

Casting

Sometimes, casting choices will be very clear. More often than not there will be multiple ways in which you can put together a cast. Casting is very much like putting together a puzzle, only with this puzzle, multiple pieces could theoretically fit into multiple spots. It will alter the picture just slightly. Ultimately, casting decisions must be your own.

Regardless of your experience, some things to keep in mind are:

- Post the cast list in a timely manner. Let students know ahead of time when and where it will be posted.
- Chances are, someone is going to be upset. Do not beat yourself up about this. If a student asks why they did not get cast in a particular role, offer constructive feedback, but stand strong and stick to your choices.
- Commitment and dedication will often be in opposition with talent. Find a balance that you can be comfortable with. It does you no good to cast a triple threat bound for Broadway, if he or she never shows up for rehearsal.
- Trust your instincts. You have been living in the world of the play longer than the students. You know more than you think.
- It often helps to write everything out in chart-form. See supplemental materials for examples.

NASCENT

At a beginning level, it is often appropriate to forgo auditions all together and simply cast based on what you have seen the students do in class and/or after school Drama Club. Assigning characters up front and letting the students know right away that the roles are already chosen eliminates the stress and competitive element.

➤ NASCENT ACTIVITY

For this activity, you'll need the following resources, found as addendums to this document.

- **Addendum 3:** Template Character Breakdown

When assigning the roles think about:

- Who best fits the character description?
- Who has shown through past experience that they are fully committed to Drama Club?
- Who are your hardest workers?
- Who do you think can best bring the characters to life?

When informing students of the roles they will play:

- Don't make too big of a scene about who is playing whom, especially in regards to "leads."
- Pass out the scripts, and simply say "_____ will be playing _____, _____ will be playing _____, etc."
- If students ask why they were chosen for specific roles over others, point out what makes the role they received special and emphasize that the particular student has the right skillset for that specific character.

INTERMEDIATE

At this stage, it is likely that you will have a few standouts, and quite a few students who need more work.

➤ INTERMEDIATE ACTIVITY

For this activity, you'll need the following resources, found as addendums to this document.

- **Addendum 1:** Audition form
- **Addendum 2:** Example cast list
- **Addendum 3:** Template Character Breakdown

When making your list:

- Start by casting your strongest students in the most challenging roles and then work your way down.

- Think about who works well with the students you know will be cast
- Ask yourself, “Can I realistically get this person to the place he/she needs to be for this role?” Be honest with yourself about the answers.
- If you are unable to cast everyone who auditions, try to find other ways for them to get involved. Your initial audition form should have a space to include other areas of interest, so that you are able to take those strongly into consideration.

ADVANCED

When multiple students are extremely strong, it can sometimes be challenging to narrow them down when it comes to casting.

➤ ADVANCED ACTIVITY

For this activity, you’ll need the following resources, found as addendums to this document.

- **Addendum 1:** Audition form
- **Addendum 2:** Example cast list
- **Addendum 3:** Template Character Breakdown

Some things to keep in mind:

- Start by casting your strongest students in the most challenging roles and then work your way down.
- Think about who works well with the students you know will be cast
- Ask yourself, “Can I realistically get this person to the place he/she needs to be for this role?” Be honest with yourself about the answers.
- If you are unable to cast everyone who auditions, try to find other ways for them to get involved. Your initial audition form should have a space to include other areas of interest, so that you are able to take those strongly into consideration.
- Seniority should only come into play if you have multiple students who could play the same role at the same level. At that point, cast the more senior of the options.
- Casting an understudy from the group is sometimes a great opportunity for a newer participant to learn what it takes to have a larger role, but it is important to set up expectations for understudies from the start so that they are not confused or disappointed by their level of participation.

MUSICAL THEATRE

When casting a musical, you have to find the balance between all of the required elements (singing, acting, dancing) and choose your personal hierarchy of importance. Generally, the best singer is not the best actor, and the best actor is not the best dancer. You have to choose for yourself what is going to take priority.

➤ MUSICAL THEATRE ACTIVITY

For this activity, you’ll need the following resources, found as addendums to this document.

- **Addendum 1:** Audition form
- **Addendum 2:** Example cast list
- **Addendum 3:** Template Character Breakdown

Ways to make the process easier:

- Know the “must-haves” for each character. Character A must be able to tap dance. Character B must have great comedic timing. Character C must be able to belt an F. etc.
- Know your strengths. If your strength as a director is actor coaching, then casting the student with the beautiful voice who isn’t quite there acting-wise might be your best bet. If you are a strong choreographer and a patient teacher, then the actor/singer who cannot move to save their life may have a shot under your guidance.
- Be realistic. Do not set yourself or the students up for failure by casting them in roles for which they do not have the “must-haves.”

