

## Glossary of Theatre Terms

**ACOUSTICS:** qualities that evaluate the ability of a theatre to clearly transmit sounds from the stage to the audience.

**ACT:** main division of a drama, ACTS may be further divided into SCENES.

**ACTOR:** a performer in a play; may be male or female.

**ADAPTATION:** a reinvention of an existing story or play; includes turning novels into plays, plays into musicals, or making changes in language or plot.

**AD-LIB:** making up a line not originally in a play, usually done when an actor forgets a line or someone misses an entrance.

**ANTAGONIST:** the opponent or adversary of the main character (protagonist); provides the obstacle the protagonist tries to overcome.

**ARENA STAGE:** stage placed in the center of a room with audience seating surrounding it, also known as theatre in the round.

**ASIDE:** a brief remark made by a character and intended to be heard by the audience but not by other characters.

**ATMOSPHERE:** tone or mood established by events, places, or situations.

**AT RISE:** refers to the action taking place as the curtain rises.

**AUDITION:** a brief performance of either a monologue or a short scene done by actors for the director of a play in order for the director to decide which actor he or she wants to cast in a particular role.

**BACKSTAGE:** refers to the areas not a part of the actual stage, but restricted for actors and crewmembers. It usually includes the green room and the dressing rooms, and frequently offices and scenic shops as well.

**BOOTH:** the small room set up for the management of the technical elements needed during a play, usually set behind the audience with a window facing the stage. The Stage Manager calls the show from there. The sound and light board operators run the audio and lighting equipment from there as well.

**BREAK A LEG:** a superstitious good luck wish exchanged by actors who feel that saying "good luck" is a jinx.

**CALL:** the time at which an actor is supposed to be at rehearsal or performance.

**CALLBACK:** a second or third audition used to further narrow the field of actors competing for a particular role in a play.

**CAST:** (verb) to assign parts to the actors in a play.

**CAST:** (noun) group of actors in a particular play.

**CASTING CALL:** notice to actors of an audition for parts in a play.

**CHARACTER:** a person in a play created by the playwright and represented by an actor.

**CHOREOGRAPHER:** the artist in charge of creating the dances and/or movements used by actors in a play.

**CLIMAX:** (of a script or play) the moment of highest tension or suspense in a play; the turning point after which all action moves to a resolution.

**COMEDY:** a story where the protagonist (main character) achieves his/her goal.

**COMIC RELIEF:** a humorous moment, scene or speech in a serious drama which is meant to provide relief from emotional intensity and, by contrast, to heighten the seriousness of the story.

**COSTUMES:** the clothes worn by actors in a play designed to fit the era, mood, and personality of the characters as well as enhance the overall design look of the production.

**COSTUME DESIGNER:** the artist in charge of creating the look of the costumes for a play.

**COSTUME SHOP MANAGER:** the person in charge of realizing the vision of the costume designer in actual clothes, responsible for maintaining the costumes and wigs during the course of the production.

**CRITIC:** a writer who reviews plays.

**CROSSOVER:** a hidden passage, often behind the scenery, through which actors can go from one side of the stage to the other without being seen by the audience. It is used if actors need to exit on one side and make their next entrance from the opposite side.

**CUE:** the last words or actions that come before another actor's speech or entrance; a light, sound or curtain signal.

**CURTAIN:** end of a scene; closing of a curtain to depict the end of an act or scene.

**CURTAIN CALL:** the process of actors taking their bows, receiving applause, and/or being reintroduced to the audience at the end of a play.

**DANCE CAPTAIN:** member of the cast in charge of working with the dancers to maintain the quality of the dance numbers, make sure dancers are properly warmed up before performance, and teach understudies and new cast members existing numbers.

**DESIGNER:** a person who conceives and creates the plans for scenery, costumes, lighting, sound, makeup, hairstyles, props and other visual aspects of a performance.

