

GETTING A SUPERIOR IN IE MONOLOGUES P.3: PERFORMANCE & FEEDBACK



Everyone wants to do their best in an Individual Events competition.

Getting a Superior is not as difficult as you might think! Here are a few hints to point you in the right direction...

If you've chosen well and prepared to the utmost of your ability, the performance should be the easy part of your Individual Event.

Performance Tips

Be professional. You can act professionally no matter what your age or situation. Be on time and have your paperwork filled out in full. Don't disrupt your fellow performers. Don't waste anyone's time. Don't apologize for anything - for having a cold, for being unprepared, for being late. Do your best under whatever circumstances you're in.

Dress appropriately. Choose clothes that allow you to show off your acting, and don't distract from your performance. Choose comfortable items that you don't have to adjust. Likewise, keep your hair off your face and keep it from getting in your way.

Breathe. It helps. Really. Take a deep breath before you start to speak.

Focus. Don't worry about what anyone else is doing. If you start comparing your work to others, you're sunk before you begin. Focus on your breathing. Run the first line of the monologue in your head. Think about your blocking.

Warm up. Find a place to do a few vocal warm-ups and some stretching.

Smile and make eye contact during your introduction but don't look at the judges while you perform. They want to be able to observe you without being stared at.

And... Make sure you know the name of the playwright and the play.

Conquering Stage Fright

Sometimes all the rehearsal in the world can't conquer the biggest demon of them all: stage fright. It happens to the most seasoned actors. So how do you deal with it?

Be prepared. Have you heard this one before? Must be important. But when you're prepared, the work you've put into the monologues can override nerves.

Realize that nerves are natural and everyone gets nervous. You *should* be nervous. Competitions are nerve-wracking. You just don't want the process to become all about the nerves. Let the nerves fuel your performance instead of preventing it.

Practise in front of an audience. The more you practise, the less terrifying the performance will be. Your IE slot should not be the first time you've performed your pieces in front of people.

Continued Over...

Visualize your success. Some actors work themselves into such a lather beforehand that everything they imagine going wrong happens right on cue. Focus on the positive before you perform. This isn't about being boastful. Simply see yourself performing your pieces to the best of your ability, without any mistakes. Know that you've practised enough and have the ability to do well.

Processing Feedback

Feedback is an important part of the Individual Event experience. For every IE, adjudicators judge you on character, voice, movement, and the overall presentation of each piece. They are supposed to give you a score (Superior, Excellent, Good or Fair) and provide written feedback.

Most judges believe 100% in the process, are committed to giving constructive criticism and want your performance to be the best it can be.

But here's something that may surprise you. Not every judge knows what they're doing. Some judges aren't fair. Sometimes they make subjective remarks. Sometimes they're mean.

How do you tell the difference? How do you interpret feedback in a way that helps you grow as a performer?

You should pay attention to feedback when...

Every judge gives you the same note, such as, "Watch your diction; it was hard to understand every word." Or, "Make sure each move is character-driven, there was a lot of wandering about the space." If the same note comes back to you time and time again, then address it. If you're getting a good response from multiple adjudicators, that's something to celebrate!

A suggestion to try something different. There should be a specific suggestion, not just, "Do something different." This is especially important if you're getting Excellents instead of Superiors. Be open to change. Those who are willing to change get better.

Your scores are Superiors in **every category but one**. If you're getting Superiors in character and voice but not in movement, that's feedback to pay attention to. That means you need to focus on a specific area to bring your work to the next level.

You should ignore feedback when...

All Fairs are circled without comment. Perhaps the performance wasn't up to snuff. But it's the adjudicators job to justify their decisions.

You get negative scores without suggestions for change. Likes and dislikes are subjective. If the feedback is solely focused on the negative ("I didn't like this") how can you improve?

The feedback is focused on the choice of monologue rather than your interpretation and performance. Some people just don't like certain monologues. It shouldn't matter in a competition, but it does. If all the feedback is centred around the dislike of the piece rather than what you did with it, don't take it to heart.

The scores don't match the written evaluation. It happens time and time again – the written evaluation is all praise, and then the score is an Excellent. The feedback should give you suggestions to grow.