

Spotlight Acting Rules

What's required of me for my Acting Preliminary 1 video audition?

All students begin with a Preliminary 1 video audition. Prepare one contemporary monologue, either dramatic or comedic. We define contemporary as material written after 1920. Those scoring highest will advance to Preliminary 2 live auditions in January, 2019.

New Rule: If you advance to Preliminary 2, you will now perform two monologues, written by different authors. Those scoring highest after Preliminary 2 will advance to the Semifinals.

- Your monologue for your Preliminary audition must not exceed 2 ½ minutes in length and must be performed in English
- Your monologue must be memorized and come from a published play. No original material will be allowed
- Your selection must be spoken word; no singing, although you may use a monologue from a published musical that has been performed on Broadway
- Choose material that you closely identify with and can relate to. Avoid characters which are much older or younger than you
- Do not use a dialect or accent
- Props are limited to one stool/chair and one table. Chairs will be permitted but may not be thrown or forcefully propelled
- Choose a monologue in which you play only one character
- No sexually explicit or physically violent material will be allowed
- Avoid selections from monologue books, unless you have read the entire play and understand the given circumstances of your monologue
- If selected to advance to Preliminary 2, you will prepare two monologues by different authors for your live audition. Keep in mind that the judges are looking for well-rounded actors

Guidelines for Recording Your Audition

- Your recording device can be a cell phone, tablet, camera, etc. You do NOT have to rent fancy recording equipment. We will refer to the recording devices as "cameras"
- Your audition monologue should contain the following introduction: "My monologue is from (title of play) by (author) in the (role/character)."
- Your audition will be viewed on a large screen, please be sure your image is clear. The panel must be able to see your facial expressions to properly adjudicate your work
- Props are limited to one stool/chair and one table
- Use a fixed point of view for your camera with you being the main focus. Shoot straight on, leaving the camera in one location. Do not pan or move the camera
- Record your audition in a clearly defined interior space
- The back drop should be a neutral color that is free of creases, breaks and distractions
- Do not record in front of your fireplace with trophies on the mantle and family portraits on the wall or in your school's scene shop with the set crew constructing the next production. It's distracting from you
- When recording with a tablet or cellphone, use the landscape/horizontal mode for best results

Before recording your piece, film a test. Perform the first few lines of your monologue, then watch and listen to it on playback. Check the following important things:

- **Sound:** Make sure the acoustics in the room are strong. Practice your piece in the space. If you hear an echo in playback, adjust the recording volume or choose someplace else to

record. Utilize only the microphone on the video camera. Do not use a hand held microphone. Make sure your phone ringer is off

- **Lighting:** Make sure the space is well-lit, but not too bright. Judges should be able to see your face clearly. Too little light and judges cannot see you. Too much light will leave you overexposed and judges cannot see your expressions
- **Framing:** The camera should be set at a distance to frame your face and body clearly. If judges only see your face and shoulders, it's too close. If judges can see the entire stage but your facial expressions cannot be seen clearly, it's too far away
- **Performance:** Just like in a live audition, unless directed to do so, don't address the camera directly. Also called "breaking the fourth wall," looking into camera can distract from your performance. Pick a focal point just off-camera. Since you're shooting yourself, you can even place a sticker on the camera a smidgen to the left or right to keep your focus out of the lens.
- **Clothing:** Wear clothing that is simple, comfortable and tasteful. And remember, your clothing should never be more interesting than your audition. For example, stripes, patterns, or large advertisements can be very distracting. Wear something that has a gentle contrast to the back drop and will help us see you clearly. If you are recording against a black back drop, do not wear black. Please do not wear large jewelry. No costumes or stage makeup is allowed

How To Submit Your Audition Video

- After you have recorded your monologue, watch it in playback to make sure you can be seen and heard
- When uploading, verify that image is upright (not sideways) and plays smoothly
- Save and name your file and upload into application
- Please do not do any of the following as it may disqualify you:
 - Do not edit within a piece
 - Do not use special effects, dissolves, fades or wipes
 - Do not submit pre-recorded live performances, such as recitals, concerts, or competitions

What the Judges are looking for:

- **Diction/Articulation** – Are you clearly enunciating words so that we understand you?
- **Authenticity** – Are you speaking in a real manner in order to create believability?
- **Characterization** - Do you have a clear point of view and finding the emotional levels of a scene?
- **Body Language** – Is your posture disconnected from the text? Don't forget to breathe!
- **Interpretation** - Are you finding the beats and transitions? What does your character want? What is compelling your character to talk? What happens right before you begin your scene?

Please be sure you follow all requirements related to your application. Failure to comply with any of the requirements listed below may result in disqualification during the review process and/or make your application ineligible for an award.

To start or complete your Spotlight application, go to: <https://app.getacceptd.com/musiccenter>. If your application is already open, simply click on the Acceptd tab on your computer to return to it.

Got Questions??? Email us at spotlight@musiccenter.org