

Creating a Rehearsal Schedule

After the text of the play, the rehearsal calendar will become the most important document in the room. Please remember that the calendar is a living document and will most likely change as you draw nearer to opening night. Stay open, stay flexible—it's ok if you go off schedule—but it is important to always keep a schedule!

No matter your skill level—there are standard questions you want to ask as you go about creating your schedule.

- What are the school/district wide conflicts?
- When does/can the show open?
- What spaces are available in your school?
- How much time do we need to prepare for success?

NASCENT

When you begin creating a rehearsal calendar many directors find it best to work backwards. The first question you need to ask yourself is, when can the show open?

► NASCENT ACTIVITY

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

- **Addendum 1:** Monthly calendar

Before you start think about when the show can open, consider the following:

- Meet with your building principal or administrators who oversee building permits and scheduling of spaces outside of classroom use. (i.e. the gym, cafeteria, and auditorium)
- You will not be able to rehearse on the stage every day where you plan to perform, so having a second available room will be essential when stage time is not available.
- Classrooms work well as alternative rehearsal spaces if you are able to move tables and chairs. You will want to have as much open space as possible to have a successful rehearsal.
- Have a clear understanding of what commitments and conflicts already exist in your school calendar. Certain events have already been scheduled in your school or they involve your students, knowing when these events are will help you select the best possible date for your school's play. It will maximize student involvement and audience attendance.
- Key events to identify when looking at the school calendar could include, but not limited to, Holiday and/or Spring Break, parent teacher conferences, athletic events, school dances, and community events being hosted at your school.

Let's work backwards

- Identify opening night and count backwards how many weeks you need to prepare. That will inform when you need to begin rehearsal.
- Once you have identified opening night you may now begin to construct your rehearsal calendar.
- Depending on how many days a week you are able to rehearse will determine the number of weeks you need to prepare for opening night.

How often are we able to rehearse?

- If you are able to meet with your students 3-5 times a week you will want to prepare for at least a 10-15 week rehearsal period.
- If you are meeting with students any less than 3 days per week you will want to plan for 15 or more weeks of rehearsal.

Who needs to be here and when?

- A good and organized director will not waste any actor's time in the rehearsal room. If a student is not in the scene you are working on there is no need to call that actor to rehearsal.
- As a director you will want to work your large scenes first, these would be scenes that include the entire company. From there you will work down to smaller scenes involving one or two characters.

DRAMA CLUB Chapter 7: Creating a Rehearsal Schedule

What are we going to cover and when?

- It is not uncommon to rehearse out of order that the play is written.
- At the beginning only keep essential people in the rehearsal space.
 - » For example: If your school is producing *Romeo and Juliet*, rehearse the scenes when the entire company is on stage; release them to go home and then only keep Romeo and Juliet to finish out rehearsal.
 - » There is no need to have all your students watch you instruct Juliet where to stand on the balcony, they will have ample opportunity to watch when you begin running the show in its entirety. An example schedule can be found in the index.

INTERMEDIATE

► INTERMEDIATE ACTIVITY

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

- **Addendum 1:** Monthly calendar

A Month to Month Schedule

- You will want to work off two schedules, the first is the month to month schedule that gives an overview the trajectory of the production.
- The month to month schedule also gives parents and caretakers a timeline of when their child will be at the school and for how long.
- If you are making drastic changes to the schedule it is best to give parents and caregivers at least two weeks' notice.

A Daily Schedule

- Along with the monthly schedule you will want to keep a daily schedule for what you wish to accomplish in each individual; rehearsal.
- This document will change almost every single day depending on how fast or slow you move through what you have scheduled.
- For that reason it might not be something you share with students but rather your other adult production staff members.

ADVANCED

The rehearsal calendar is nothing more than a breakdown of how you will navigate your time as you prepare for opening night.

► ADVANCED ACTIVITY

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

- **Addendum 1:** Monthly calendar
- **Addendum 2:** French Scenes
- **Addendum 3:** Sample rehearsal schedule

As you breakdown that time consider the following;

- A model that many directors follow is that for every minute of dialogue or action in the text you should plan for one hour of rehearsal.
 - » Example: for the five minute balcony scene in *Romeo and Juliet* you will want to schedule 5 hours of rehearsal.
 - » These five hours do not and should not be consecutive.
 - » Spread them out and allow your actors time to digest and take the notes you are giving them.
 - » Allow the actors time to explore and discover their actions in this one minute to one hour ratio.
- While you are doing your scene analysis and research, identify which scenes you believe will take more time to accomplish the goals you are setting for yourself and the company
 - » Some scenes will be able to move quicker than others.
 - » Start with the most difficult or challenging scenes first and work your way down to the simpler and

DRAMA CLUB Chapter 7: Creating a Rehearsal Schedule

straight-forward scenes.

