

Voice

- **Pitch** – speaking in a high, low or natural voice.
- **Pace** – the speed with which you speak, eg the speed of response in an argument.
- **Pause** – a dramatic pause at a crucial moment is very effective in performance.
- **Tone** – your tone suggests your mood and your intention towards the listener, eg happy, sad.
- **Volume** – you must be audible to the audience but not shout at them!
- **Accent** – you need to consider the accent that will work for your character.
- **Emphasis** – this is the pressure on individual words that makes them stand out. There's a natural stress on syllables as we speak, such as the first syllable in 'cabbage'. But emphasis or stress for a particular effect is significant and can change the meaning of a sentence as well as the feeling behind it.
- **Intonation** – the rise and fall of the voice. There's a clear movement up when we ask questions for example. Intonation also helps us to say what we mean.

Interpretation

Definition of Interpretation - a stylistic representation of a creative work or dramatic role.

- Actors give their take on the character: they tell the character's story with their voice, body language and ensemble. They breathe life into the character their way.
- Great works like Shakespeare's *Hamlet* are staged again and again with different actors in the title role giving their interpretation of this well known text.
- Actors mould their interpretation into the director's vision for the play – director's often cast actors who fit their vision and way of working.
- Christopher Ecclestone created a Hamlet who was a disposed teen in a hoody skulking at the back of the stage, whereas Mark Rylance saw him as a madman in an asylum full of mad people.

Actor

Controls the interpretation of their character

VOICE

Tone, monotone, intonation, pitch, inflection, volume, accent, pace

PHYSICALITY

Posture, gesture, facial expression, eye contact, speed/pace, stillness, mannerisms, non-verbal communication

INTERPRETATION

How is this character developed by the choices that the actor has made?

ENSEMBLE RAPPORT

How well do the cast work together as a team in performance?

EXCEPTIONAL MOMENTS

Where did the action leap off the stage?

Exceptional Moments

- The '*money moment*' of a performance is where the actor gets to stand out or dominate in a scene.
- For example, the 'To be or not to be' soliloquy in *Hamlet*.
- Actors need to plan for these moments and build toward them as a climax to their interpretation. They need to identify them for their character and work hard to realise the truth for their character in that moment.

Physicality/Body Language:

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/bitesize/guides/zg8tgk7/revision/1>

- **Posture** – the position in which someone holds their body when standing or sitting with a particular approach or attitude
- **Gesture** – a movement of part of the body, especially a hand or a head, to express an idea or meaning, which is often symbolic and linked to a central idea for the production
- **Facial expression**- tell us a lot about characters, situations and subtext; they are a way to voice out your character's true feelings to the audience and can be hidden from other characters as necessary
- **Eye contact**- eye contact is significant in terms of trust and understanding. It is a significant form of non verbal communication. Eye contact can be used to include, exclude and search for truth and real meaning. Direct and indirect eye contact will be read as evidence of the character's relationships and well being
- **Speed/Pace**- the speed of our movements is often linked to our emotions and wellbeing.
- **Stillness**- don't forget to use and comment on stillness, it can suggest peace but also panic – freezing is a significant action.
- **Mannerisms**- Repeated gestures that are habitual to the character, often called 'actor's business'.
- **Non-verbal communication**- anything you do physically.
- **Proximity/Distance/Levels** – using proxemics (space) to help visually describe the relationship between characters.

Ensemble Rapport

Definition of 'ensemble' - a group of musicians, actors, or dancers who perform together.

Definition of 'rapport' - a close and harmonious relationship in which the people or groups concerned understand each other's feelings or ideas and communicate well.

- Great team work is at the heart of strong ensemble performances, where the group work enhances the performance.
- A great example of this is *Curious Incident* where the chorus work makes the show.

