**Performing a Monologue for Drama Class**

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<http://plays.about.com/od/monologues/a/performmono.htm>

The monologue performance is one of the most important assignments in a drama class. This assignment involves much more than simply reciting lines in front of the class. Most drama teachers expect a student to research the play, to develop a unique character, and to perform with confidence and control.

**Choosing the Right Monologue**

If you are performing a monologue for a drama class, make certain that you follow the specifications of the assignment (see the rubric at the back of the package Mr. Kelly provided in class). Get advice from your instructor about preferred monologue sources.

What kind of monologue does your instructor want you to perform? Comedic? Dramatic? Classic? Contemporary? You can find a wide range of free-to-use monologues in our [Plays / Drama collection.](http://plays.about.com/od/monologues/Monologues.htm)

Monologues can be found in many forms:

*Complete Play:* Whether it’s a full length or a one-act, most plays have at least one monologue worth performing.

*Movie Monologues*: Some drama teachers won’t allow students to select a speech from a film (you are permitted in Mr. Kelly’s class). However, if the instructor doesn’t mind cinematic monologues, you can find some [good movie monologues here](http://plays.about.com/b/2007/12/18/mesmerizing-monologues.htm).

*Monologue Books*: There are hundreds of books filled with nothing but monologues. Some are marketed to professional actors, while others cater to high school and middle grade performers. Some books are collections of original, “stand alone” monologues.

A "stand alone" monologue is not part of a complete play. It tells its own brief story. Some [drama teachers](http://plays.about.com/od/actvities/a/advicefordrama.htm) allow them, but some instructors prefer students to select monologues from published plays so that the performer can learn more about the character’s background.

**Research the Part:**

Once you have selected a monologue, read the lines out loud. Make certain you are comfortable with the language, pronunciation, and the definition of each word. Become familiar with the complete play. This can be accomplished by simply reading or watching the play. You can further enhance your understanding by reading a critical analysis and/or a [review of the play](http://plays.about.com/od/reviews/Reviews.htm).

Also, learn about the life of the playwright and the historical era in which the play was written. Learning the context of the play will give you insight into your character.

**Create a Unique Character**

As tempting as it might be to mimic the performance of your favorite actor, you should strive for originality. Your drama teacher does not want to see a copy of Brian Dennehy’s portrayal of [Willy Lowman](http://plays.about.com/od/reviews/fr/deathsalesman.htm) in *Death of a Salesman*. Find your own voice, your own style (.

Great characters can be perceived and performed in countless ways. To create a unique interpretation of your subject, study the [arc of your character](http://plays.about.com/od/dramaenglishstudents/a/characterarc.htm).

Before or after your monologue performance, your drama teacher might ask you questions about your character. Consider developing answers to some of these:

* What is your character’s background?
* How does your character change throughout the play?
* What is your character’s biggest disappointment?
* Happiest moment?
* Deepest fear?

Sometimes drama instructors will expect students to answer these types of questions while in character. So, learn to think, speak, and react the way your character would in a variety of situations.

**Perform with Confidence:**

Of course, studying the literature and developing the character is only half the battle. You must be prepared to perform in front of your instructor and the rest of the class. Aside from the old [adage](http://quotations.about.com/od/Quotations-Glossary/g/Adage.htm) of “practice, practice, practice,” here are some useful tips to consider:

[Memorize your lines](http://plays.about.com/od/basics/a/memorizelines.htm) to the point that they become second nature to you. Try a wide range of emotions to discover which style suits you best.

Practice projection. When you “project” you speak loud enough for your audience to clearly hear you. As you rehearse your monologue, be as loud as you want. Eventually you will find the ideal vocal level.

Do [enunciation exercises](http://plays.about.com/od/actvities/a/enunciation.htm). This is like a work-out for your tongue. The more you practice enunciation, the better the audience will understand each word.

Once you have rehearsed and performed your monologue, tell us about your experience in the [Plays / Drama forum](http://forums.about.com/n/pfx/forum.aspx?nav=messages&webtag=ab-plays&lgnF=y).