

Theatre Jobs

There are many jobs one can do in the entertainment industry. Some are stage jobs, such as acting, makeup, and technical work. Others are in the film, TV, and commercial industries. The following is a small sampling of the jobs one might seek.

Stage Crew: There are many jobs within the stage crew. For example, *grips* move the scenery around during the show. The *props manager* buys or creates the many props used in the show and makes sure that they are always placed where they are needed. Sometimes the members of the stage crew even build and paint the set, but some theatres have *construction crews* who do this. All of these jobs and many more are overseen by the *technical director*, who runs all of the technical aspects of the show and works in the interest of the director, and the *stage manager*, who handles the show from backstage.

Imagine you are on the crew for a children's comedy about the character "Aladdin." Explain how your show's set and props would differ from an adult drama about the same character.

Lighting: There are many people on the lighting team. A *designer* designs the lights, including where to hang which instruments, what gel color to put in the instrument frame, and, with the help of the director, when to bring lights up and down during the show and the lighting intensity and effects. *Light technicians* hang and gel the instruments and take care of them throughout the show. The *light board operator* runs the lights during the show. *Spotlight operators* maneuver the lights used to follow actors during certain scenes. In smaller theatres and at most high schools, all of this is done by the technical director and his or her students.

How can lighting be used to establish the mood of a play? Give examples.

Sound: The sound crew has several members and quite a few responsibilities. Depending on the show's requirements, there may be as few as a single sound crew member or as many as ten. The sound crew is responsible for all of the microphones, the crew's headsets used to communicate during the show, and all of the sound effects used during the show. They are also responsible for any background music that might be used. Most importantly, they monitor the sound levels during the show to make sure that the quality stays good.

How could sound effects add realism to a scene about a campfire on a starry night?

Name _____ Period _____ Date _____

Costumes and Makeup: The *costumers* and *makeup artists* work very closely with the director and the technical director to provide a style, theme, and overall look that is congruent with the rest of the production. Larger theatres have a *designer* and a *seamstress* (and sometimes several of each). Smaller theatres and most high schools rely on costume rental houses to provide them with appropriate costumes. Likewise, most students learn how to apply their own makeup, but in the world of professional theatre, talented artisans create complex designs, which can truly complete the actor's characterization.

Color is a very important part of any show's overall design, but especially when it comes to costuming. Explain how color can be symbolic within the costume design of a show.

Publicity: The person or crew responsible for the promotion of a show has a huge job. They must coordinate news releases and advertisements. They must create a schedule in which pictures can be taken *in costume* for publicity and programs but without disturbing the most important phase of the rehearsal process — the technical rehearsals. Posters must be designed and printed and visibly hung in appropriate places and tickets must be printed and sold. Programs have to be designed and printed, and often advertisers purchase ad space in these. Many theatres have a phone line to be maintained and a mailing list for sending out flyers. Finally, theatres often have reserved seating or special offers on season tickets. All of this is maintained by the publicity crew.

Discuss the pros and cons of general admission seating at a lower rate versus reserved seating at a higher rate.

Choreographer: Makes up the dance routines for any show that involves dancing.

Special Effects Manager: Creates and monitors special effects for shows and is responsible for the safety of the actors and the audience.

House Manager: Takes charge of the audience area of the theatre before, during, and after performances, including managing the ushers and concessions and attending to the general comfort of the audience.

Writer: Creates the dialog and storyline used on-stage or in film.

Musical Director: In musical theatre, this person is in charge of bringing all of the musical elements together to support the goals of the director.

Stage Combat Director: Choreographs the more *physical* part of the show and monitors actors for safety. Stage combat can include fist fighting, wrestling, swordplay, or simply a trip or kick. It is very complex and requires extensive training.

Stuntperson: Used mainly in film and TV, the stuntperson doubles for the actors performing physically challenging or dangerous tasks for which he or she has received special training.

Cameraperson: Operates the camera for film and video.