**DIALECT:** a speech pattern which is distinctive, or the use of a cultural accent on stage.

**DIALOGUE:** conversation between two or more actors in a play.

**DIALOGUE COACH:** person responsible for working with a cast on correct pronunciation and dialect usage.

**DIRECTOR:** a person responsible for initiating the interpretation of the play, enhancing that interpretation with the concepts of the designers and making all final decisions on production values; tells the actors where to move and how best to communicate the interpretation of the play to the audience.

**DOWNSTAGE:** front area of the stage, nearest to the audience.

**DRAMA:** the playscript itself; the art of writing and staging plays; a literary art form different from poetry or other fiction.

**DRAMTIS PERSONAE:** cast of characters in a drama or, more generally, participants in an event.

**DRESSER:** a person in charge of assisting actors with their costumes, wigs, and makeup during a production.

**DRESSING ROOM:** the place where actors take their costumes, wigs, and makeup on and off. Sometimes dressing rooms are communal, one for men, one for women, sometimes actors have a dressing room all to themselves or to share with just one or two other actors. Dressing rooms often contain (or are in close proximity to) toilets, sinks, showers, lighted make-up tables and sleeping areas.

**EXEUNT:** stage direction meaning "they exit."

**EXIT:** stage direction telling an actor to leave the stage.

**EXPOSITION:** dialogue which gives the audience the background information it needs to follow the action of the play; most will occur early on in the play.

**ENTRANCE:** the movement of an actor onto the visible areas of the stage.

**FALLING ACTION:** (of a script or play) the acceptance of the situation derived from the climax; the conflict is worked out or resolved.

**FIGHT CHOREOGRAPHER:** the artist in charge of staging fight scenes, can include swordplay, other weapons, or barehanded combat.

**FORESHADOWING:** a hint of what is to come in the story. This is often used to keep the audience in a state of expectancy.

**GHOST WRITER:** person hired by an author to write on his or her behalf; receives no public credit.

**GREEN ROOM:** a small lounge backstage where actors can relax and get ready to go on.

**HALF-HOUR:** the usual call for actors to be at the theatre, thirty minutes before curtain.

**HOUSE:** the audience or the theatrical building.

**HOUSE MANAGER:** the employee in charge of the audience during a performance, trains ushers, runs the concessions, and troubleshoots seating problems.

**IMPROVISATION:** to make up as you go along; often used as a rehearsal technique to make actors more comfortable with their characters; may be a part of some performance situations.

**INCITING INCIDENT:** (of a script or play) the launching pad of the play; the action or short sequence of actions that constitute the point of attack.

**IRONY:** a contrast between what is and what appears to be. Two types of irony are--- **VERBAL IRONY** when a character says one thing and means another; **DRAMATIC IRONY** when the audience knows something that the character does not

**LIGHTING DESIGNER:** artist in charge of creating the lighting effects for a play.

**MAKEUP:** cosmetics, wigs, hair colorings, or other items applied to the actors to change or enhance their appearance.

MELODRAMA: play with exaggerated plot and emotion.

MONOLOGUE: long speech spoken by one actor without interruption.

MOTIVATION: a character's reason for saying or doing something; actors search for this in studying their role and use voice and movement to relay it to the audience.

MOVEMENT COACH: a person familiar with the ways people physically relate to one another in different historical periods, as well as general historically and culturally accurate movements. (How to properly use a fan, how women walk while corseted, where and how men and women might stand in relation to one another, etc.)

NARRATOR: one who tells the story; speaks directly to the audience.

OBJECTIVE: what the character wants/needs/desires.

OFFSTAGE: areas on the stage which are not seen by the audience, like the wings or the crossovers, where action can take place and be heard by the audience, or where actors can wait for their entrances.

PLAYWRIGHT: author of a play.

PLOT: the story of the play.

PROP: any moveable item used on the set of a play or handled by an actor.

PROSCENIUM: a form of staging in which an arch frames the stage; the stage is at one end of a room and the audience sits in front of it, watching the play through an arch which frames the action.

