

*“When you stand on the stage you must have a sense that you are addressing the whole world, and that what you say is so important the whole world must listen.”*

—Stella Adler,  
actress and acclaimed  
acting teacher



# Troupe Performer

**P**erformance is a powerful way to make an impact on an audience—and a perfect way to put your leadership into action. It’s also a fun way to sharpen your communication skills, learn to handle stress with grace, strengthen your teamwork skills, and grow relationships and networks. Get out there and show your stuff!

## Steps

1. Pick your performance style
2. Find and develop material
3. Rehearse!
4. Launch your performance
5. Put on your show

## Purpose

When I’ve earned this badge, I’ll know how to organize a team of people and put together a performance.

## The Power of Performance

Your performance can have lasting impact. Think about what you want your audience to feel, and possibly even learn. Imagine:

- A **dance performance** that ends with a lesson. Your group could perform on a playground and teach hip-hop moves to younger girls.
- A **poetry jam** that gets people really thinking. Your theme could be tolerance, or the environment. You could hold it in a public space so your message can really be heard by your community.
- A **variety show**. Many senior centers welcome performances and have stages. What if you spoke to the seniors beforehand and tried to incorporate some of their favorite acts? It's a fun way to learn some popular history as well.
- A **dramatization about Girl Scouting**: "The Founding of Girl Scouting," "What Girl Scouts Do," or "Girl Scouts Around the World." (Girls did this in 1940 to earn the Play Director badge.)



Every step has three choices. Do ONE choice to complete each step. Inspired? Do more!

## Tips Before Takeoff

- ▶ **Build your troupe.** It could be a small team of Girl Scout sisters, or a bigger team of friends and family. If you're involved in a theater group, you can do this badge as part of a performance.
- ▶ **Make your show fit your time and resources.** If you have months to prepare, go all out. Less prep time? Focus your efforts: perhaps lunchtime entertainment for little kids at school, or a special pre-holiday family show.
- ▶ **Divide roles.** Do you need a costumer, producer, director, set designer, lighting designer, prop master?
- ▶ **Find space to practice and perform.** It might be your backyard, a room at school, or your Girl Scout meeting place. If you want to perform outdoors, look into any permit requirements.
- ▶ **Don't be afraid to ask for help!** Performance groups, drama teachers, and colleges with performing arts students are great resources.

## STEP 1 Pick your performance style

**Pick a format that excites you. Do you want your team to perform a Broadway musical or a Shakespearean drama? A modern dance routine? A song-and-dance variety show? Choose something that inspires you and your group, and it will inspire your audience.**

### CHOICES – DO ONE:

- Get inspired by a live performance.** Check out listings for shows in your area and attend one with your team. Afterward, compare notes. What worked fabulously? What didn't? Compile a list of ideas from the performance you'd like to use in your own show.  
OR
- Interview a producer, director, performer, or performing arts teacher.** Find out what advice and inspiration they can offer. Take questions and ideas so you can brainstorm with the expert and your team and make the most of your session.  
OR
- Watch three shows and be the critic.** Write a short review of each show to discuss with your team. Or watch the shows together, take your own notes, and compile your thoughts into group critiques. This will help you figure out what inspires you about a performance—and what doesn't—which is good to know when you're putting together your own!

**Tip:** Check out performance reviews in various media to see how professional critiques are put together.

## STEP 2 Find and develop material

What do you need for your show? A script? Dance moves? Songs? By the end of this step, you'll know what you're performing and who's doing what. When casting, be sensitive to your team's needs—you might decide to have more than one performance so everyone can try more than one role. That's the best way to understand how to put on a show!

### CHOICES - DO ONE:

**Choose an existing show or combination of poems or songs.** Material in the public domain is a great place to start. If you use a script from a well-known play, there may be royalties associated with a performance. Ask for help from a drama teacher or local expert to make sure you follow requirements for any copyrighted material (see sidebar).

OR

**Give old material a new twist!** Wish *Romeo and Juliet* had a different ending? Do you think Dorothy would have more fun in Oz if she danced hip-hop down the yellow brick road? Could you make *The Nutcracker* into a poetry jam? Add a new twist to an existing story—but be sure the material is in the public domain.

OR

**Create your own.** The easiest way to avoid stepping on any creative or copyrighted toes is to make up your show yourself. That's a challenge—and a super fun one. What talents does your team have that you could use? Could everyone create a piece of the show? Whom could you call on for help?

