

How to Give a Great Audition

You give your all at the audition, but someone else got the part you wanted. What's the deal? Here are the top reasons given for not casting someone, and what you can do to improve your chances.

#1: Give the Casting Committee what they are looking for

When reading a script or singing a song, it may seem that there is only one way to play it, and that's what you try for when auditioning. There are, however, many different ways to interpret most parts. Maybe you played it very "up," and those casting it saw something darker, or you played "understated" when they wanted broad. If someone else comes closer to the vision of the part, that actor may be a better choice because the director has far less work to do to get the actor to match that vision.

How to better your odds: Pay attention to the character descriptions and try to portray what the director seems to want to see. For Aladdin, we are using the cartoon and Broadway show as inspiration!

#2: Be prepared for the audition

Maybe you have a lot of homework the week of auditions and don't have time to memorize the lyrics to your song. Maybe you get nervous, so you look at the words while you sing or just sing and stare straight ahead. Or maybe you don't plan ahead of time what kind of moves or facial expressions you are going to have during your song or monologue. Or you over plan and look staged. Giving a more polished audition because you prepared ahead of time gives an advantage and shows that you are enthusiastic about the show and are serious about wanting the part and working hard at it. Being prepared doesn't mean you'll get the part, but the Casting Committee can't help but be impressed by someone who's put that much work into it before they've even gotten the part.

How to better your odds: Memorize the song you are singing or the monologue you are delivering. Practice your audition material over and over. Rehearse your audition in front of a mirror. Watch the expression on your face as you sing the song and ask yourself if your expression matches up with the song you are singing and the story you are telling. Then practice the song in front of your parents or friends but tell them to NOT BE AFRAID OF TELLING YOU THE TRUTH. (Most of your friends or even your parents may tell you what they think you want to hear just to avoid making you feel bad.) Ask them if the expression on your face makes them believe that you are really feeling what you are singing about. Ask them how you can change the look on your face to make the song more believable. Ask them if you are off key or too quiet or sound like you're straining. Do the same thing with the monologue. NOTE: If you aren't prepared, we still want to see you audition. Maybe no one else prepared either....

#3: If the Casting Committee asks you to do it again, but differently...

Sometimes you'll be given directions as you're auditioning. Take this as a compliment! They are not necessarily telling you that your interpretation is wrong. They may want to see if you can change what you're doing to better fit their idea of the character. They may also be checking to see how well you take direction to see how easy you are to work with. And, if you **aren't** asked to do it again differently, don't take that as a bad sign either!

How to better your odds: If you are asked in an audition to try something different, do it! Listen carefully and ask questions to make sure you understand what they are going for.

#4: Don't get your hopes up for a role that isn't a good fit

You auditioned for a belter but you're a soprano or you auditioned for a tenor but you're a bass. Maybe the part requires someone to back flip - they are going to cast someone physically capable of doing that!

How to better your odds: Think about the characters ahead of time and think about which parts you can physically do.

YOU DIDN'T GET THE ROLE. WHY NOT?

You prepared to audition. You were awesome! But you still didn't get the part! Why not?

#1: You may be perfect – for more than one part!

Sometimes you are perfect, but you are needed to play another role. For example, both Susie and Sandy would be great as Cinderella, but we still need the Evil Stepmother. Susie would be great at that too (even though she is actually the best for Cinderella). For the good of the show, we need Susie to be the Evil Stepmother – no one else would be as good – and Sandy will still make a great Cinderella, even if she was originally second choice.

*How to better your odds: If you are placed into a role that you weren't expecting, take it as a compliment. This means they have decided that you are **NEEDED** for this specific part – for the overall good of the show! No cast decisions are made by accident, including characters with just one line.*

Reason #2: You're an unknown quantity

You gave a really strong audition and are perfect for the part, so how come you lost out to someone who wasn't as good but seems to get cast all the time anyway? Sometimes the Casting Committee knows what the other actor can deliver and just doesn't know your work habits, your ability to get along with others, or your sense of commitment to the show. Just about every director with any experience can cite instances of taking a

chance on someone new and having it blow up in their faces, leading to that common lament “But they were so wonderful at auditions!” He or she instead opts to go with “tried and true.”

How to better your odds: The problem is that nobody knows you, so for the future, change that by getting involved in some way other than acting. Volunteer for behind-the-scenes jobs. Are you early to rehearsal and see the director is setting up chairs? Jump in and lend a hand. Your extra effort will be noticed. If you are given responsibilities and carry them out well, you’ll become known as a team player and a hard worker -- two characteristics that are valued – not just in theater, but everywhere!

Reason #3: Past Reliability

So you’re late once in a while, or have to miss rehearsals because you’ve got a lot going on and inevitably there are scheduling conflicts. No big deal, right? Wrong! Being consistently late wastes everyone’s time and makes you look less than serious about the show. Missing rehearsals can throw off the entire schedule, especially if you have an important part. Do it often enough, and they are going to cast someone who has a better grasp of exactly how short the rehearsal period is.

How to better your odds: If rehearsals start at 9:30, be there at 9:20. If you have a job every Saturday afternoon, let the director know at auditions so he or she can plan accordingly (and don’t take it too hard if that conflict puts you out of the running for a part). If you must unexpectedly miss a rehearsal, let the director know as soon as possible. Above all, do not ever drop out of a show without an extremely good reason.

A FINAL WORD

People should love being in the show to be in the show - not for what the role or show gives to them but based on what they can bring to the show. The audience likes to see the whole show - not just the one or two leads. It is very important to remember that the point of theater is not to turn everyone into a star. Many students come and go and never have a lead role, but looking back they still say it is one of the best experiences in high school. Although it can be disappointing to not be cast in the role you want, in the end you’ll love being part of the show no matter what part you play!