PROSCENIUM ARCH: opening in the proscenium through which the audience views the play.

PROTAGONIST: the main character; the person whose success or failure the audience is most concerned.

PUT-IN REHEARSAL: a special rehearsal called when an understudy is going to go on, so that the rest of the cast has an opportunity to get used to the presence of a different actor.

REHEARSAL: the time period before a play opens involving the practice of the dialogue, movement, rhythms and interpretations of the play.

RISING ACTION: (of a script or play) the sequence of action and events that leads to the climax of the play; the conflict becomes clear and tension builds as obstacles are presented.

RUN CREW: people in charge of moving scenery and props onstage during a performance, and helping create live audio or visual special effects.

SCENE: a small unit of a play in which there is no shift of locale or time.

SCENIC ARTIST: a painter or machinist who reproduces the scene designer's drawings in full scale on the stage.

SCRIPT: the written words and stage directions created by a playwright.

SET: the scenery of the play; depicts time, place and mood.

SET DESIGNER: the artist in charge of creating the physical world in which the play will live; usually creates in drawings and scale models.

**SOLILOQUY:** a speech given by a character alone on the stage where the audience gets to know the inner thoughts and feelings of the character.

**SOUNDBOARD OPERATOR:** the person who discharges the correct sounds or music at the appropriate moment in the play.

**SOUND DESIGNER:** the artist responsible for the creation of the sounds heard during a performance, including music and special effects.

**STAGE BUSINESS:** small pieces of physical action put into a scene to heighten its appeal, suspense or sense of reality.

**STAGE DIRECTIONS:** information written into a script which tells the actors when and where to move, or describes the intent or mood of action, may also describe scenery or props.

**STAGE LEFT:** side of the stage on the actors' left as they face the audience.

**STAGE RIGHT:** side of the stage on the actors' right as they face the audience.

**STAGE MANAGER:** person who coordinates all aspects of the production during production and performance, runs or calls the show.

**SUBTEXT:** the thoughts behind the words the actor speaks.

**THEME:** the main idea or ethical precept the play deals with.

**THRUST STAGE:** a stage set at one end of the room which extends out into the audience area; audience surrounds the stage on three sides.

**TONY:** awards given annually by the American Theatre Wing for outstanding contributions to the theatre; officially the Antoinette Perry Awards.

**TRAGEDY:** a story where the protagonist does not achieve his/her goal.

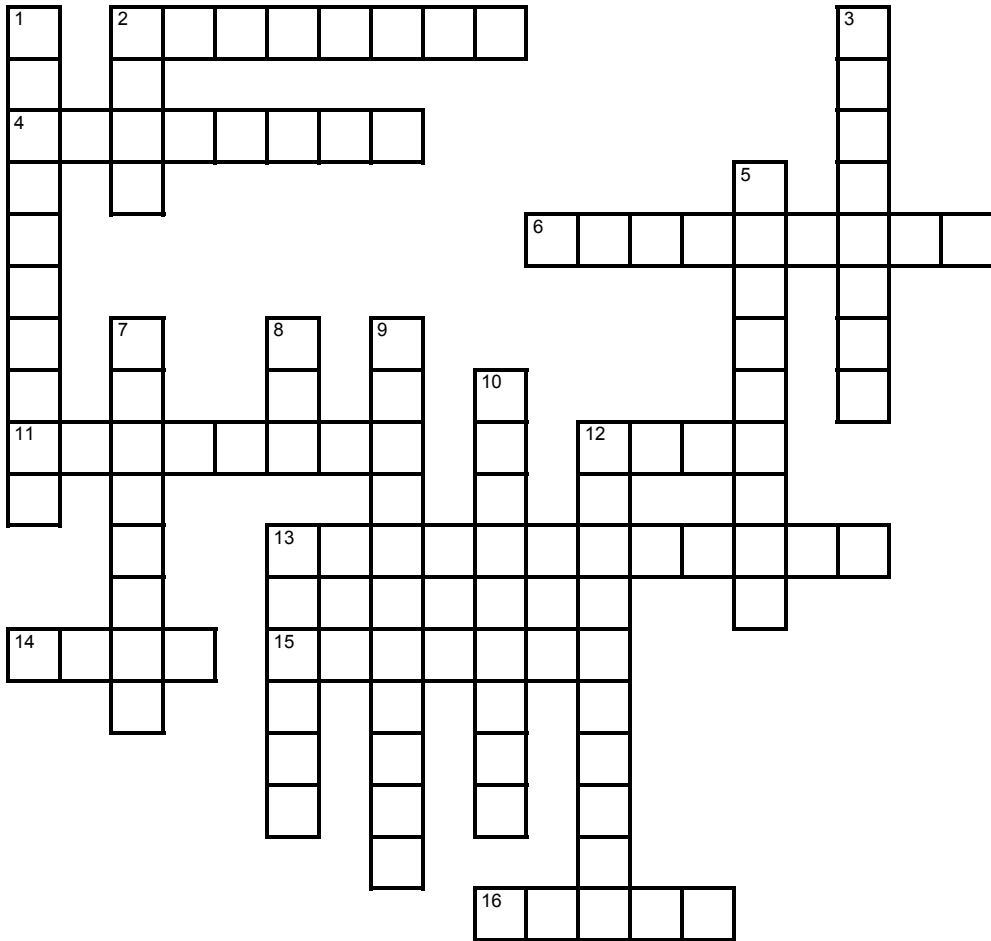
**TRANSLATION:** taking a play in one language and converting it into another.