**Tip:** Before you get to step 3, you'll need to decide who gets which roles. You might draw parts from a hat, vote on a director together and let her assign roles, or find an independent reviewer to audition for (like a drama teacher or Girl Scout volunteer).



#### Tip:

Even if you obtain permission or pay for licensing rights, you cannot alter copyrighted work, such as by changing dialogue or updating the time period.

## Performing with Permission

If you want to put on a play based on an existing script or to include a song in your performance that's not an original, the material may be protected by a copyright. Know these terms:

- **Copyright:** Protects the rights of authors and artists. If a work is copyrighted, it cannot be performed without permission.
- **Royalty:** The money authors or artists earn by allowing others to perform their work. These costs are usually per performance, and necessary whether or not you charge admission to the play. Cost depends on the publisher, but for a general idea: Multiply your average expected audience per performance by the average ticket price, then by the number of performances, and then by 10 percent, and then round up to the nearest \$10.
- **Public domain:** This means the material can be performed without permission. Most work published in the United States before 1923 is in the public domain. The laws can be complex, however, so check the U.S. Copyright Office website.



## The Call Sheet

Communication with your team is essential, whether via e-mail, text, or handouts. Call sheets include information everyone needs to know: rehearsal and performance times, costume requirements, etc. These can be updated for each group rehearsal.



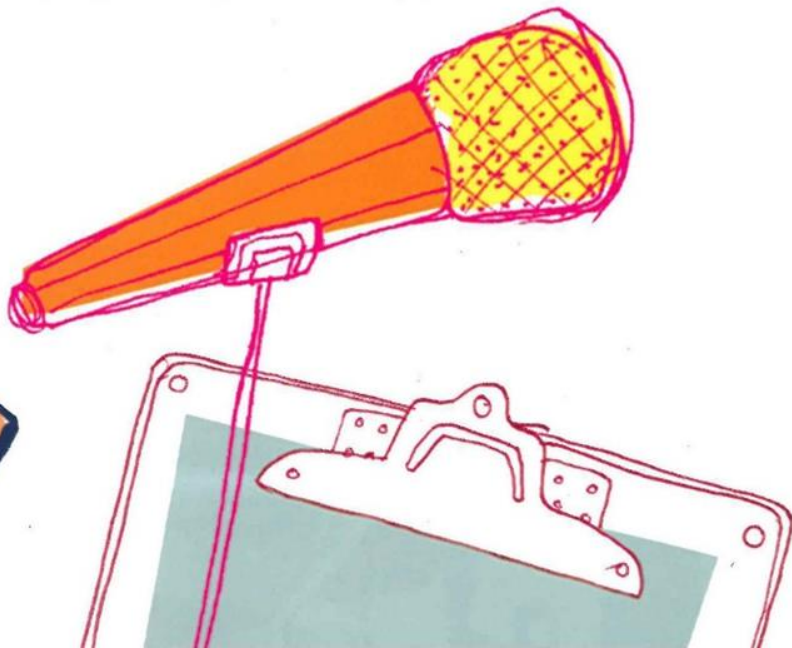
## STEP 3 Rehearse!

Your team will need to practice at least once. If you need to do staging, blocking, or memorization, you'll want to rehearse more. Make a schedule that works for your group. Choose one of the following to prepare, get the most out of your time together, and enhance your team's skills.

### CHOICES - DO ONE:

- Dig into the nitty-gritty of moving performers around the stage.** Bring in (or interview) someone with serious stage experience: a director, actor, or choreographer (any older Girl Scouts you could ask?). You might ask a performer in a different genre than your show: Could a comedian help with comic timing in a dance? Or a dancer help poetry jammers use their bodies effectively?  
**OR** -----
- Get behind the scenes.** What happens offstage is just as important as what happens on—sometimes more so! Get advice on who can do what and how from a prop master, stagehand, sound technician, lighting pro, or other person with backstage knowledge.  
**OR** -----
- Get tips on team motivation.** If you're set with blocking—planning when, how, and where actors move around the stage—and backstage organization, talk to someone who can share tips on getting the most out of your time together, working as a team, and staying motivated. This might be a producer, athletic coach, business leader, or anyone with experience getting a group into a great groove.

**Tip:** Food unites—bring snacks! When everyone's got energy, everything's likely to go more smoothly. (And, of course, be more delicious.)



