















Learning lines for a performance can be one of the hardest things to do. There are a number of methods that you can use to help those lines to get into your head and stay there. Different strategies work for different people as we all learn in ways which are very personal to us. Younger students often remember better through visual or aural mnemonics, some people learn better through the visual prompt of seeing words written down, some performers learn in a logical, almost mathematical, way, others learn by getting up and 'doing'. It all depends on the individual. This short pack collates some great ideas of different methods for learning lines that will – hopefully – help them to be remembered and retained for that great performance!

It's a good idea to learn cue lines too at the same time as your own. This is the line that comes immediately before yours. You can choose to remember a whole line or elect to learn just the last three or four words before your line. The only danger with the latter being that some performers might paraphrase so badly that they completely leave out the ending of a sentence, so may not feed accurate final cue words. The more you know of a script the less likely you are to be thrown by words, lines, or even whole paragraphs, being omitted!

This pack has been compiled from personal experience as a youth theatre and AmDram director and from suggestions made by a Facebook group of teachers, directors, and drama practitioners. All suggestions, therefore, are based on great practical knowledge.

Drama practitioners, youth group leaders, and theatre directors need to have a variety of line learning strategies available to ensure that there's a method which suits every cast member. This pack hopefully provides something for everyone.

Also: please remember to use praise and support when supporting anyone who is trying to learn their lines as a little encouragement goes a long way!

-  Create pictures associated with the lines, incorporating the character's emotions.
-  Use teddy bears (other toys will do)! Sit each bear around the room in their own seat. Say the lines full stop to full stop, i.e. one sentence at a time, to each bear. Then say the lines one block at a time, i.e. one speech at a time, to each bear. This is great for vocal variety and a good way to prevent becoming bored by repetition.
-  Read lines just before you go to sleep – only do this if it won't stress you out too much!
-  Use pictograms. These are where pictures are used to represent words, much like hieroglyphics. Create your own pictograms to represent words, lines, and/or speeches. This is a good method for when you're nearly there with line learning.
-  Use a combination of a line learner app (some suggestions above) with reading through the script then back to the app for practice.
-  Sit with someone and get them to read the cue lines for you, to give you a different voice reading the lines.
-  Record the cue lines, leaving a gap where your line should be for you to say the line aloud.
-  Record the cue line and your line, leaving a gap for repetition of your line.
-  Walk backwards around the room reciting lines – this supposedly forces them to go into long-term memory.
-  One for drama practitioners and directors: create a mini assault course in the classroom or drama studio. Cast members have to get through the assault course saying their lines all the way round. If they get a line wrong, they go back to the beginning of the course!
-  Record everyone else's lines in the play, leaving gaps for yours. Listen to this and practice anywhere and everywhere. It's a time-consuming method but it helps actors to learn the whole play.
-  Recite each section whilst walking around the room and throwing a ball or piece of fruit up in the air and catching it. Doing a number of actions simultaneously helps lines to stick in the memory. This is a particularly good method for learning monologues.
-  Write the first letter of each speech (line) at the side of the script. Cover the actual line and just say it from the first letter cues.
-  Work in pairs. One person provides the cue lines, the other says his or her lines in response. When a mistake is made, they go back to the beginning of that scene and start again. Swap roles. Swap scenes. Swap partners. Repeat this process for 1 to 2 hours over 2 or 3 sessions in the drama studio, rehearsal space, or classroom.

Other Resources Available from Arts On The Move

Arts On The Move produces and publishes a wide range of resources for schools, drama clubs, and youth theatres. These include lesson plans, schemes of work, drama packs, policies, starter guides and play scripts for young actors.

These teaching materials and plays have all been created by experienced teachers and writers who know exactly what practitioners need. Consequently the quality is high and the prices are low, some are even free to download!

Find our complete list of resources here:

https://www.artsonthemove.co.uk/e_shop/plays-teaching-materials.php

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