

# Bright Lights Theatre Audition Guide

Auditions are a necessary first step in putting a production together, but they can feel stressful and uncertain, whether you've auditioned 20 times or never before. The Bright Lights team has assembled this guide to help you know what to expect and how to prepare.

Trying out for theatre takes courage! As you continue to audition for shows, you will face rejection more often than you land your dream role. It's tough, but it's not personal. The casting decisions will often come down to things you have no control over. For example, directors may want a Tin Man who is taller than Dorothy for *The Wizard of Oz* or an Anna with a higher voice than Olaf for *Frozen*.

Your job is to prepare well, making thoughtful acting choices as you rehearse your monologue and practice your song, so that you can walk out of the audition confident that you did your best.

Remember, the directors in the audition room are rooting for you and want to see you succeed. The role they ultimately give you will be one in which you can shine and continue to grow into a masterful storyteller.

[Audition Process](#)

[Audition Form](#)

[Choosing Audition Pieces](#)

[What To Wear](#)

[Callbacks](#)

[In the Audition Room](#)

[Resources for Monologues and Songs](#)

## Audition Process

Bright Lights auditions are structured to give students an opportunity to demonstrate the talents and spirit they would bring to a production, and to provide directors with knowledge of students' singing, acting, and dance abilities (both as individuals and in partners/groups through callbacks).

Each initial audition involves two short (30-60 seconds) performances:

1) Monologue

- A speech delivered by a single character
- Can be sourced from a play or musical, movie, TV show, or book

2) Song

- Can come from musicals, movies, or the radio
- Students who are not comfortable singing a cappella (without music) will need an instrumental or karaoke track to sing along to during the audition.

Dancing will typically be assessed in callbacks, a second round of auditions in which directors can test out show-specific material with various students and see how different combinations of actors work together on stage.

## Audition Form

- Read the character descriptions before filling out your audition form and consider what role(s) might be a good fit for your current set of skills.
  - It's sometimes hard to evaluate our own talents honestly. Ask your family, friends, teachers, and/or Bright Lights staff (before audition time!) what kinds of characters they could see you playing well. You might be surprised by what they believe you're capable of!
  - There's only one Annie in *Annie* and one Olaf in *Frozen*, but every character and ensemble member is vital to telling a story with excellence.
  - You are always welcome to simply write "any role," "featured dancer," or "ensemble" on your preference list.
- Your character preferences do not guarantee callbacks for those roles. Your list helps the directors understand how you see yourself, whether you're confident about memorizing lots of dialogue or excited to shine as a dancer. You'll be considered for every role, not just those you list.

## Choosing Audition Pieces

### **Monologue**

- Choose a monologue that has a good story arc. When the character has a moment of discovery (where they realize or learn something for the first time) or a change of emotion during the monologue, it reveals a lot about your acting capabilities!
- Choose a monologue that is congruent with the role you want most. If the character is funny, choose a comedic monologue. If the character is serious, dramatic, or genuine, choose a monologue to display your ability to embody that type of character.
- While reciting a poem is allowed, it should be a last resort since poetry does not best demonstrate your ability to deliver dialogue.

### **Song**

- Do not sing a song from the show you are auditioning for. Singing something from the show itself could pigeonhole you in the directors' minds. They want to hear all that your voice can do in auditions, not just the role that you want. Callbacks will be used to hear you sing for specific roles they think are the best fit.
- Consider the songs you already know and are confident singing; do any of them sound like the role you'd like to get? Choose a song that will allow you to tell a story while you sing.
- Do not rap a song for your audition unless there are raps included in that musical (e.g., Hamilton). The directors need to hear you sing actual notes.
- You may audition with a musical track or a cappella (without music). If you use music, we ask that you use an **instrumental or karaoke track**.
  - NOTE: If you intend to use music, send the track link or file to [auditions@brightlightstheatre.org](mailto:auditions@brightlightstheatre.org) with the subject: **NAME - Track for SHOW Audition**.
  - Please send an MP4 file or a link to YouTube or Spotify. We do not have access to Apple Music.

