

WORKING IN THEATRE: Actor



Actors bring characters to life onstage. They are independent artists who usually work on a per-show basis, although some theatres have acting companies (called ensembles, or repertory companies) comprised of actors who play roles in several productions each season. Actors spend a lot of time auditioning for roles. If they are cast, they sign a contract that outlines how much they will be paid. In a midsize or large professional theatre, actors are paid for rehearsal time in addition to performances. Many actors attend college to study their craft, and some choose to get advanced degrees in acting or theatre as well. Actors can specialize in areas like musical theatre, physical theatre or clowning, or classical theatre, and some schools offer specialized degrees in these areas.



UNFAMILIAR TERM: “MFA” (MASTER OF FINE ARTS)

A graduate (advanced) degree that typically requires two to three years of postgraduate study after a bachelor’s degree (BA—Bachelor of Arts or BFA—Bachelor of Fine Arts).

Note to students: You’ll get the most out of this video if you watch it twice. Watch it once, and then read the questions below before the second viewing.

REVIEW QUESTIONS:

1 One of the first things Oscar says is that an actor lives truthfully under imaginary circumstances. What do you think he means by that?

2 An actor prepares for a performance by warming up their voice, body, and imagination. Choose one of these and explain how you think an actor uses it to create a role.

3 Oscar says it takes courage to be an actor. What does courage mean to you? How is acting “courageous” (as opposed to something like fighting a fire, for example)?

4 Oscar talks about his first job and being able to work alongside actors he had long admired. Who is an actor you admire and why?

WORKING IN THEATRE: Actor



REFLECTION QUESTIONS:

1 What can you identify with or what speaks strongly to you in the video?

2 Oscar says that in acting “you’re telling your deepest, darkest secrets.” Are you comfortable revealing things about yourself to others? Why or why not? What other careers might require you to be very revealing and honest about yourself to others?

3 You may be more familiar with watching TV or seeing films than seeing live performances. What do you think are some of the differences between acting onstage and acting on film?

4 Usually, actors are hired for just one project, and then need to find their next job. Do you see yourself getting one job and staying in it for a long time, or do you see yourself changing jobs frequently? Why do you feel that way?

FURTHER ACTIVITIES:

1 Take the Career Path Quiz. First, answer the questions for yourself, and then take it a second time as you think an actor might answer them. What conclusions can you draw about your interests?

2 Search “a day in the life of an actor” on YouTube and watch one of the videos.

3 Choose an actor you admire and research their career path. (Training, work in areas of TV/film/theatre other than acting, etc.)

Visit CTGLA.org/WorkingInTheatre and select “Actor.”

“Actors can specialize in areas like musical theatre, physical theatre, clowning, or classical theatre.”