line of your dialogue. Pace can also be the speed that creates a style for the piece.

PANTOMIME – An art form related to the dance; not to be confused with “silent scenes” or a “scene without words.”

PAN – A camera shot which sweeps from side-to-side.

PER DIEM – Fee paid by producer on location shoots to compensate performer for expenditures for meals not provided by the producer.



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PHOTO CALL – Some actors may need to appear in publicity photos for a show. This usually happens 2-3 weeks before opening and a photo call will be scheduled.

PICK UP – Starting a scene from a place other than the beginning.

PICTURE'S UP! – Warning that the sequence of cues to shoot a scene is about to begin.

PILOT – A sample of a television show that the producers then try to sell to the networks. If the pilot is picked up by the network, it will be put on the schedule and will air for a trial period of usually 13 episodes.

PLAYBILL – A program usually containing information about the play, cast, crew, supporters, and advertisers.

PLAYWRIGHT – A person who writes or adapts properties known as play; in most traditions, the first and most creative artist of all those who collaborate to make theatre. It is the playwright's property that stimulates the impetus for a full-fledged production. In musicals, the writers include the writers of the music, the lyrics, and the book.

POV – A shot that shows the scene through the character's eyes. We see the world from their point of view.

PRESS OPENING – Some theaters will have a special performance before opening night to which members of the press (critics) are invited. Usually, critics are invited for opening night.

PREVIEW – Performance with an audience. Before official opening night. Usually invited friends. No press.

PRINCIPAL – A performer with lines.

PRODUCER – Often called the Line Producer; the person responsible for the day-to-day decision making a production.

PROFILE – Often in auditions, the CD will call for a profile. The actor stands facing the camera in normal posture, picture taken or filmed, then to each side showing the actor's profile from front, right and left side.



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PROJECTION – A director may tell you to ‘project’ more. This means to speak so that you can be heard throughout the theatre, this does not necessarily mean more volume or shouting. It’s a technique you will learn.

PROPS – Any objects used by actors in a scene.

PSA – Public Service Announcement.

Q RATING – Refers to an ad research rating that gauges how easily a celebrity is recognized — and how well the celebrity is liked.

REACTION SHOT – The camera shooting a character’s emotional or physical response or reaction to something that is happening in the scene.

READ THROUGH – For theater and some on-camera. This is usually the first rehearsal when the actors sit and just read through the script with the director.

REGIONAL THEATRE – Also called resident theatre. A term applied to permanent nonprofit professional theatre companies that have established roots outside the major theatre centers. Besides bringing first-rate theatre to their region, they often have programs to nurture local talent and to encourage new plays of special regional interest.

RESIDUAL – The fee paid to a performer for rebroadcast of a commercial, film or TV program. Tracked by the Actors Unions.

RESUME – List of credits, usually attached to an 8×10 headshot.

‘RHUBARB’ – Background conversation by extras. So-called because extras were often asked to mutter the word “rhubarb” to produce the effect of genuine conversation, with their mouths moving convincingly. Also known as “walla”.

ROLLING! – The verbal cue for the camera film and audio tape to start rolling.

ROM-COM – Showbiz slang for a Romantic Comedy.

RUSH CALL – The last minute booking of an actor or extra. This usually occurs when another actor or extra cancels at the last minute.

SAG – Screen Actors Guild. The On-Camera Actors Union. Now SAG-AFTRA.

SCRIPT – The written form of a screenplay, teleplay, radio or stage play.



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SCRIPTY – The script supervisor.

SCRIPT ANALYSIS – The close study of a play or screenplay. This incorporates all of the dialogue and stage directions to find the answers necessary to create a full and rich character and to craft a performance that serves the script. The exploration of the script may include the questions of theme, story, character, and overall elements of the play and characters.

SECOND ASSISTANT DIRECTOR – Often two or three on a set, they handle checking in the talent, ensuring proper paperwork is filed, and distributing script revisions. Actors check in with the 2nd A.D. upon arrival on the set.

SECOND TEAM! – The verbal cue for the stand-ins to come to the set and be ready to stand in.

SENSORY – Connecting the character to the body and mind through the senses; to taste, hear, feel, see, think, perceive; to know through the physical inner self, as opposed to the instinctive.