Stagecraft: A production is deliberate, everything you experience is carefully chosen

Epic Theatre and Brecht - <https://www.bbc.co.uk/bitesize/guides/zwmvd2p/revision/1>

'Art is not a mirror with which to reflect reality but a hammer with which to shape it.' Bertolt Brecht

- Brecht was against cathartic theatre. He believed that while the audience believed in the action onstage and became emotionally involved they lost the ability to think and to judge.
- He wanted his audiences to remain objective and distant from emotional involvement so that they could make considered and rational judgements about any social comment or issues in his work.
- He called the act of distancing the audience from emotional involvement the **verfremdungseffekt**.
- Epic theatre (Brechtian theatre) breaks the **fourth wall**, they are active members of the theatrical experience as they are kept thinking throughout, not switching off.

Techniques to consider: narration, coming out of role/third person narration, speaking stage directions, direct address, placards, multi-role-ing, split role, minimal set/prop/costume, symbolic prop, song, montage,

Naturalism and Stanislavski - <https://www.bbc.co.uk/bitesize/guides/zxn4mp3/revision/1>

'Remember, there are no small parts, only small actors.' Stanislavski

- Stanislavski takes the approach that the actors should really inhabit the role that they are playing. So the actor shouldn't only know what lines he needs to say and the motivation for those lines, but also every detail of that character's life offstage as well as onstage.
- In this way we can establish Stanislavski as a director and practitioner whose productions are naturalistic. Realism was a 19th-century theatrical movement, seeking to portray real life on the stage. Stanislavski was a committed follower of realism throughout his working life.
- **Experimentation** was his key approach to theatre. There may be typical productions of Chekhov plays with extraordinarily realistic sets but Stanislavski also, for instance, explored symbolism.

Techniques to consider: Everyday conversations/style of speaking, ordinary people explored, acting style that distils life, real settings, given circumstances, emotional memory, subtext super/objective and magic IF

Physical Theatre and Frantic Assembly - <https://www.bbc.co.uk/bitesize/guides/ztfk6sg/revision/1>

'I wanted to develop a language that felt accessible and honest. I wanted to share a process that would take people past their perceived limitations.' Scott Graham, Artistic Director of Frantic Assembly

<https://www.franticassembly.co.uk/the-frantic-method>

- A form of theatre that puts emphasis on movement rather than dialogue.
- Essentially Physical theatre is anything that puts the human body at the centre of the storytelling process. As a result it's often abstract in style, using movement in a stylised and representational way. With the expression of ideas choreographed through movement, such performers use very little or no dialogue at all.

Techniques to consider: Gesture, proximity, movement, stillness, dance work, stance, mime, contact improvisation, mask work, status work, harshness/tenderness, chair duets, movement motif

Video Revision: The choices in role

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/teach/class-clips-video/drama-gcse-physical-choices-acting-techniques/z798qp3>

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/teach/class-clips-video/physical-theatre/zrsygwX>

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/teach/class-clips-video/playing-with-emotions/zhj76v4>

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/teach/class-clips-video/playing-objectives-obstacles/zdbrkmn>

Career Links

<https://www.backstage.com/uk/magazine/article/become-actor-uk-4683/>

<https://actinginlondon.co.uk/how-to-become-an-actor-with-no-experience/>

<https://targetcareers.co.uk/career-sectors/arts-and-creative/1014259-how-to-get-into-acting>

<https://www.ucas.com/ucas/after-gcse/find-career-ideas/explore-jobs/job-profile/actor>

<https://www.whatuni.com/degree-courses/search?subject=acting>

<https://www.backstage.com/magazine/article/tips-established-actors-10028/>

<https://www.theguardian.com/lifeandstyle/2018/jan/14/i-want-to-be-an-actor-but-am-afraid-dear-mariella>

Wider Reading

<https://aact.org/actor>

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/bitesize/guides/zxn4mp3/revision/1>

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/bitesize/guides/z3c2yrd/revision/1>

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/bitesize/topics/zqwj6sg>

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/bitesize/topics/zm72pv4>

<https://www.theguardian.com/culture/2017/apr/27/judi-dench-berates-lazy-young-actors-who-ignore-their-artistic-heritage>

<https://www.theguardian.com/culture/2011/aug/24/ian-mckellen-50-years-gandalf>