

ACTOR'S GLOSSARY

actor: A person who performs as a character in a play or musical.

antagonist: A person who actively opposes the protagonist.

author: A writer of a play; also known as a playwright. A musical's authors include a book writer, a composer, and a lyricist.

blocking: The actors' movements around the stage in a play or musical, not including the choreography. The director usually "blocks" the show (or assigns blocking) during rehearsals.

book writer: One of the authors of a musical. The book writer writes the lines of dialogue and the stage directions. A book writer can be called a librettist if she writes the lyrics as well.

cast: The performers in a show.

cheating out: Turning slightly toward the house when performing so the audience can better see one's face and hear one's lines.

choreographer: A person who creates and teaches the dance numbers in a musical.

choreography: The dances in a musical that are often used to help tell the story.

composer: A person who writes music for a musical.

creative team: The director, choreographer, music director, and designers working on a production. The original creative team for a musical also includes the author(s) and orchestrator.

cross: An actor's movement to a new position onstage.

dialogue: A conversation between two or more characters.

director: A person who provides the artistic vision, coordinates the creative elements, and stages the play.

downstage: The portion of the stage closest to the audience; the opposite of upstage.

house: The area of the theater where the audience sits to watch the show.

house left: The left side of the theater from the audience's perspective.

house right: The right side of the theater from the audience's perspective.

librettist: The person who writes both dialogue and lyrics for a musical. Can also be referred to separately as the book writer and lyricist.

libretto: A term referring to the script (dialogue and stage directions) and lyrics together.

lines: The dialogue spoken by the actors.

lyricist: A person who writes the lyrics, or sung words, of a musical. The lyricist works with a composer to create songs.

lyrics: The words of a song.

monologue: A large block of lines spoken by a single character.

music director: A person in charge of teaching the songs to the cast and orchestra and maintaining the quality of the performed score. The music director may also conduct a live orchestra during performances.

musical: A play that incorporates music and choreography to tell a story.

objective: What a character wants to do or achieve.

off-book: An actor's ability to perform memorized lines without holding the script.

offstage: Any area out of view of the audience; also called backstage.

onstage: Anything on the stage within view of the audience.

opening night: The first official performance of a production, after which the show is frozen, meaning no further changes are made.

play: A type of dramatic writing meant to be performed live on a stage. A musical is one kind of play.

protagonist: The main character of a story on which the action is centered.

raked stage: A stage that is raised slightly upstage so that it slants toward the audience.

read-through: An early rehearsal of a play at which actors read their dialogue from scripts without blocking or memorized lines.

rehearsal: A meeting during which the cast learns and practices the show.

score: All musical elements of a show, including songs and underscoring.

script: 1) The written words that make up a show, including dialogue, stage directions, and lyrics. 2) The book that contains those words.

speed-through: To perform the dialogue of a scene as quickly as possible. A speed-through rehearsal helps actors memorize their lines and infuses energy into the pacing of a scene.

stage directions: Words in the script that describe character actions that are not part of the dialogue.

stage left: The left side of the stage, from the actor's perspective.

stage manager: A person responsible for keeping all rehearsals and performances organized and on schedule.

stage right: The right side of the stage, from the actor's perspective.

upstage: The part of the stage farthest from the audience; the opposite of downstage.

warm-ups: Exercises at the beginning of a rehearsal or before a performance that prepare actors' voices and bodies.

SHOW GLOSSARY

above the fold: The prominent placement of an article on the front page of a newspaper; if a headline is above the middle fold, it is the first thing a reader will see when buying the paper.

acquitted: Declared not guilty of a criminal charge.

Alfred Dreyfus: A French artillery officer who was charged with treason in a highly controversial trial in 1894; he was acquitted in 1899.

am-scray: Pig Latin for "scram;" a phrase telling someone to leave quickly.

aptitude: Innate or acquired ability or talent.

Aspirin: A drug that reduces inflammation, pain, and fever, invented by the firm Bayer and released in 1899.

auspicious: Promising success.

begudgingly: Reluctantly or resentfully.

Betsy Ross: The creator of the first American flag.

borough: A district or municipality within a city; New York's boroughs are Manhattan, Brooklyn, The Bronx, Queens, and Staten Island (known as Richmond in 1899).

Bottle Alley: An alley that was part of Mulberry Bend, an area in the Five Points neighborhood of Lower Manhattan that had particularly poor living conditions.

Bowery: A neighborhood in Lower Manhattan; in 1899, the Bowery was an immigrant neighborhood famous for its vaudeville-style plays and musicals.

Brighton Beach: An oceanside neighborhood in the southern portion of Brooklyn.

bulls: Slang for "police officers."

cavalry: A group of mounted soldiers.

charismatic: Compelling or inspirational.