SENSE MEMORY – (emotional recall) The basis for Lee Strasberg's Method Acting. "Sense memory" is used to refer to the recall of physical sensations: sight, touch, taste, smell, and sound. These physical sensations surround an emotional event, instead of the emotions themselves.

SET – The immediate location where the scene is being filmed.

SET-UP – Each time the camera changes position.

SFX – Sound effects.

SIDES – Pages or scenes from a script, used in auditions or (if on a film set) those scenes being shot

that day. In Australia, Sides are called Scenes.

SIGN-IN SHEET – A sheet at the casting office where talent will sign their Name, Agency, Phone number and time arrived to the casting office. The Talent are generally called into the audition room based on the time they arrived.

SLATE – A small chalkboard and clapper device, often electronic, used to mark and identify shots on film for editing; also the process of verbal identification by a performer in a taped audition (e.g., "Slate your name!").



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SOLILOQUY – A speech given directly to the audience, ordinarily with no one else on stage. Usually played as a direct address to the audience, sometimes played as a character thinking aloud in the audience's presence.

SOUND CUES – Sound effects (music, doorbell, a car door, dog barking, etc.).

SPEED THROUGH – A rehearsal exclusively for lines. Actors recite their lines quickly without blocking. This is often to help the actors with memorization.

SPIKING THE LENS – Looking directly into the lens during a scene; since it destroys the illusion of realism, actors should never spike the lens unless specifically directed to do so for specific effect.

STAGE DOOR – A back entrance to the theater used by the cast and production crew. Want to catch a glimpse (or the autograph) of your favorite star after a show? This is where you want to be.

STAGE MANAGER – The person who will become your best friend. This is the person who runs the rehearsals, sets the rehearsal schedule and usually 'calls' the show (prompts the light and sound cues from the booth during performances). He/she is in charge of the production after opening night.

STAGE RIGHT – To the performer's right side, to the audience's left side. Likewise, STAGE LEFT is to the performer's left, the audience's right. Stage directions are for actors, not audiences, therefore they are always given from the actor's point of view to the audience.

STAND-INS – Extra Performers used as substitutes for featured players, for the purpose of setting lights and rehearsing camera moves; also known as the second team.

STAGE WHISPER – Sounds like a whisper but is loud enough for the audience to hear.

STRIKE – After the final performance, the set is taken apart, lighting instruments are taken down and props and costumes are put away. This is called 'strike'. Sometimes actors will be asked to volunteer to help. You are never obligated to help (unless you are a member of the theatre company) but it is a good idea to help if you can. Usually there's good camaraderie,



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pizza and beer! This is not the case in larger union theatres where there are paid technical crews to take care of strike.

SUBMISSION – An actor's or agent's suggestion to a casting director for a role in a certain production.

SUBPLOT – A secondary, subordinate, or auxiliary plotline, often complementary but independent from the main plot (the A story), and often involving supporting characters; not the same as multiple plotlines; aka the B story or C story.

SUBTEXT – The character's complex thoughts, feelings, motives, etc. created and layered under the actual words and actions of the character by the actor.

SUPER OBJECTIVE – Stanislavsky developed the concept of the super- objective (referred to here as The Happiness) that would carry the 'through line of action,' mapped out for the character through the entire play.

SW – A notation on a call sheet that an actor is starting on that day and working on that day.

SWF – A notation on a call sheet that an actor is starting, working, and finished on that day.

TABLE-READ – A stage of film, television and theatre production when an organized reading around a table of the screenplay or script by the actors with speaking parts is conducted.

TAFT-HARTLEY – Refers to a legislative ruling also known as the National Labor Relations Act. Allows non-union actors to work their first union job and any others within a 30-day period of the first booking without having to join the union. They may not work any union job after the 30-day period without joining the union.

TAGLINE – A clever phrase or short sentence to memorably characterize a film, and tease and attract potential viewers, or sell the movie; also creates a catchy 'soundbite' often repeated or presented in a trailer or on a film's poster, sometimes along with the film's leitmotif.

TAKE – The clapboard indication of a shot "taken" or printed.

'TAKE 5' – The announcement of periodic five minute breaks.

TELEPROMPTER – The brand name of a device which enables a broadcaster to read a script while looking into the camera lens.