## What To Wear

- Be comfortable and able to move easily.
- Dress like yourself! No need for formal wear, but a tidy appearance can show that you're ready to work and take this seriously (for example, no Crocs or sweatpants). The audition room is an opportunity for the directors to get to know you and the personality they will be working with.
  - \*\*\*Parents: Think about what you might encourage your student to wear to a casual job interview. This should be the vibe of an audition. Sweats, leggings,

and t-shirts are appropriate for callbacks since there is more dancing involved.

- Please do not dress exactly like the role you want. Wearing something that fits the setting/theme of the show is fine (e.g., a jungle pattern for *The Lion King* or bright colors for *Seussical*), but anything more specific forces the directors to evaluate you for that role as you audition. This can be a disadvantage if that role is one for which you're not yet ready. Help them keep an open mind!

## In the Audition Room

- When you arrive to audition, you'll check in and wait for your turn. Inside the audition room will be 2-3 directors sitting at a table, excited to meet you and watch you perform. Introduce yourself and then follow their directions.
  - Family and friends are not allowed inside the audition room. The directors need to see what you can do on your own. Your family will be asked to wait in the lobby.
  - Expect to see the directors taking notes as you perform. This is not a negative thing—they just want to remember what you've done!
- Acting intentionally in your song is as important as acting in a monologue. Characters in musicals sing because their emotions have become so strong that speaking is no longer sufficient to properly convey their emotion (sad, mad, elated, surprised, overwhelmed, etc.). Telling a good story is more important than sounding pretty or getting all the notes exactly correct.
  - There will always be a chair in the room if you want to use it in your acting.
- Focus on enunciation and projection in your pieces. It won't matter how good your acting choices or notes are if the directors can't hear or understand what you're performing.
- Being nervous is normal! You can push through it with a deep breath, remembering to slow down and really embody your character. (If your pieces don't have a specific character, make one up!)
- If you forget a line in your monologue, take a deep breath and make an acting choice. Don't panic. Try saying the previous line again to see if that jogs your memory. If you mess up big, it's okay to calmly ask to start over.
- Please do not read your monologue or sheet music in your audition. It communicates to the directors that you aren't prepared (even if you are) and prevents you from being able to use your body to make effective acting choices.

## Callbacks

- For most musicals, we will have an all-cast dance callback to assess everyone's dancing ability. Then, the majority of the cast will be sent home so directors can assess chemistry and skill for speaking roles.
- If we call a group of students back for particular roles, we will email out a list of songs and scenes from the show to prepare in advance.
  - You won't get to perform everything you practice for callbacks (we don't have time for every student to sing every song on their own), but having a variety of pieces prepared means you'll be able to perform with confidence no matter what the directors ask to see.
- Much of the time, behavior weighs just as heavily as the content of your audition/callback. The directors want to see that they are casting someone who will be responsible, coachable, and able to conduct themselves as a leader to the rest of the cast.
- Enter callbacks with an open mind, ready to do your best, no matter what role the directors have you try. Just because you weren't called back for a specific role does not mean you couldn't still receive it.
- Bright Lights staff will not comment on callback listings or specific casting decisions. Since the reasoning most often comes down to criteria that are out of the students' control, hearing the "why" is neither helpful nor encouraging. To read our full casting guidelines, click [here](#).

## Resources for Monologues and Songs

- For monologues that will be newer to your directors:  
<https://www.dramanotebook.com/monologues-teenagers/>  
<https://www.dramanotebook.com/monologues-kids/>
  - These are written by students for students. They are labeled dramatic or comedic and vary in length.
- For classic monologues:  
<https://stageagent.com/monologues/teens>
  - These are monologues pulled from well-known plays. You can easily see the name of the play and the character who performs the monologue. They also vary in length and are tagged as dramatic or comedic (click on “Search More Monologues” at the bottom to reveal filter options).
  - You will need to create a free StageAgent account for full access.
- For monologues from larger works for kids:  
<https://www.backstage.com/magazine/article/monologues-for-kids-72732/>
- Shorter monologues from Disney Movies for younger actors:  
<https://www.allstarstheatre.org/monologues-for-younger-actors>
- Search YouTube or Spotify for “instrumental” or “karaoke version” to find audition-appropriate song tracks.
  - If you can’t find a good track, you should audition a cappella (without accompaniment). It’s harder for the directors to assess your skill if there are other voices singing with you.