

Preparing for your audition and choosing your speeches

Hello, and welcome to The Lir Academy! Before you start preparing for your audition, please make sure you have read all our notes about choosing your speeches, tips on preparation for the audition, how to fill out your application, etc. These resources are here to help you bring us your best work.

It is important that you have read the details on our audition process and reflect on what we are looking for at each stage of the auditions. There is no perfect speech, or even the perfect way of performing a speech. Focus on what rings true to you, on what you have interpreted from reading the play text and show us what you have prepared.

Remember that our audition panel understands what you are going through: many on the panel are actors themselves, many have graduated from The Lir Academy. We want you to do well: so, try to enjoy the process and learn something new.

There is not one perfect way of preparing a speech for an audition; but this guide will give you some direction as to what we expect, and what you need to have with you when you come in for your audition.

Choosing Your Speeches

You need to prepare **THREE** speeches.

You must read and understand the play from which you have chosen your speeches.

Each speech must be **NO LONGER THAN THREE MINUTES**

- **ONE CLASSICAL** speech (Shakespeare or another Elizabethan/Jacobean playwright).
- **ONE** speech from a **CONTEMPORARY** play, i.e., a play written in the last 50 years (at the earliest, 1976)
- One **RESERVE** speech: this can be either **CONTEMPORARY** or **CLASSICAL** and should be fully memorised and prepared as a reserve to the same standard as your two main audition pieces.

On your first-round audition, we will ask you to perform **the CLASSICAL speech and the CONTEMPORARY speech**. The panel may ask you to go over a specific section again or provide you with notes for reflection, or they may go straight to the interview section. This is not an indication of how you did in your speeches, and the panel are merely looking to take full advantage of the time available to see all the specified skills in each applicant. Only if the panel feel they need to see more from you will you be asked to perform your **RESERVE** speech.

Tips on what to do	Tips on what not to do
<p>Choose at least one speech from a character close to your age.</p> <p>Choose contrasting pieces i.e. dramatic/comic, serious/light, active/reflective.</p> <p>Imagine the person you are speaking to.</p> <p>Read the rest of the play in which the speech appears You may be asked about this.</p> <p>Choose a speech about which you are excited as a performer and can imagine playing one day.</p> <p>Choose plays that have been published and performed professionally.</p>	<p>Do not choose speeches from film or TV scripts.</p> <p>Do not bring any props or costumes. There will be chairs and a table in the room.</p> <p>Do not mimic the performance of someone else you have seen perform the speech</p> <p>Do not assemble a speech by picking up lines and piecing together a speech from separate parts of a play text i.e. where there are lines of dialogue from another character which are an important part of the scene,</p> <p>Do not choose speeches by characters who are experiencing an altered state of consciousness, speeches by non-human characters, or character that are wildly out of control i.e. drunk, or otherwise under the influence; extreme emotional or psychological states; fairies, Gods, or animals</p> <p>Do not worry about how original your choice of speech is.</p> <p>Do not use an accent in which you are not confident We invite you and welcome your delivery of the speech in your own accent.</p>

Some specific unsuitable speech choices include:

- Lancelot Gobbo, *The Merchant of Venice*
- Puck, *A Midsummer Night's Dream*

- Any speech from edited compilations of audition speeches

Practical Tips for Speech Research

Applicants are not limited to the resources plays or writers suggested below. These are merely a starting point for research, for those looking for this.

Again, we highlight the importance of reading the entire play from which you have chosen a speech. You may be asked about it during the audition/interview.

Please make sure you read the application guidelines and procedures carefully when choosing your speeches.

Classical Speeches

For your classical speech, you must choose a piece from Elizabethan or Jacobean drama (16th and 17th century).

Earlier classical works, such as Greek tragedies, or Renaissance plays from other traditions that have been translated to English (ie. Lope de Vega, Racine, Molière etc) are not suitable.

Beyond the works of William Shakespeare, you can also look at speeches from the following, for example:

Christopher Marlowe (*The Massacre at Paris*, *The Tragical History of Doctor Faustus*)

Ben Jonson (*The Alchemist*)

John Webster (*The White Devil*, *The Duchess of Malfi*)

If this is your first time engaging with classical play texts, you may find the following resources useful.

Shakespeare's Globe Teaching and Learning Resources

[Open Source Shakespeare: Comprehensive Database of the complete works of Shakespeare, with useful filter and search tools](#)

[The Royal Shakespeare Company's Teaching Resources](#)

Contemporary Speeches

Your chosen speech must come from a play that has been written and produced professionally from 1975 onwards.

Plays from the modern canon, written early in the 20th century from authors such as Ibsen and Chekhov are not considered suitable.

Consulting what plays have been placed on the Irish Leaving Certificate is a good starting point on your journey, if you are looking to discover new play texts from Irish writers. The same goes for school curricula in other places outside of Ireland and their reading suggestions for theatre pieces.

Have a look at the plays that have been performed recently in your local or national cultural organisations – this is another good starting point.

Your local library and bookstores are good places to do research as well, and helpful in your search for full theatre texts.