# GIRL SCOUT WARM-UPS FROM HISTORY

Rehearsals often start with fun warm-up exercises—try one from the Girl Scout past.



## From the 1940 Dramatics badge:

- Choose two or three of the following lines or make up some that are similar: "Why, it's 12 o'clock!", "Well, this is a surprise!", "Please give me one more chance!", "It's no use!", "You can't do that!", or simply "Yes!" or "No!" Act a scene for each line in pantomime, building up to a climax when you speak the line and end the situation.
- Suggest an environment and situation to an audience without using any lines or scenery. Walk across a room like a person navigating a busy street, crossing a desert, crossing a river on stepping-stones, and so forth.



## From the 1980 Theater badge:

- Do a mirror mimic with someone else. Take turns being the leader. Don't talk. Try to express a feeling.
- Say a sentence such as "I did it" five times, expressing a different emotion each time: pride, guilt, fear, happiness, surprise, horror, etc.
- Create a pantomime based on a reaction: taste something sweet/sour, touch something hot/cold, see something beautiful/horrible, smell something fragrant/foul.
- Portray in pantomime (choose five) a person who is lazy, sad, energetic, happy, sick, athletic, etc.
- Pretend to have a conversation on the phone with an imaginary person.

## STEP 4 Launch your performance

Every performance needs an audience! While you're rehearsing, you'll also want to get the word out about your show. Try your hand at public relations in one of these ways (and feel free to approach a pro for help!).

### CHOICES – DO ONE:

- Create a poster to promote your performance.** Posters are an effective way to market your performance. Here are some tips for creating an impressive poster:
  - Keep the design simple and enticing.
  - The text is the most important element. Make sure you can read the title from a distance.
  - Use a plain, bright background with readable text.
  - Make sure all relevant information is included: performance name, location, date, and time.
  - Get permission from places you want to post it.

OR

- Create a press kit.** Press kits are folders for the media with information to help them promote your show. Yours might include a press release with the when and where of your show, why people should come, and bios and photos of the performers. Request sample press kits from other performance groups or from a public relations pro, and ask for advice on where to send yours (newspapers, bloggers, etc.).

OR

- Make a video trailer or radio commercial.** What better way to get people excited about your show than letting them see or hear part of it? Put together a short trailer to share via YouTube, e-mail blasts, or at a special screening—or make a radio commercial for your local station or school station.

**Tip:** Recruit friends and family to help with promotion!

*The audience is a very important part of any dramatic production. In fact it wouldn't be much fun to give a play without one.*

— Girl Scout Handbook, 1940



## STEP 5 Put on your show

After all your hard work, put on your show—and take a bow! Celebrate and commemorate in one of these ways to make the most of the experience and build on your performance expertise.

### CHOICES – DO ONE:

- Host a cast party or an after-party to celebrate.** Take a moment to talk about what went great and what you would change next time.  
**Tip:** Tape your session so you can watch or listen to it later—you'll likely be too gleeful and tired to take notes!  
**OR** -----
- Videotape your show and screen it soon after.** Show the video to your team or members of the audience. Give each other notes, or have the audience give you notes and constructive comments—and congratulations!  
**OR** -----
- Take photos and create a record of what went on.** Then you can post the photos online, frame them as special thank-you gifts, or create a fun slide show to share.

### FUN FACT

#### **The belief:**

For good luck, tell an actor to “break a leg.”

#### **Origin:**

“Break a leg” here means to bend a knee or curtsy to an audience during a curtain call. It’s like saying, “I hope you have a lot of bows to take after the performance.”

### Careers to Explore

Director  
Stage manager  
Lighting designer  
Choreographer  
Personal manager  
or artist agent

Playwright  
Lyricist  
Event planner  
Sound engineer  
Producer  
Casting agent  
Tour manager

Composer  
Concert promoter  
Entertainment  
attorney  
Business manager  
Music supervisor

Music therapist  
Cruise director  
Wardrobe and  
makeup artist  
Set designer



### **Add the Badge to Your Journey**

Your show might portray your troupe's vision of a perfect world for girls. Could it help raise awareness of your Take Action project?

#### **Now that I've earned this badge, I can give service by:**

- Staging a poetry jam at a senior center
- Volunteering at a community theater
- Assisting younger Girl Scouts with their Performance badges



***I'm inspired to:***