ADDENDUM 1: Template Audition Form

(SHOW TITLE)

By _____

(Performance Dates)

Name: _____

Grade: _____ Age: _____ Height: _____ Weight: _____

Hair Color: _____ Eye Color: _____

Email: _____

Phone: _____ Text: Yes / No

Role Preferred: _____ Will you accept another? _____

If cast are you willing to cut/dye your hair? Yes / No

Are you currently employed? If so where? _____

What is your availability? Please list any major time commitments between now and the show. (Athletic Events Weddings, etc...) ****Performance Dates are _____ Rehearsals will typically run _____.**
(The week prior to opening night rehearsal will run 5 days a week including one Saturday with extended hours.)

(Any other important dates/times) _____

Please List any theatre experience below:

If not cast in the show are you willing to be on crew? Yes / No

What crew area interest you? _____

Do you have an interest in stage management? _____

ADDENDUM 2: Example Cast List

WILD PARTY Cast List

Queenie	Leiney Rigg
Kate	Kyle Scholl
Burrs	Garett Taketa
Black	Lavour Addison
Madelaine True	Stacey Pulmano
Eddie	Seth Lilley
Mae	Amy Johnson
Oscar	Isaac Ligsay
Phil	Kalau Crisostomo
Nadine	Danielle Allaire
Dolores	Pualani Armstrong
Max	Geovante Joseph
Sam	Leon Sheen
Jackie	Jonathan Sypert

Ensemble

Ashlynn Duncan
Eric Hiro
Luigi Du
Sharlene Wang

ADDENDUM 3: Template Character Breakdown

CHARACTER BREAKDOWN

MALES:

Leo Frank: (Bari-Tenor, Low G-High G) 29-31, lead role. Northern Jewish man who runs the National Pencil Factory and is falsely accused of the murder of Mary Phagan.

Jim Conley: (Tenor, Low D-High Bb) 20s. African-American janitor who works for Leo at the National Pencil Factory.

Britt Craig: (Tenor, Low D-High A) 20s/30s. Down-on-his luck newspaper man, whose career is revived by the Leo Frank trial.

Tom Watson: (Baritone/Bass) 30s/40s. Conservative politician and publisher, who helps to spur on the witch-hunt for Leo Frank.

Frankie Epps: (Tenor, Low Bb-High Ab) Teens. Mary's friend and love interest.

Governor Jack Slaton: (Bari-Tenor, Low C-High G) 30s/40s. Governor of Georgia who pardons Leo Frank.

Hugh Dorsey: (Bari-Bass) 30s/40s. Prosecutor in the Leo Frank case, desperate for a conviction.

Newt Lee: (Bass, Low Bb-C) 40s/50s. African-American night watchman at the National Pencil Factory. Finds Mary Phagan's body.

Judge Roan: (Bass, Low Bb-D) 50s/60s. Judge in the Leo Frank Case.

Luther Rosser: (Any voice part) 30s/40s/50s. Leo Frank's lawyer, comes off as a blithering idiot.

Young Soldier: (Tenor, Low D-High F [High A in falsetto]) Teens/20s. Young confederate soldier.

Old Soldier: (Bari-Tenor, Low C-High G) 50s/60s. Old man who was formerly the young confederate soldier.

Riley: (Baritone) 20s. African-American servant.

J.N. Starnes: (Any voice part). 20s/30s/40s. Police officer assigned to the case.

Officer Ivey: (Any voice part). 20s/30s/40s. Police officer assigned to the case.

Prison Guard: (Any voice part). 20s/30s/40s. Guards Leo Frank's cell in Fulton.

Mr. Peavy: (Any voice part). 20s/30s/40s. Guards Leo Frank's cell in Milledgeville.

FEMALES:

Lucille Frank: (Mezzo, Low A-D) 20s. Leo's wife.

Mary Phagan: (Mezzo, D-D) 14. Young girl who is killed at the National Pencil Factory.

Mrs. Phagan: (Alto, Low F#-Bb*) 30s/40s. Mary's mother.

Iola Stover: (Soprano, D-F) Teens. Friend of Mary and Frankie, who testifies against Frank.

Monteen: (Mezzo, Eb-Eb) Teens. Friend of Mary and Frankie, who testifies against Frank.

Essie: (Mezzo, Eb-Eb) Teens. Friend of Mary and Frankie, who testifies against Frank.

Lizzie Phagan: (Soprano) 30s/40s. Mary's Aunt

Angela: (Mezzo) 20s. African-American servant.

Sally Slaton: (Any voice part) 20s/30s. Wife of Governor Slaton.