

TRICKS TO MEMORIZATION

By Brian Hampton

Memorizing lines is difficult, but obviously important. Your true acting choices emerge only once you know your lines, and you're not busy thinking, "What's my next line?" When you're able to think through the mind of your character, great acting ignites!

Here are some tricks to help you memorize your lines:

Line-by-line hide-and-peek

Highlight your part, then take a separate piece of paper and move it down the page, stopping whenever you come to one of your lines. Try to say your line while it's covered, then reveal it to see if you got it right.



Card tricks: indexing, with a twist

Number a stack of index cards. Go through the script and on one side of an index card, write your next line. On the other side, write the line before yours and the character who says it. When you're done, go through your deck of cards like flash cards to learn your lines based on the cues. When you think you know your lines—brace yourself—SHUFFLE THE CARDS. Yes, try to do them out of order to make sure you can recall lines from memory based on cues.



Fill in the blanks

Using your phone, record only the lines of the other actors you share scenes with, giving a silent pause in the places where your own line will be spoken. Be sure to give about one-and-a-half times the amount of time for yourself. That way, if you make a mistake, you have enough time to fix it before the next line is played. Play and practice over again until you can go through the entire recording smoothly.



Listen, learn, repeat

Treat monologues like your favorite new song. Record yourself acting out your entire monologue exactly as you'll want to do it. Then listen to it over and over again while you go about your day. You'll learn your monologue just like you learn lyrics to your favorite song that you listen to repeatedly.



The buddy system

When you're about 90 percent memorized, ask someone to "read lines" with you, but make it fun for them too—tell them they can act out the other roles. Think you're ready for the advanced version of this? Ask your reading partner to say the lines fast, and you do the same. This will really solidify them and make you even quicker.

