

Pre-Screen Information

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Pre-Screen Website:

<https://getacceptd.com>

The above website is going to be where you submit the majority of your prescreens and where you are going to find each school's requirements for the videos. Making an account is free and you can add schools to your list (I believe). Get familiarized with this website because all of the communication about acceptances and things like that will go through acceptd on the website and into your email. Also, it is acceptd there is no "E" and if you put that in it'll take you to a different website.

Blog:

<https://auditioningforcollege.com/>

I found the above blog to be really useful. There are some good audition tips on here, such as what to audition with and what not to audition with. There is a DO NOT list on here so make sure you look over that. The creator of this website is a professor at Shenandoah University so just be aware that there is a bias at some parts of the website. This is only one person's view so know that there are varying opinions on what you can and cannot do so make sure you check other sources, but this is a really good thing to look at.

Monologues:

<https://www.backstage.com/monologues/> (my favorite website for monologues)

<https://monologueblogger.com> (be careful with this! A lot are not from plays)

<https://elon.libguides.com/theatre/monologues> (Not explicitly for college but good for info)

Great Monologues For Young Actors Volume II Edited by Craig Slight and Jack Sharrar (Book)

Monologues They'll Remember You By by Andrew Biss (Book)

Monologues can be pretty intimidating but do not worry! They do not have to be. The above websites and books are things that I used in my own journey but are not always going to be useful to everyone. I used the top website (backstage) for a lot of monologue searching. There are some big Dos and Don'ts when it comes to picking a monologue for college.

DON'T:

- Pick a monologue from TV/Movie or a monologue that is not from a play
- Pick a monologue from a musical. That is not saying musicals have bad writing but all the dialogue in a play has to be focused on progressing the story while musicals have songs to assist them

- Pick a monologue that tells a story. Keep it in the present, that way you can show the auditors what you want from the other person and the different tactics you use to get it
- Pick something that you cannot play realistically for your age (a mother, an old man, etc.)
- Pick a monologue meant for an actor of color if you are a white person
- Cry in a monologue just because you think it looks good!

AVOID:

- Monologues from one acts. You can do them but usually they don't give you enough information about the characters so that you know your POV for the monologue
- Monologues about suicide or other traumatic events.

DO:

- Pick something you click with
- Pick something in your age range
- Pick something you can play well!
- Read the entire show that the monologue is from (it gives you some context AND lets you know if you actually like the monologue or not)
- Allow yourself to explore a lot of options
- Allow yourself to “settle” if you don't love any of them but give yourself some time to fall in love with your monologue and your work (this just means that eventually you have to pick something, and if you like one you can pick it and run)

These are some guidelines and obviously not all of them apply every time (for example, if a program asks explicitly for a monologue from a one act, then do that). A lot of schools will ask you for contrasting pieces. Usually that means a comedic and a dramatic but there is a lot of room for interpretation within that. Comedy does not just mean rolling around on the floor laughing and dramatic does not mean sobbing. Sometimes something can be dramatic and be heartwarming, and sometimes something can be comedic and not make jokes (not everything has to be stand-up comedy, a good example of the latter is Dusty's monologue from *Clown Bar*). At the end of the day you need to pick something you click with, and something you can get excited about. The auditors are going to really want to see you see your other, this means they want to be able to watch the actor and see the person they are talking to even though there is no one there. When doing a monologue, you are ALWAYS ALWAYS ALWAYS talking to another person. That person might be your friend, your lover, your mom, the audience, or yourself (although that last one can be hard to pull off). Make sure that you as the actor really see that person and really know what you want from them. Just knowing those things are going to help you. Also, if you pick a piece and feel good about it and then while working it don't like it anymore, that's okay! You can start over (if you have enough time). They want to see you through your pieces so make sure you don't hate what you are doing. Also, make sure you have more than just two pieces in case they ask for another! In addition, having multiple pieces gives you plenty of opportunity to do what you're comfortable with and feel best about. In addition, some schools might ask for different lengths so you might have multiple monologues anyway! Make sure you are comfortable performing all of them so you can do it if asked!

Songs:

<https://musicaltheatresources.com/2014/04/24/breaking-down-the-singers-musical-theatre-anthology-tenor-volumes/> (Allows you to breakdown the eras of MT songs)

<https://talk.collegeconfidential.com/musical-theater-major/1397441-audition-songs-for-a-tenor.html> (This link is for tenors but might help with some songs. It is a blog though so keep in mind some of the info on here is opinions)

<https://www.csmusic.net/content/articles/singer-and-accompanist-etiquette-101/> (Accompanist Etiquette)

If you are not auditioning for Music Theater programs this section is not imperative for you (although might be useful for the future). Also, even though I am an acting major I did go through the Music Theater audition process and continue to do Musical Theater.

