

# Stage Movement

Moving about the stage as a part of a group (stage movement) requires several key understandings.

1. All stage movement, by definition, must have a purpose.
2. Stage movement is not stage business. Stage business is a series of small detailed actions that an actor does in one spot to develop the character physically.
3. All stage movement must be relative to the audience. Many directors will ask actors to “cheat out”. This means facing the audience more directly than would be normal if the action did not occur in a play. The actor does not face the other character or the audience directly, but rather a point about half way in between.
4. All positions on a stage have a name. This allows a director to quickly call out “center left, please” and have the actor move to half way back the stage on the left hand side.
5. Blocking is the term for the collective stage movements of the cast as a whole. It is recorded by the stage manager and remains consistent once it is established.

## Activity One:

Develop your short action-based improvisation as a group. It should be 2-4 minutes in length. Once you have gone through the improvisation enough so that there is basic consistency, the student who is the director should check your group for the following errors:

- Any member of the cast whose back is towards the audience without a very good reason for excluding the audience from the action. Move objects (for example, tables, a pay phone) that you are miming or using before you accept an actor's back to the audience.
- Static (holding still) sequences without movement. The only still sequences in an action improvisation should be brief.
- Actors standing in a semi-circle or a line.
- Not using all section of the stage
- Lack of balance (for example, all actors on one part of the stage)

Many of these things will be necessary occasionally. Occasional movement errors are all right if they have a purpose. Your job as a group is to clean up all the unnecessary problems. Try to use stage directions while improving your scenes. This will give you practice in using them.

When you have completed the checklist, rehearse to polish your work, and then perform it for the class.

## Activity Two:

Develop a short dance sequence in a group of two to five. It must be set to music and be at least one minute in length, although longer is preferable. Use a variety of movements and cover the entire stage well. Some movements must be simultaneous and symmetrical (people doing the same thing at the same time). Try to use a variety of levels (sitting, laying, standing etc.) The dance evaluation form is available under **Evaluation**, and the evaluation is as follows:

Variety of levels	/5
Variety of movement	/5
Clarity of symmetrical, simultaneous movement	/5
Appeal	/10
Use of class time	/10

*Note that the actor's ability to move with the music, to flow and to use good technique are not being measured here. While dance is closely related to theatre, this is specifically a drama class. The skills being evaluated in this assignment are common to both performing arts.*