

**UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS AT AUSTIN  
BFA IN ACTING VIDEO AUDITIONS  
INSTRUCTIONS AND TIPS**

**Camera:**

You may use a cellphone, a DSLR camera, or a camcorder. Please use a tripod, or place your camera/phone on a stack of books or other objects to keep it from wobbling or shaking. If you use a phone, use the front facing, not rear-facing camera for the highest resolution.

**Lighting:**

You can light your video using a large window, or a few lamps fitted with full-spectrum light bulbs. If you choose the latter or want to assist your natural light, you will need something to diffuse the light source, which will make it softer and larger. Remove the lamp's shade as it is probably designed to make the light warmer and do some DIY diffusion.

The easiest, least expensive way to diffuse is to hang something like a white shower curtain, a white sheet, or even paper towels or baking parchment between you and the bare light bulb. This will allow the light to fill more space and fall softly on your face.

Do not place any of the diffusion directly on the bulbs as this will create a fire hazard. You may also use a professional photography lighting kit or ring light if you have one available. If you are using your phone to film, you may also use a phone selfie light, though you will likely also need a window or other light source.

If you have any white paper lanterns like this, they are already perfectly diffused light sources when you use full-spectrum bulbs.



Shooting outside is also an option, though you will need to have a care for audio disruptions. Birds and cicadas are fine, lawnmowers and planes are not. When shooting outside, choose a shaded spot, or shoot on an overcast day when the light is even. Morning light tends to be best.

### **Background:**

A flat, matte solid color backdrop or wall is best. If you do not have this available, just make the background as simple as you can by removing any extraneous elements from the frame such as plants, furniture, or paintings.

## **REQUIRED ELEMENTS**

Your audition will consist of three separate videos. A slate, a scene, and a monologue.

### **The slate:**

- Because we won't get to meet you in person, the slate will be how we "meet" you.
- Put yourself in a location that is either fun or meaningful to you. It can be inside your home, in your yard, or anywhere that will make it fun for you.
- Make sure the lighting is good.
- Frame the shot however you like.
- The slate should begin with your name and hometown, and then tell us about a memorable trip you have taken. It can be as simple as a trip to Target, or as elaborate as a vacation. It doesn't matter, as long as it is unrehearsed rather than scripted or written.
- The slate should be no longer than one minute.

- The more natural and relaxed you are, the better. Don't worry about looking polished or rehearsed. Just be yourself and try to have fun.
- You MAY use jump cuts when you edit the slate.

### **The scene:**

- Select one of the options for the scene, and perform part A. Your reader will read part B off-screen.
- Frame in a medium close-up shot (just below the shoulders up to the top of the head.)
- Your reader should be off-camera, sitting or standing just to the right or the left of the camera.
- Please use a live reader rather than a recording.
- Begin and end the scene with a non-verbal moment of some kind between you and your reader.
- The scene should be one, continuous take.
- Do not slate before you begin.
- Ask your reader to keep their volume low as they will be closer to the camera than you and you don't want them to overpower the tape. The reader should never shout or raise their voice. You want to be the star of the tape.
- Create a backstory for yourself. There is literally NO RIGHT ANSWER as these scenes are very open. Create a story that gets you excited about the scene and makes it specific.
- Decide who the other person is to you, and what your history is. The best options are parent, best friend, sibling or romantic interest.

### **The monologue:**

- Use a medium shot (waist or hips up to the top of your head) for the monologue.
- Look just to the right or the left of the camera lens. Do not look directly into the camera or too far into profile.
- Do not slate your name or the title of the piece before you begin.
- Select a piece that is no more than 15 years old, naturalistic, and a character of roughly your age.
- The monologue should be one, continuous take.

- When you are finished, simply cut the take. You do not need to say “scene” or “thank you.”

## **MONOLOGUE SELECTION TIPS**

### **Good monologues have:**

- A clear relationship with high stakes (parent, best friend, sibling, or romantic interest tend to work best.)
- Action in the present tense rather than remembering or telling the story of an event from the past.
- Similarity to your age and type.

### **Avoid:**

- Monologues that need trigger warnings or cast you as an abuser, racist, murderer or sociopath. While there are very good plays that contain this kind of material, it doesn't function well in an audition setting.
- “Remember when” or story monologues. These are designed to make the audience imagine the story, which makes it harder to see you in the piece.
- Direct address monologues - where the character is talking to a general group or to the audience.
- Monologues that feel like standup. While everyone loves standup, your monologue should feel like a real person in a real situation, not a comedian telling jokes.
- Heightened or poetic language. These pieces, while beautiful, do not work as well as audition monologues.
- Any monologue by Kellie Powell, from Drew's Script-o-Rama, or from a book called something like “100 Monologues for the Actor.” These pieces are too overdone to be useful to you. If you can find the text of your piece for free on the internet, it's not a good choice.

### **Where can I find a good monologue?**

- In a play. You must read the full play to do a good job with a monologue. This process takes a lot of time, so expect to do a lot of reading before you find the right piece.
- A great place to start is the Humana Festival anthologies that are published every year. They have many plays by different authors in each volume. Even if you don't find something, you may discover a playwright you like.
- NPX (National New Play Network's New Play Exchange), which is an online subscription service that costs \$10 a year for a reader subscription. You can access a huge, searchable digital library of new plays for free once you subscribe.

### **To prep the monologue:**

Ask yourself:

- Who am I?
- What is important to me in this play?
- Who am I talking to and what am I trying to "fix" about them?
- What do I want this person to DO or SAY when I am done talking? The more specific this answer is and the more you really NEED what you are trying to get, the better your monologue will be.

### **UPLOADING YOUR AUDITION VIDEOS**

Each clip should be uploaded separately. Please label them:

Last\_First\_slate

Last\_First\_mono

Last\_First\_scene

**BREAK A LEG!**