Songs are big. If you are auditioning for MT programs your song is a big part of the audition. You want to make sure that you pick something you do well and something you love. Make sure you read the school's requirements so that you know what they are looking for (contemporary or golden age, 32 bars or 16 bars, etc.). I am now going to put a do and don't list

DON'T:

- Sing something currently on Broadway (it'll be overdone)
- Sing something out of your range. If you can't sing it 100% of the time, don't sing it. They want to hear what you can comfortably sing, not something that you can sometimes sing.
- Tap or clap at your accompanist (read about proper accompanist etiquette)

AVOID:

- Doing songs with crazy sheet music. While your accompanist should be able to play anything, you make their job easier by not expecting them to sight read Jason Robert Brown. However, if you choose to do this, do not be rude if they mess up a note here or there. Again, take the time to read proper accompanist etiquette.

DO:

- Find something you like
- Find something in your range
- Stick to the timing requirements (for a 16 bar cut, around 30 seconds is good, for a 32 bar cut about 1 minute is good)

Songs are imperative. Picking a song can also be really scary, but it doesn't have to be. Make sure you know what the school is looking for. Pick something that isn't on Broadway, make sure you check the DON'T lists just to make sure you won't do something that might be overdone. This is not to say that you won't be able to do the song really well, and if you feel as though you are going to sing it the best out of everyone who is auditioning than go ahead. BUT the reason to pick a song that is not overdone is because it allows the auditors to hear you and not compare you to other people who might have also sung that song. As with monologues, listen to the

musical if you can, try to get the idea of what the song is saying. You want to be able to act through song as well as act through your monologue. In terms of contrasting pieces, that could mean up-tempo and ballad, contemporary and golden age, things like that. Make sure you have more than just two songs in your book in case they ask you to sing something else (which can and has happened). At the end of the day be prepared.

Recording Devices:

Your phone is totally okay! That being said if your camera quality is not good on your phone maybe ask a friend to use theirs. You do not need to buy recording equipment to record your prescreens. If you have stuff lying around the house that you can use or have those resources available that's awesome! But do not feel like you HAVE to have those things in order to make a pre-screen video. I used a tripod and then bought a cheap attachment so that I could have the tripod hold my phone so that it would be stable and not shaky. Again, you can find lots of tips on how to record your prescreens online.

Microphone:

https://www.amazon.com/dp/B07CHCSLVC?ref=ppx_pop_mob_ap_share

I personally recommend using some sort of microphone to help make the sound quality a little better. Not a requirement but for sure will help a little. You can find plenty of info about using microphones in your prescreens. Again, not a requirement but if you have an external microphone it could help with sound quality. The link above is the microphone I used for my prescreens. I attached one to a music stand just out of frame and it made the quality a little better!

Background:

Don't even stress about this one. Just find a neutral colored wall if possible. I taped a white sheet up and filmed all my prescreens in front of that. Super cheap, don't worry too much about this. Try to find a neutral color though as to not be distracting. Look at other self-tapes to see what other people do.

Lighting:

Lighting also does not have to be expensive. If you have a ring light or things like that, awesome! Totally use them. But if not don't worry. You want to make sure your lighting is good though. Make sure that your face is illuminated well and that the light isn't casting any super hard shadows if possible. I used some lamps and made sure that the room and my face were well lit.

Headshots:

Ahh yes, the headshot. Something that every aspiring actor knows about and worries about. Yes, this can be super intimidating but do not worry! Colleges are not going to expect every single actor to have a professionally taken headshot. Personally, I had my friend who was a photographer take my headshots. She took good photos, and I used them for college. Once you

get moved up into the more professional world you totally can drop hundreds of dollars on professional headshots, but for college you do not need to worry about spending all of that money (the cost of prescreens is already going to be expensive enough). There are plenty of wonderful photographers that go to your school and I'm sure you have a friend who is a photographer (reach out to upperclassman who's work you've seen before). There are plenty of places where you can find information about headshots because headshots are different than glamour shots. And the biggest thing is you want to accentuate your eyes! Your eyes are the most important part! I read about headshots from the book *The Actors Life: A Survival Guide* By Jenna Fischer (Pam in the office) and it was a great read and I highly recommend that book to everyone!

Wildcard:

The wild card video (if a school asks for one) is your opportunity to show yourself! Do whatever you want! Showcase yourself, if that means you can dance really well and want to show them that awesome! If you can do crazy riffs do that! If you want to do something silly and wildly creative like magic, do that! This is truly your opportunity to show who YOU are.

Final Thoughts:

This list is a great starting point and I hope makes the process a little easier on you. However, make sure you do your own research! All of what I have said is helpful but your own research is imperative in this process to find what works for you. This can be a really hard and crazy time in your life. But take the time to enjoy it. You'll only get this experience once. It is okay to stumble and fall. It is okay if you get turned around and scared. It is all part of the process. But know that throughout this journey you will meet so many new people, get to read some awesome scripts, and as cliché as it sounds, you will learn so much about yourself. Have fun, and never be afraid to reach out to the school if you have a question! It never hurts to ask. Now get to searching for material and have fun!