

MAKING NEW WORDS YOUR OWN

Lesson 19

CONTEXT: Reading, Writing, and Performing
Staging Plays

Staging a play can be so expensive that many groups cannot afford to do it. If you are on a limited budget and want a chance to hone your acting or directing skills, you may want to consider Reader's Theater productions. All they require is dedicated actors and some chairs. Another cost-cutting measure is making very simple sets—a chair and a table, for example, can represent any room. There are many other techniques to make staging drama affordable. After all, the acting itself is what's most important, and it doesn't cost a thing.

In the following exercises, you will have the opportunity to expand your vocabulary by reading about staging drama inexpensively. Below are ten vocabulary words that will be used in these exercises.

- | | | | | |
|------------|-----------|---------|---------|-----------|
| encore | inventory | ovation | replica | soliloquy |
| intonation | oratory | patio | rostrum | tripod |

EXERCISE 1

Mapping

Directions. In the item below, a vocabulary word is provided and used in a sentence. Take a guess at the word's meaning and write it in the box labeled **Your Guess**. Then look the word up in your dictionary and write the definition in the box labeled **Definition**. In the **Other Forms** box, write as many other forms of the word, such as adjective and noun forms, as you can think of or find in your dictionary.

Then, following the same procedure, draw your own map for each of the nine remaining vocabulary words. Use a separate sheet of paper.

1.

encore

→

Some of us can't help ourselves. We dream of opening night with its repeated curtain calls and final **encore**. We would love to be held over, to be brought back by special demand.

↓

Your Guess:

↓

Other Forms:

←

Definition:

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EXERCISE 2 *Context Clues* 

Directions. Scan the definitions in Column A. Then think about how the boldface words are used in the sentences in Column B. To complete the exercise, match each definition in Column A with the correct vocabulary word from Column B. Write the letter of your choice on the line provided; then write the vocabulary word on the line preceding the definition.

COLUMN A

- _____ 11. word: _____
n. skillful public speaking
- _____ 12. word: _____
adj. enthusiastic and prolonged applause; an enthusiastic reception or tribute
- _____ 13. word: _____
n. a copy; a reproduction; a duplicate
- _____ 14. word: _____
n. a further performance given on demand; a demand for further performance
- _____ 15. word: _____
n. the rising and falling pitch of the voice
- _____ 16. word: _____
n. a raised platform for public speaking
- _____ 17. word: _____
n. the stock of goods or merchandise on hand; an accounting of goods; any detailed list; *v.* to list merchandise or belongings
- _____ 18. word: _____
n. a speech a character makes to himself or herself onstage that reveals his or her thoughts to the audience
- _____ 19. word: _____
n. a three-legged stand for a camera; anything that stands on three legs
- _____ 20. word: _____
n. a paved terrace for outdoor eating and lounging; an inner court open to the sky

COLUMN B

- (A) Acting groups that can't afford a stage with curtains sometimes place posters on a **tripod** or easel to announce the opening and closing of acts.
- (B) Plays in Reader's Theater can be performed with the actors sitting in chairs on a **rostrum**. The players on the platform can even hold the scripts and read from them.
- (C) Actors enjoy the roles of Clarence Darrow (1857–1938) and William Jennings Bryan (1860–1925) in *Inherit the Wind*. Both were great public speakers, and it is interesting to watch the actors who play them show off their skills in **oratory**.
- (D) When choosing a play to perform, it's wise to make a list of the props that will be required. To save money, determine what items in the **inventory** can be made or borrowed.
- (E) Young actors can often find work during the summer months at dinner theaters. When the weather is mild, some restaurants open their **patios** to diners and provide them with a meal and a performance of Shaw on the terrace.
- (F) A student cast may not be able to build a **replica** of the Broadway set for *Cats*, but if they can sing and dance, they can stage an excellent show with sawhorses, stepladders, and the like.
- (G) The acting is more important than the set. A great set will not hide the fact that a bad actor is using the same **intonation** in every speech. But an actor who can use her voice to express a wide range of emotions can make up for a makeshift set.
- (H) A troupe of just three or four actors can provide an exciting evening of drama if they each perform **soliloquies** from a variety of plays.
- (I) *The Fantasticks* is a musical that does not require elaborate sets. Audiences love it, and often they demand an **encore**.
- (J) Taking a curtain call to a standing **ovation** is an actor's dream.

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EXERCISE 3 *Sentence Completion* 

Directions. For each of the following items, circle the letter of the choice that best completes the meaning of the sentence or sentences.

21. A class is considering producing a student-written play about a girl who dreams of being a classical pianist. The play ends after her first concert as she receives a standing _____ and cries of "_____!"
 (A) intonation . . . ovation
 (B) ovation . . . encore
 (C) intonation . . . patio
 (D) encore . . . replica
 (E) replica . . . oratory
22. Another student-written plot involves what happens in a jewelry store when the _____ indicates that several valuable gems have been replaced with _____.
 (A) inventory . . . replicas
 (B) soliloquy . . . tripods
 (C) oratory . . . rostrums
 (D) replica . . . oratory
 (E) encore . . . replicas
23. At the corner of the _____ sits a three-legged stand. The sign on this _____ says that a play will be performed in the courtyard tonight.
 (A) encore . . . tripod
 (B) tripod . . . patio
 (C) patio . . . rostrum
 (D) soliloquy . . . encore
 (E) patio . . . tripod
24. A drama student recalls forgetting her lines at the worst possible time—right in the middle of her _____ when she was alone onstage.
 (A) oratory
 (B) soliloquy
 (C) tripod
 (D) encore
 (E) ovation
25. Would anybody be interested in seeing a play about a teenager who wants to build a _____ of a dinosaur in his backyard?
 (A) tripod
 (B) rostrum
 (C) replica
 (D) patio
 (E) soliloquy
26. Actors who study _____ are especially conscious of their _____.
 (A) soliloquy . . . encore
 (B) encore . . . ovation
 (C) ovation . . . oratory
 (D) oratory . . . intonation
 (E) intonation . . . soliloquy
27. A plot for a comedy might center on a young boy who is on the _____ when he overhears his aunt in the kitchen discussing a bank robbery, and he assumes that she is planning to commit the crime.
 (A) patio
 (B) tripod
 (C) rostrum
 (D) replica
 (E) oratory
28. Another student play is about a young minister. In one scene in the empty church, the minister climbs onto the _____, stands behind the pulpit, and delivers her _____, revealing to the audience her concerns about her spiritual life.
 (A) patio . . . soliloquy
 (B) rostrum . . . soliloquy
 (C) rostrum . . . patio
 (D) oratory . . . intonation
 (E) tripod . . . encore
29. A young actor who received an award at a drama festival was so nervous as he stood on the _____ that he flubbed his speech. He said, "You're so happy to be here."
 (A) patio
 (B) tripod
 (C) soliloquy
 (D) oratory
 (E) rostrum
30. One young actor does her vocal exercises into a tape recorder and then listens to her pronunciation and _____.
 (A) oratory
 (B) intonation
 (C) soliloquy
 (D) encore
 (E) ovation