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TECH REHERSAL – Technical Rehearsal. This is when the director will work the set, lights and sound cues into the rehearsal process. This usually takes several days and is long and boring for the actors. Tech is very important and actors must stay focused and be patient during this process. The focus of the rehearsal is solely on the technical aspects of the show. It is for the technicians and the designers, and the ‘acting’ must take a back seat.

TEMPO – The level of speed with which the scene or play is acted out. The general effect creates a specific mood or tone to the work.

TIGHT SHOT (Go in Tight) – Framing of a shot with little or no space around the central figure(s) of feature(s); usually a close-up.

TOURING COMPANY – A company of performers who travel with a show that they present in essentially the same way it was originally created in a theatre center such as New York.

TRACKING SHOT – A shot taken while the camera is moving, either on a dolly or mounted on a moving vehicle.

‘TRADES’ – Short for “trade papers” – The newspapers and periodicals such as the Hollywood Reporter and Variety that specifically feature information on the entertainment industry.

TREATMENT – Longer version of a Synopsis of a story for a film. More detailed outline of the plot, characters, high points of a film.

TRIGGER – An emotional or physical signal that signals or sparks a bonfire of emotion to break through to the surface.

TRIPLE THREAT – Refers to an actor or actress who can sing, dance and act skillfully and equally well on a consistent basis; usually applicable to performers in the musicals genre; it also could refer to a person who can act, direct, and screenwrite!

TURNAROUND – (a) The number of hours between dismissal one day and call time the next day. (b) To shoot a scene from another direction.

TWO-SHOT – A camera framing two persons; a TREE-SHOT would be a 3 person shot.

TYPECAST – In television, film, and theatre, typecasting is the process by which a particular actor becomes strongly identified with a specific character; one or more particular roles; or,



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characters having the same traits or coming from the same social or ethnic groups. There have been instances in which an actor has been so strongly identified with a role as to make it difficult for him or her to find work playing other characters.

U5 – An under-five, also known as an under-5 or a (U/5) is an SAG-AFTRA contract term for an American television or film actor whose character has fewer than five lines of dialogue.

UNDERSTUDY – Actor hired to perform in a show if the actor originally cast in the role is sick or unable to perform that night. Often an understudy will never actually perform, but must be ready to go on with as little as 10 minutes notice. It is very common for an understudy to cover more than one role.

UPGRADE – Like getting a raise or promotion, an upgrade is when an individual is moved from being an Extra to a Stand In, Photo Double, or Principal Player. Upgrades also provide higher pay rates.

UPSCALE – Term for actors and extras who appear clean and nicely dressed. Upscale often means Extras will appear wearing expensive and/or fancy looking clothing. The exact opposite of Downscale.

UP STAGE – (a) The area located at the back of the stage. Down Stage is the area in front of the performer. (b) To draw attention to oneself at the expense of a fellow performer.

V.O. – Voice-Over. An off-camera voice coming either from an actor not in the frame, or from a secondary source such as a speakerphone or answering machine.

VIDEO VILLAGE – The area where all of the camera shots are fed into video monitors, allowing the director to get an accurate view of every shot.

VOUCHER – Time slip with all pertinent information needed for getting paid properly.

WALK-ON – A minor role consisting of a single, brief appearance on the screen, usually not appearing in the credits and without dialogue; contrast with extras, bit parts, and non-speaking roles.

WARDROBE – The clothing a performer wears on camera.



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WARDROBE ALLOWANCE – A maintenance fee paid to on-camera talent for the use (and dry cleaning) of talent's own clothing.

WARDROBE FITTING – A session held prior to production to prepare a performer's costumes.

WEATHER PERMIT CALL – Due to weather conditions, the production company has the option to release an actor four hours after the call time (if the camera has not started to roll) with a reduced rate of pay for the day.

W/N – Will Notify. A notation on a call sheet that tells the actor that he/she will probably work that day but the specific time has not yet been decided.

WRAP – The completion of a day's filming or of the entire production.

8×10 – Commonly used size of a performer's Headshot/photos. Another term for headshot.

Black and white was the standard in the old days, today headshots are in color.

18-TO-PLAY-YOUNGER – A performer legally 18 years old, who can convincingly be cast as a younger age.