**UNDERSTUDY:** an actor who has memorized all the lines and action of an actor in a play, so that if the original actor falls ill or cannot perform, there is someone prepared to take his or her place at a moment's notice.

**UPSTAGE:** the part of the stage farthest from the audience. Also, to steal the scene from another actor by moving upstage, forcing the downstage actor to turn his or her back on the audience.

**WINGS:** the areas offstage right and left, hidden from the audience, where actors can enter or exit, do quick costume changes, receive or discard props, or speak lines meant to be heard as if from another room.

**Use the Glossary of Theatre Terms to complete the following Crossword Puzzles**



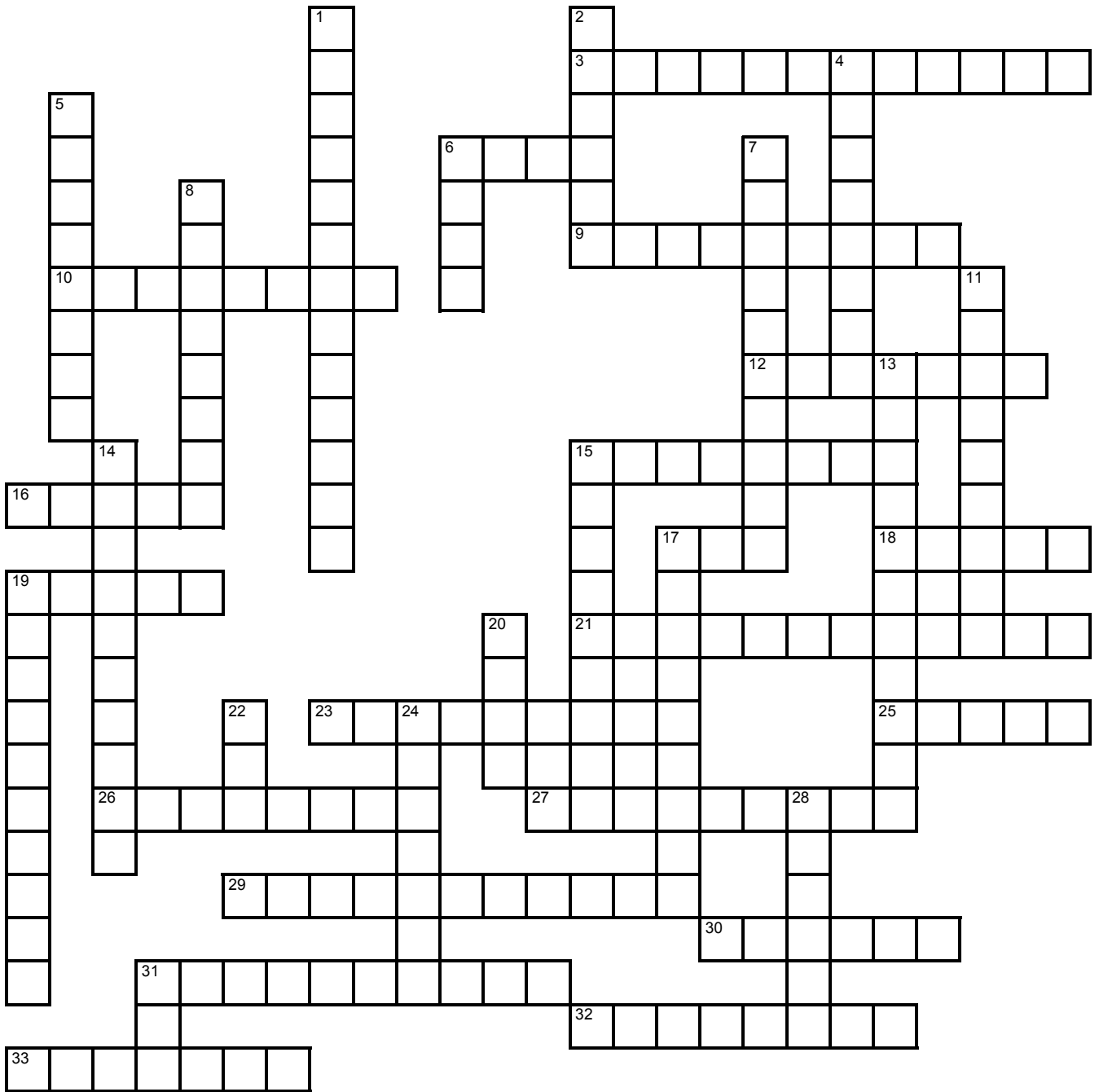
## Theatre Terms Beginner Crossword Puzzle

### Across

- 2. Clothes worn by characters.
- 4. Creator of plans for costumes, props, lights, etc.
- 6. Actors represent a \_\_\_\_\_ in a play.
- 11. In charge, interprets the play, "the boss".
- 12. The story of a play.
- 13. Person who coordinates the show for the director.
- 14. Any moveable item used by an actor.
- 15. People who move scenery or props during a show.
- 16. A performer in a play.

### Down

- 1. Takes over when an actor gets ill.
- 2. Verb or Noun, refers to actors in a play.
- 3. If an actor want's a job he/she must \_\_\_\_\_.
- 5. An area "behind the scenes" of the stage.
- 7. One who tells the story.
- 8. Scenery of the play.
- 9. Actors bow to an audience to thank them for watching during the \_\_\_\_\_.
- 10. "Practice" for the actors.
- 12. The author of a play.
- 13. Written words and directions of the playwright.



