

Rehearsing

In any production, the aim of the cast and crew is to be perfect for the opening night, so the rehearsal process, from early run-throughs to the dress rehearsal, is a serious business.

For a professional production, actors may rehearse for anything up to six or seven weeks. Rehearsals allow the actors to understand the play better and better as time goes on. They constantly develop their ability to interpret the playwright's words so they can create a connection with the audience.

Reading the script

The first rehearsal is a read-through. This is exactly what it sounds like: the actors sit around a table with their copies of the script and read through the play together from start to finish. This allows the director to explain different points as they work through the play.



Rehearsals

Next comes the period of rehearsals, when the actors really get to know the play and become comfortable with their lines. They also need to learn all their movements and their **cues**, which includes learning when to enter and exit the stage – not forgetting which side!

Tech week

The final week of rehearsals is called technical week, or 'tech week' for short. Before this, the actors may have been rehearsing in a different place, but during tech week, they rehearse in the venue itself, with all the technical elements of the production in place. These include:

- costumes • make-up • sets
- lighting • sound.

By the start of tech week, the actors need to have learnt their lines and be completely comfortable with the director's interpretation of the play.

The purpose of tech week is to iron out any physical problems with the production. For example, an actor may discover that their costume is restrictive and that they can't move easily in a fight sequence.

Tech week is a very hectic time and can be stressful because everyone is trying to fix problems in the run-up to opening night.

Dress rehearsal

The final rehearsal is called the dress rehearsal. This is treated as a real performance. There may sometimes be a very small audience for a dress rehearsal.

DID YOU KNOW?

There is a superstition amongst actors that a bad dress rehearsal will mean a good opening night.

Put on a show!

