

## Unit 2: Elements of Acting

Oct 29-12:13 PM

### Chapter 5: Movement & Stage Directions

There are many elements of movement on a stage, beyond pantomiming, that an actor can use to help his audience believe what he wants them to believe.

*believe*

#### **Entering the stage**

- Always know when it's time to enter.
- Be quiet backstage, so as not to attract attention to yourself.
- Be prepared to enter at the right time, and in the right way.

Oct 29-12:14 PM

- Walking** : - When you walk onto the stage, look forward  
- You walk should represent your character (slow, jittery, sleepy, etc...)
- Standing:** - Unless you have a purposeful movement to make, stand still. (Avoid shifting your weight, fixing your hair, etc...)  
- Unmotivated movement can distract the audience and make them uncomfortable.
- Turning** : - When you turn, always turn towards the audience.  
Remember, you're doing all of this for them, so let them see it!

Oct 29-12:23 PM

- Sitting** : - When you need to sit, do so comfortably.  
- Always be ready to get up (do not slouch in your chair!)  
- Avoid dragging chairs and making unnecessary noise)
- Rising** : - When you get up, keep your spine straight, and rise slowly.  
- Avoid scraping the chair and making unnecessary noises.
- Gesturing:** - Your gestures need to be purposeful, definite and clear.  
- Halfhearted gestures mark you as unfocused and nervous.
- Exiting** : - Be sure you stay in character until you leave the stage!

Oct 29-12:27 PM

#### Rules of Stage Movement:

1. Actions should always be motivated by your character's intentions.  
*Always know WHY you're doing what you're doing.*
2. Movement should be simplified, but often times exaggerated.
3. Movements should keep in line with the character.
4. Movement must always be **towards** the audience.
5. Avoid **upstaging** others by moving when you shouldn't, or standing in such a way that forces another to face away from the audience to speak to you.

Oct 29-12:32 PM

#### Practice:

Each person will come on stage and interact with another. They will be given a character trait and a situation. They will improv a scene, but will repeat as often as necessary to practice basic stage movement.

Oct 29-12:38 PM

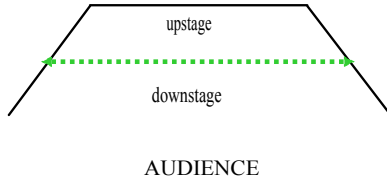
**Stage Direction**

Stages weren't always built flat: Some time ago, audience reported that it was easier to see the actors on a slanted stage, where the back end was higher than the front end.

The back end became known as the "upstage"

The front end (towards the audience), became known as "downstage".

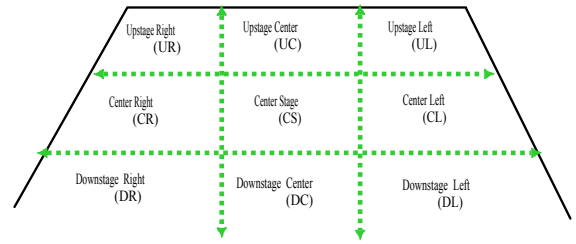
Those terms are still used today, even though most stages are flat.



Oct 29-12:39 PM

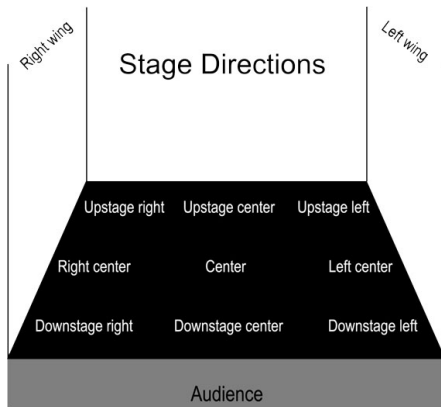
The stage can also be divided into 9 imaginary sections for the director to choreograph scenes with ease.

The terms "right" and "left" are always used in reference to the actors on stage, when facing an audience. They do not refer to the sides from the director, or audience's, viewpoint.



Oct 29-12:44 PM

The "strongest" positions on stage are those found downstage (closer to the audience) and on stage right (Western audiences have been trained to read from left to right, and will naturally follow action from left to right more easily).



Oct 29-12:49 PM

**Body Position**

Ultimately, you must always stand in such a way that the audience can see your face.

A full front position occurs when you face your audience directly



A profile position shows you from the right or left side. You should never be turned away from the audience any more than this.

When in profile, always keep your feet apart. The foot closest to the audience should be pointed toward them. This "opens" up your body, and makes you easier to see and hear.



Oct 29-12:53 PM

**Crossing the stage**

When you must cross the stage, the direction is written down using an "X".

ex: X DR - Cross to downstage right.

Complicated crosses imply indecision or ease, whereas simple crosses indicate strength, power and authority.

Oct 29-1:07 PM