- A well-organized director will schedule actors only when their scenes/sections are being worked on stage.
 - » This might mean that you are rehearsing out of sequence that the play is written—that is OK!

Ensemble based plays

- If the text of your play does not lend itself to a French Scene style of rehearsal you may end up calling your full company to every rehearsal.
- This model will best fit small ensemble based plays where every actor's movement is contingent upon one another's.
 - » For example: *Twelve Angry Men* by Reginald Rose. In this jury room drama each actor's blocking directly dictates the others actors as all characters stay in the same location for the duration of the play.

MUSICAL THEATRE

► MUSICALS ACTIVITY

is activity, you'll need the following resources, found as addendums to this document:

- **Addendum 1:** Monthly calendar
- **Addendum 2:** French Scenes
- **Addendum 3:** Sample rehearsal schedule

Singing, Acting, Dancing—and all at the same time!

- Creating a rehearsal schedule for a musical is similar to that of staging an advanced play.
- You want to work your largest and most challenging scenes first.
 - » This time you're adding singing and dancing to the mix and need to account for that time in your calendar.

Always begin with music rehearsals.

- You will want to coordinate with your music director when they would like to rehearse and who they would like to call.
 - » See the section in advanced on how to schedule individual actors.
- You will want 3-5 days to solely work on the music.
- This will be the building blocks for the rest of your rehearsal process.

Once you feel your actors have a strong enough understanding of their music you may begin to stage and choreograph the scenes.

- If you have a production team of more than three people you may in theory be working three rehearsal rooms at the same time.
 - » Room A could be the director clocking scene one.
 - » Room B could be the choreographer teaching a separate dance number.
 - » Room C could be the music director working on individual solos.

If you have the resources for the above model you will want to identify three locations to rehearsal in and build those locations into your calendar. You may find it helpful to schedule a choreography rehearsal for a scene before that scene is to be blocked on stage. This will allow for a smooth transition from dancing to blocking.

- Please see the above multiple rehearsal space schedule for reference.
 - » This time you're adding singing and dancing to the mix and need to account for that time in your calendar.

ADDENDUM 1: Monthly Calendar

NAME OF SHOW
MONTH

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY

ADDENDUM 2: French Scenes

Which scenes when?

- If the text permits, you will want to divide your rehearsals into “French scenes”
 - » A **French scene** is a scene in which the beginning and end are marked by a change in the presence of characters onstage, rather than by the lights going up or down or the set being changed. This model will help keep focus on only those actors who are essential to rehearse the scene. Avoid having actors standing in the rehearsal room with nothing to do.
- For example: In Arthur Miller’s play *Death of a Salesman* you are able to break up the first part of act one into French scenes.
 - » On your rehearsal schedule you would notate that you will be blocking pages 6-22, however you will be blocking the scene out of its linear sequence.
 - » Rather than calling the actors playing Willy, Linda, Happy, and Biff all at the same time from 3:00-6:00 pm you would stagger their call time and work larger scenes first.

Breakdown of French Scenes

I, 1 pgs. 6-11 Willy, Linda

Begins with: Opening, Ends with: “There’s more people! “

I, 2 pgs. 11-13 Willy, Linda, Happy, Biff

Begins with: “ruining this country”, Ends with: “Boy, there was a pig!”

I, 3 pgs. 13-18 Happy, Biff

Begins with: “You taught me everything...”, Ends with: “any babe you want.”

I, 4 pgs. 18-22 Willy, Happy, Biff

Begins with: “No, with a ranch I could...”, Ends with: “Wait’ll I tell this in Boston!”

ADDENDUM 3: Sample Rehearsal Schedule

Based on the above scene (Addendum 2)

3:00-4:00	BLOCK PGS 6-11	WILLY/LINDA
4:00-4:30	BLOCK PGS 11-13	ADD HAPPY/BIFF
4:30-4:40	BREAK	RELEASE LINDA
4:40-5:30	BLOCK PGS 18-22	WILLY/HAPPY/BIFF
5:30-6:00	BLOCK PGS 13-18	HAPPY/BIFF

With this break down the only actor needed for the entire 3 hours is Willy.
The other actors may come and go as needed.