

THEATER

What can I do with this degree?

AREAS

EMPLOYERS

STRATEGIES

PERFORMING

Community theaters
Regional theaters
Commercial theaters
Summer stock theaters
Dinner theaters
Children's theaters
University theater groups
Touring companies
Industrial shows
Show groups
Amusement and theme parks
Television/film studios
Radio stations

Participate in acting workshops, courses, and seminars to get advice and experience and to make contacts with others in the field.

Join unions or actors' guilds to stay abreast of opportunities and developments in the field.

Get as much acting experience as possible. Perform in school productions, community theater, summer stock, etc. to hone acting skills.

Prepare a professional resume that lists your acting experience. Have your resume attached to or printed on the reverse side of an 8" x 10" photograph of yourself.

Be prepared to make the rounds. Distribute your resume to numerous agencies and offices. Follow up with several personal visits.

Be aware that more opportunities exist in large cities such as New York and Los Angeles.

Learn about the entertainment industry as a whole: Take courses on entertainment law, business, management, etc.

An extensive network of contacts is essential. Get to know people working in your field and related areas.

DIRECTING

Direction
Technical Direction
Casting
Stage Management
Support Staff

Theaters
Television/film studios

Participate in the Director's Guild Training Program.

Develop leadership skills through participation in campus and community organizations.

Experience with fund-raising is important. Volunteer to do this with local theaters and arts councils.

Learn what types of permits and insurance are needed to film or perform in certain areas.

Volunteer with directors in local theaters to become familiar with the environment. Serving as an assistant is a great way to get started in this area.

Gain directing experience by participating in college productions.

AREAS

BEHIND THE SCENES

Set Design/Construction
Property Design
Lighting Design
Sound Design
Costume Design
Camera Operation
Hair/Make-up
Special Effects
Wardrobe
Prop Management
Broadcast Technology
Riggers
Electricians

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STRATEGIES

Learn to work well in a team.
Develop a sense of artistry and creativity.
Become involved in the International Alliance of Theatrical Stage Employees (IATSE). This organization can give you information about becoming an apprentice as well as help you make valuable contacts.
Get experience. Offer your services to school and local theaters.
Read industry magazines and books to learn about your area.
For sound design: Become familiar with computer technology as digital sound effects and electronic music replace traditional means of sound design.
For costume design: Supplement your program with courses in art history and fashion design.
Learn about different eras in history in order to recreate on stage. A basic knowledge of history and architecture is helpful.

WRITING

Scriptwriting
Playwriting
Screenwriting
Journalism
Publicity (Press Agents)
Research

Theaters
Television/film studios
Television stations
Magazines
Newspapers
Freelance

Review plays, movies, and TV shows for school or local newspaper.
Theatrical press agents publicize and promote theatrical productions. They write press releases, arrange press conferences, and other media events. Take courses in related areas such as public relations, advertising, and business.
Reporters spend time on the set absorbing everything. They interview actors as well as craftspeople.
Get as much writing experience as possible: Write for the college newspaper, enter playwriting contests, etc.
See many different productions and shows. Read a variety of scripts to see how scripts are developed.
Researchers gather information for movie writers. They may also track down photographs or historical documents to make the film more authentic.

AREAS

EMPLOYERS

STRATEGIES

BUSINESS

Producing
Management
Agents
Marketing
Fundraising and Development
Coordination of Volunteers
Administration of Arts Programs
Box Office Sales

Theaters
Arts councils
Television/film studios

Secretarial/clerical positions in theaters and studios are often stepping-stones to other positions and a good way to make contacts.
Take business courses to supplement your program.
Obtain a working knowledge of computers.
Gain a thorough understanding of theater.
Develop skills in leadership, negotiation, budgeting, and fundraising.

EDUCATION

Teaching

Public and private schools
Colleges and universities
Performing arts centers

Obtain certification for the state in which you wish to teach. Obtain dual certification for more teaching opportunities.
Get experience in various areas of theater, as well as working with young people.
Obtain a graduate degree to teach on the college level. Develop one or two areas of expertise within theater arts.

GENERAL STRATEGIES

- Complete an internship or an apprenticeship with a local theater. Participate in summer stock.
- Network: Talk with people working in the field to find out about jobs and opportunities.
- Read newspapers and periodicals related to the theater to keep up with new developments. Read the "trades"--magazines and newspapers that report events in the entertainment industry. Read the "Theater" section of daily newspapers to find out about upcoming productions.
- Get your foot in the door and get involved with productions in any way you can. Be prepared to do various tasks assigned by stage managers or producers.
- Join professional groups as an opportunity to make contacts.
- Volunteer with fundraising efforts for the arts.
- Be aware of scams. Check out the legitimacy of agencies and companies before paying any fees.
- Be prepared to move to a metropolitan area where more opportunities exist.
- A career in the arts takes patience, dedication, and luck!
- Have a back-up plan. Be aware that the unemployment rate for actors hovers around 85%. Develop skills that qualify you for other jobs while you wait for opportunities in acting. Consider pairing theater with another career interest or major to open up more job opportunities.
- Theater helps students develop verbal and written communication, public speaking, and teamwork skills. These transferable skills are valued by many types of employers.
- There are many ways to be involved in the theater while pursuing other career options.