## Theatre Terms Intermediate Crossword Puzzle

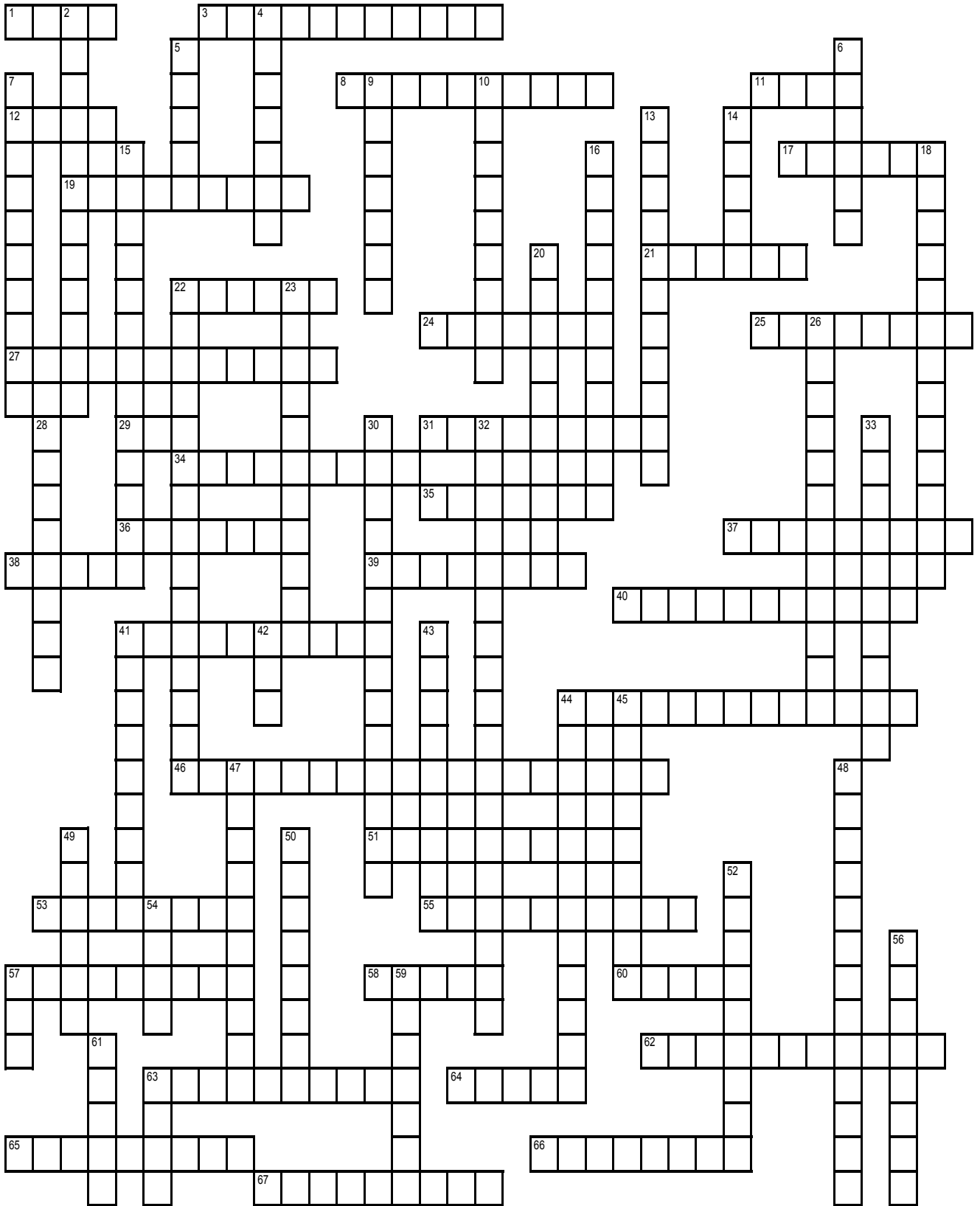
**Across**

- 3. The events of a play before the climax.
- 6. The story of a play.
- 9. A part for an actor in a play.
- 10. If something happens that the audience can't see we say it happened \_\_\_\_ .

12. People who move scenery or props during a show.
15. Creator of plans for scenery, costumes, props, etc...
16. Area offstage right and left.
17. Scenery of the play.
18. To make up a line not originally in a play.
19. Single unit of a play with no shift of place or time.
21. Person who coordinates the show for the director.
23. An area "behind the scenes" of the stage.
25. A performer in a play.
26. Person in charge, interprets the play, "the boss".
27. "Practice" for the actors.
29. The main character in a play.
30. Turning point of high tension in a play.
31. The character who is an obstacle to the protagonist of a play.
32. One who tells the story.
33. Part of the stage farthest from the audience.

