

Speaking and Listening Discussion

Let's Talk About... Acting

New Vocabulary Mark the stressed vowel sound in each word or phrase:

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|----------------------|------------------------|-------------------|---------------------|
| 1. actor | 6. award | 11. lines | 16. supporting role |
| 2. actress | 7. drama school | 12. method acting | 17. typecasting |
| 3. amateur dramatics | 8. extra | 13. part | 18. understudy |
| 4. audience | 9. improvisation | 14. performance | 19. unemployment |
| 5. audition | 10. leading lady / man | 15. rehearsal | 20. voiceover |

Discussion Questions Ask and answer them with a partner or small group:

1. Do you use the gender-specific words 'actor' (male) and 'actress' (female) to describe people who act, or the word 'actor' for everybody? Why? In these questions we use 'actor' to mean both actor and actress.
2. Are you a thespian? Do you act? What about **amateur dramatics** – creating community theatre in your free time? If not, would you like to? What do you think would be the challenges and rewards?
3. Who is your favourite actor? Why? What have you seen them in? If you could spend the day with them, what would you do? Why are some actors famous and others never make it big?
4. Do you know any actors in real life? What kind of people are they? Describe a typical actor's lifestyle.
5. Are actors pretentious? What kind of character is required to be a really great actor? Could you do it? What kind of actor would you like to be? Would you prefer to be a **leading lady / man**, or play a **supporting role**?
6. Is the ability to act a useful skill in everyday life? Is acting really just lying? Are you a good liar?
7. How many different kinds of acting can you think of? What is **method acting**? Is acting a dangerous job?
8. How difficult is it to learn **lines** when preparing for a **part**? What about if you have a leading role in a Shakespearean tragedy? How do actors learn all those lines? What techniques would you use?
9. Are you good at **improvisation**? When in life do we need to be able to improvise?
10. What are the differences between acting on stage, acting in films, and acting on the radio?
11. Is **unemployment** a problem for actors? Why? What kind of jobs do actors do when they are 'resting'? If the majority of actors don't become rich and famous, why don't they just 'pack it in' and get a 'proper job'?
12. What would it be like to be an **understudy** – only playing the part if the main actor is unavailable?
13. What skills do people learn at **drama school**? Is it easier than other forms of higher education?
14. How long do actors need to spend in **rehearsal** for a theatre or film role? What happens during rehearsals?
15. What is the relationship between the actor onstage and the **audience** at a theatre? What makes for an effective **performance**? Is it more rewarding to watch actors at the theatre, at the cinema, or on TV? Why?
16. Have you ever thought about being an **extra** in a film or TV production? Why are extras required?
17. Is **typecasting** a hazard for certain actors? Why do some actors get typecast?

English Idioms about Acting

Say a new sentence with each idiom:

1. be a hard act to follow
2. act your age
3. an actor's life for me
4. be caught in the act
5. be in the limelight
6. break a leg!
7. get your act together
8. it's curtains for you
9. let's get this show on the road
10. life is not a rehearsal
11. live up to the hype
12. make a song and dance about something
13. perform a disappearing act
14. read somebody the riot act
15. run the show
16. something is waiting in the wings
17. the show must go on
18. upstage somebody

Discussion Situations about Acting

What would you do if...?

1. You filmed your part as a zany robot for a blockbuster movie. It was great, but you were cut from the final edit.
2. You are waiting for a car to take you to the Oscars, but it doesn't show up and you can't collect your **award**.
3. You volunteer to act in an amateur dramatics production, but your fellow actors are *really* bad.
4. You desperately want to go to drama school, but you can't scrape together enough money for the fees.
5. Your teacher at drama school believes you lack talent.
6. You are cast in a dog food commercial – playing a poodle.
7. You have an **audition** for a pirate film, but you lied on your resume about being able to sword-fight.
8. You've been 'resting' for a while, and have no money left.
9. On the morning of a lucrative **voiceover** gig, you wake up to find you have laryngitis.
10. Due to a trilogy of hit movies, you're typecast as a villain.
11. The audience thinks your understudy is better than you.
12. You forget your lines during a big moment on stage.

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1. Describe the pictures. 2. Discuss them. 3. Compare them. 4. Create a quiz about them using different question types: comprehension, wh-, yes/no, true/false/unknown, etc. 5. Improvise a dialogue or story.

Picture A



Picture B

