

SPOTLIGHT ACTING RULES

WHAT'S REQUIRED OF ME FOR MY ACTING PRELIMINARY 1 VIDEO AUDITION?

All students begin with a Preliminary 1 video audition. You will be presenting **one monologue or a 2-person scene** that comes from published plays, movies, or television. No original material is allowed. In a scene, the majority of the dialogue must be spoken by the applicant, not the scene partner and only the applicant will be judged. The video should be focused on the person auditioning. Those scoring highest will advance to Preliminary 2 live auditions in January-February 2026. If you advance to Preliminary 2, you will perform 2 monologues, or 2 scenes (or a combination of monologue and scene) written by different authors. Those scoring highest after Preliminary 2 will advance to the Semifinals.

- Prepare one contemporary monologue, either dramatic or comedic, **OR** one 2-person scene – where the applicant has the largest role. We define contemporary as material written after 1920 **(Shakespeare or Classical monologues are not allowed)**
- Try to keep your monologue/scene to 2 1/2 minutes. A little under or over is fine. It must be performed in English
- Your monologue or scene must be memorized. Material can be from a published play, movie or television. 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 feel a strong connection to; something you can relate to. Avoid characters who are much older or younger than you
- If you are using props, stay with one stool/chair and one table. Chairs will be permitted but may not be thrown or forcefully propelled
- Choose a monologue/scene 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 2 monologues or 2 scenes (or 1 of each) by different authors for your live audition. This gives you a chance to show how well rounded you are as an artist. Yay!

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 device as "camera"
- Your audition introduction should contain the following information: "My monologue/scene is from (title of play/movie/show) by (author) in the (role/character)." Your introduction is **not** part of your 2 1/2-minute monologue time limit.
- Your introduction may be uploaded separately
- If using a scene partner, make sure the camera is focused on you. Place the scene partner next to the camera so it will appear you are looking slightly to the left or right of the camera lens.
- 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 assess your work
- 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
- The backdrop should be a neutral color
- 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 your performance
- When recording with a tablet or cellphone, use the landscape/horizontal mode for best result

Before recording your piece, film a test. Perform the first few lines of your monologue/scene, 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, (a little to the left or right of the lens). Since you're filming 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. And remember, your clothing should never be more interesting than your audition. We want you to stand out. 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 piece, watch it in playback to make sure you can be seen and heard
- When uploading, verify that the image is upright (not sideways) and plays smoothly
- Save and name your file and upload it into application

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 a believable presence
- **Characterization** - Do you have a clear point of view and are you 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 may result in disqualification during the review process and/or make your application ineligible for an award.

For **guidelines or requirement** questions, email us at spotlight@musiccenter.org.

For **technical issues** please visit the **Acceptd Help Desk** at support@getacceptd.com.

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.