**Down**

1. Creator of dance and movement.
2. Writer who reviews plays.
4. If an actor want's a job he/she must \_\_\_\_\_.
5. Conversation between actors.
6. Any moveable item used by an actor.
7. The author of a play.
8. Clothes worn by characters.
11. Instead of "good luck".
13. At the end of a play actors bow to the audience during the \_\_\_\_.
14. Takes over when an actor gets ill.
15. Front of stage nearest the audience.
17. On the actor's left as they face the audience.
19. On the actor's right as they face the audience.
20. Verb or Noun, refers to actors in a play.
22. Signals the time for an actor to speak.
24. Opens at the beginning of an act and closes at the end.
28. Written words and directions of the playwright.
31. Main division of action in a drama.



# Theatre Terms Advanced Crossword Puzzle

## Across

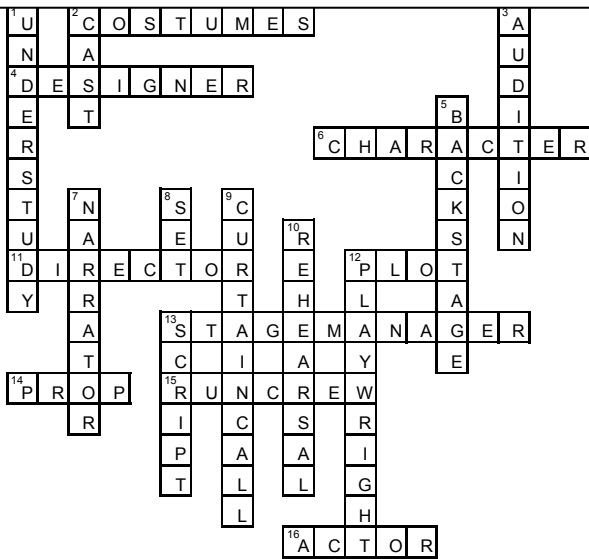
1. Verb or Noun, refers to actors in a play.
3. Actors take a bow during the \_\_\_\_ \_.
8. On the actor's right as they face the audience.
11. The story of a play.
12. The Antoinette Perry Awards.
17. Writer who reviews plays.
19. Hidden passage behind the scenery.
21. The protagonist achieves his/her goal in a \_\_\_\_.
22. Written words and directions of the playwright.
24. Speech pattern or cultural accent on stage.
25. If an actor want's a job he/she must \_\_\_\_.
27. The events of a play before the climax.
29. Signals the time for an actor to speak.
31. An area "behind the scenes" of the stage.
34. Creators of plans for scenery, costumes, lights, etc...
35. Part of the stage farthest from the audience.
36. This closes at the end of an act or scene.
37. Instead of "good luck" people who work in the theatre say " \_\_\_\_ \_ \_ \_".
38. Small room set up for technical elements of a play.
39. Clothes worn by characters.
40. A play converted from another language.
41. A character's reason for doing something.
44. Physical action in a scene to heighten reality.
46. Person who makes all sound effects happen.
51. These are represented by the actors in a play.
53. Person in charge, interprets the play, "the boss".
55. Reinvention of an existing story.
57. On the actor's left as they face the audience.
58. A character's remark heard only by the audience.
60. Single unit of a play with no shift of place or time.
62. Announcement of auditions.
63. The author of a play.

- 64. A performer in a play.
- 65. A character's inner feelings told to the audience.
- 66. Areas onstage not seen by the audience.
- 67. Front of stage nearest the audience.

