

GETTING A SUPERIOR IN IE MONOLOGUES P.1

CHOOSING MONOLOGUES

by Lindsay Price

Everyone wants to do their best in an Individual Events competition.

Getting a Superior is not as difficult as you might think! Here are a few hints to point you in the right direction...

NAME _____
TITLE(S) _____

RULES

1. Entrant must present two (2) contrasting selections that ma...
2. Material must be drawn from published scripts written for...
3. Only one (1) character from each play may be used. prohibited.
4. The performance of both selections combined cannot exce...

Choose a Monologue that is...

Active. You don't have to physically run in circles to have an active monologue. A character dealing with conflict is active. A character making a life and death decision is active. A character confronting another for the first time is active. And having said all that, a little blocking doesn't hurt – emphasis on 'little.' Specifically-chosen moves or gestures that are textually motivated. Watch out for wander-itis!!!

Emotion-based. It's always better to choose an emotion-based monologue over a storytelling monologue. But don't confuse *emotion-based* with *emotional*. Being overly emotional (such as sobbing or shouting for your whole monologue) comes across as self-indulgent rather than engaging.

Character-driven. There are no lights, no sets, no costumes, no other actors, no rest of the play. Just you and the words. Give yourself a helping hand and make sure those words come out of the mouth of a three-dimensional character.

Well-written. Seem obvious? Be on the lookout for all of the above in your piece. An interesting character in the middle of an emotion-based moment. Look at the sentence

structure; is it ordinary or something you can have fun with? Is there subtext? Is there a journey within the monologue?

Avoid Monologues that...

Are over 2 and a half minutes. If both your pieces hit that 2 and a half minute mark you run the risk of going over time. Allow yourself time to play with your monologues rather than rushing to beat the clock.

Don't work out of context. If the monologue doesn't work on its own or without explanation, don't use it.

Tell a story rather than show a story. Monologues are often used to advance the plot of a play. These types of monologues do nothing to show off your skills as an actor. There's nothing for your audience to connect to.

Don't come from plays. You know the rules. Monologues must come from published scripts written for theatre.

Contrast

"To compare in order to show unlikeness or differences."

This is the very first rule on the evaluation sheet: "Two contrasting selections." It's amazing how many IE's I've judged where I couldn't tell the difference between the monologues!

Contrast shows your versatility as an actor. Choose monologues that are unlike each other, that have differences.

Continued Over...



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The Fine Print

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Types of Contrast

Character: What makes the characters different in each piece? How do they physically move about the space? What emotion does each character experience? Are the stories for each character similar or different?

Sound: Read the monologues aloud. Sometimes monologues that look different on the page become similar when spoken. Do the pieces sound similar? Do they move at the same pace? Is the vocabulary different?

Period: Pair Shakespeare, Euripides or Molière with something modern. **THE IMPORTANCE OF BEING ERNEST** with Mamet. A Feydeau farce with Arthur Miller.

Genre: Classical, Absurd, Naturalistic, Modern, Post modern, Melodrama, Comedy, Drama, the list goes on. Don't use two pieces from the same genre.

Mood: Contrast giddy with serious. Which of the following moods contrast well each other? Peace, fear, joy, anger, charming, frustration, warmth, playful, condescending, upbeat, festive, sombre, whimsical, anxious, sad, bored, excited, passionate. **Define the mood in your monologue.**

Pace: Pace is an excellent way to establish contrast. Some pieces will have the pace organically built in through sentence structure: pauses, run-on sentences, clipped sentences. If not, look to the character. How urgently do they want to share their story?

What do they want? What tactics do they use to get what they want? Let the character determine the pace.

A Few Last Words

Choose monologues with characters in your age range. Avoid playing a seventy-year-old when you're seventeen. More often than not, it'll be a distraction for the judges, no matter how good the piece itself is.

Choose a piece that you love and connect to. The more you love a piece, the more fun you'll be able to have with it, the more you'll want to work on it, the more you'll shine.

You get a Superior, when you shine in your work. When you bring a character to life. When you give your audience an experience. Choose monologues that will make you shine. 🌟