Congress: The lawmaking wing of the U.S. federal government.

constituents: People who authorize someone to act on their behalf.

converge: Gather or meet up at a certain point.

David and Goliath: Biblical figures commonly referred to in an underdog situation, in which a smaller and weaker opponent faces a bigger and stronger adversary.

destitute: Lacking the basic necessities of life.

distribution wagon: The location (a window, historically) at which newsies would purchase their papers for the day; each newspaper publisher had its own distribution window.

excursionists: Individuals who take short trips with a specific intent.

- exploited:** Taken advantage of or used unfairly.
- fish-eye:** A suspicious or unfriendly look.
- Flushing:** A neighborhood in Queens.
- gospel:** In Christianity, the teachings of Jesus Christ.
- gratis:** French for "free."
- gripe:** A complaint.
- Grand Central Station:** A major rail terminal in midtown Manhattan.
- Harlem:** A neighborhood in the northern section of Manhattan.
- hawks:** Sells by calling aloud in public.
- highfalutin:** Pompous or bombastic.
- hoi polloi:** An Ancient Greek expression meaning "the many," which refers to the masses; *Race* ironically uses this phrase incorrectly, referring to the elite.
- impudence:** Disrespect.
- inferno:** A large, out-of-control fire.
- ingenuity:** Cleverly resourceful.
- Joseph Pulitzer:** Publisher of the *New York World* from 1883 to 1911.
- kingmaker:** A person who brings leaders to power through political influence.
- legitimate:** Valid.
- Mile-a-Minute Murphy:** Charles Minthorn Murphy, an American cyclist who in 1899 became the first man ever to bike a mile in less than a minute.
- Montreal Shamrocks:** An amateur men's ice hockey club based in Canada that existed from 1886 to 1924. They became a permanent team in 1895 when they merged with the Montreal Crystals.
- muckety-mucks:** Slang referring to those in a position of authority or status.
- Navy Yard:** The U.S. Navy Yard, also known as the Brooklyn Navy Yard; a shipyard located in Brooklyn on the East River, built in 1801 and in use until 1966.
- New Richmond tornado:** An 1899 tornado that left a 45-mile path of destruction in and around the city of New Richmond, Wisconsin.
- newsies:** Young newspaper vendors (boys and girls) who purchased their goods from the publisher and re-sold them for a profit; some newsies were as young as six years old and worked long hours on the streets of American cities.
- Nickelangelo Dervinci:** A misstatement and combining of the names of two separate famous Italian Renaissance artists, Michelangelo and Leonardo da Vinci.
- nobbin':** Slang for "hobnobbing," or mixing socially.
- nom de plume:** French for "pen name," or a fake name used when publishing written work.
- Palomino:** A type of horse with a yellow or gold coat, originally bred in the southwestern U.S.

pastrami: A meat product that is usually made from beef and often used in sandwiches.

polio: A disease, usually affecting children and young adults, that can cause paralysis in all or parts of the body.

Prospect Park: A large public park in Brooklyn.

Richmond: One of New York's five boroughs; now known as Staten Island.

Sante Fe: The capital city of New Mexico; it attracted a number of artists and writers in the late 19th and early 20th centuries due to its cultural richness and natural beauty.

scabs: A slang term for individuals who take work when the regular employees are on strike.

Sheepshead Races: The Sheepshead Bay Race Track, a horse racing facility in Sheepshead Bay, Brooklyn; opened in 1880 and operational until 1910, it was converted to an automobile racetrack in 1915.

skunks: Slang term referring to defeating an opponent badly.

soak: Slang for both "take money from" and "beat up."

Spanish-American War: A war between Spain and the United States in 1898 as a result of U.S. intervention in the Cuban Revolution and the explosion of the U.S.S. *Maine* in the Havana harbor.

strike: A refusal to work in order to compel an employer to agree to workers' demands.

sweatshop: A factory where manual workers receive low wages for long hours under poor conditions.

Theodore Roosevelt: A progressive reformer who was Governor of New York from 1899-1900 and President of the U.S. from 1901-1909.

trolley: A passenger vehicle that runs on a track embedded in the street, also called a streetcar; New York had an extensive trolley system throughout the late 19th and early 20th centuries.

troupers: Members of a performing company.

union: An association of employees that collectively bargains with employers to protect the interests of the workers.

vaudeville: A theatrical genre popular between the 1880s and 1930s that involves performances made up of a series of separate, unrelated acts of varying types.

vive la résistance [VEEV lah RAY-zeese-TAHNSE]: French for "long live the resistance."

William Randolph Hearst: The founder of Hearst Communications, which published the *New York Journal*.

Woodside: A neighborhood in western Queens.