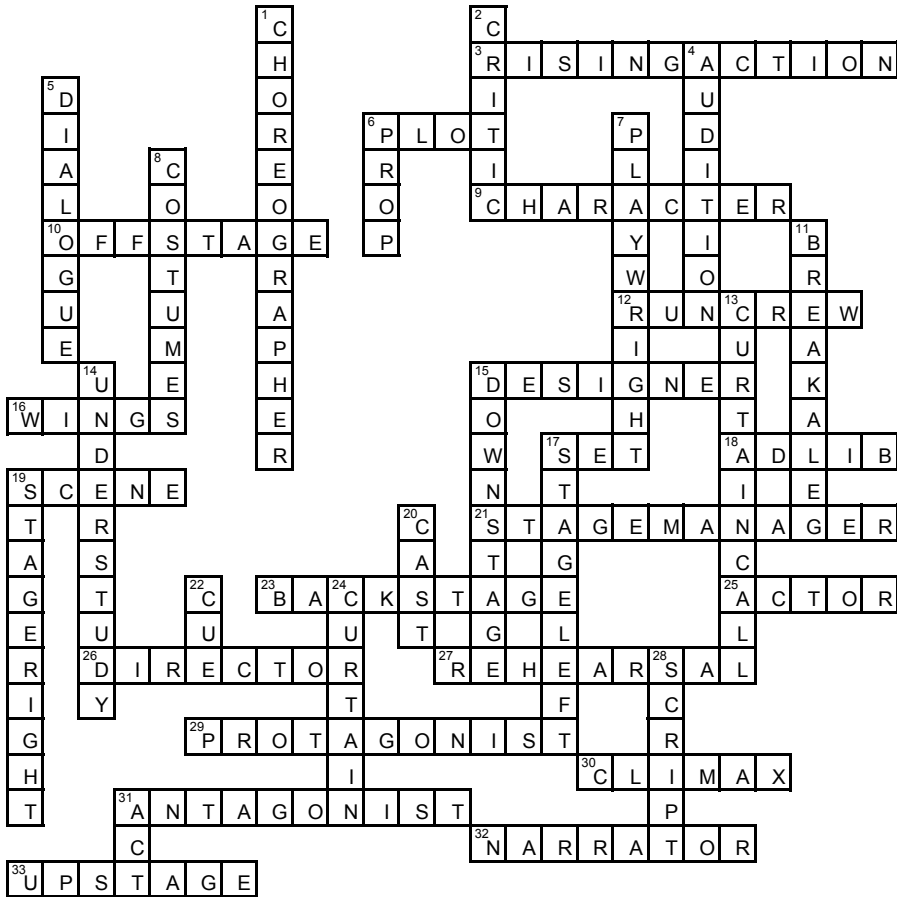
**Down**

- 2. Reproduces the scenic designer's drawings full-size.
- 4. People who move scenery or props during a show.
- 5. Area offstage right and left.
- 6. Action as the curtain rises.
- 7. "Mood" of a play.
- 9. The protagonist does not achieve his goal in a \_\_\_\_\_.
- 10. "Practice" for the actors.
- 13. A funny moment in a drama.
- 14. The main idea of the play.
- 15. A specialist in historical styles of movement.
- 16. The stage extends into the audience.
- 18. Creator of dance and movement.
- 20. A stage in the center of the audience.
- 22. Script information about movement.
- 23. The main character in a play.
- 26. A cast member in charge of dance quality.
- 28. Conversation between actors.
- 30. A frame around a particular kind of stage.
- 32. Sees that costumes are made for the designer.
- 33. Obstacle to the protagonist of a play.
- 41. One actor's long speech.
- 42. Main division of action in a drama.
- 43. Exaggerated plot and emotion.
- 44. Person who coordinates the show for the director.
- 45. Quality of sound in a theatre.
- 47. Takes over when an actor gets ill.
- 48. Helps actors with pronunciation of words.
- 49. Turning point of high tension in a play.
- 50. One who tells the story.
- 52. What a character wants/needs/desires.
- 54. Time to be at rehearsal or performance.
- 56. The second or third time to audition.
- 57. Scenery of the play.
- 59. Thoughts behind the actor's words.
- 61. To make up a line not originally in a play.
- 63. Any moveable item used by an actor.

## Theatre Terms Beginner Crossword Puzzle



## Theatre Terms Intermediate Crossword Puzzle



# Theatre Terms Advanced Crossword Puzzle

