

How to Prepare

“Treatment”, “Relationship”, and “Objectives” for upcoming classes (9/21 – 10/3)

Please be ready with your preparation. There is *not enough time* during the rehearsal session for you to figure everything out on that day. Each of those days is meant to be for everyone to share what they’ve already come up with.

1. *Treatment* is how we’re going to approach the show. All of us (including me) should be ready to briefly answer this question: “What is this show about from my character’s point of view?”
2. *Relationship* is what you want from someone. Be ready to tell each of the other characters in your show— *every character*, including the ones you do not interact with directly!— what your character wants from them. Only 1-2 sentences are necessary for each, as you’ll see a more complete relationship develop out of those sentences.
3. You need a *superobjective* for the show and an *objective* for each “beat” (the numbered divisions in your script).

A “superobjective” is a single action which your character is there to do. From the moment you step on stage to your last exit, you are actively pursuing this superobjective. ***Your superobjective must support the director’s superevent.***

A “beat objective” is the single action which defines the beat for your character. The beat begins *because* you start doing this action; the beat ends when you have clearly succeeded or failed to accomplish this action. ***Your beat objective must support both the beat event AND your superobjective.***

A play is defined by its superevent (“this is what happens”) and the beat events (“this is how it happens”). Your objectives are what *make* the events happen. When I say that your objective “must support the event”, I mean something like this:

Event: John and Bob have their biggest argument yet.
John’s objective: To get a big raise.
Bob’s objective: To protect the company’s assets.

You can see how John’s and Bob’s objectives help make the event happen; that is, they “support” the event.

As long as you understand how your objectives support the events, then all you have to do is get out on stage and *do them*, and that’s how we tell the story of the play.

Please note! Choose an objective that makes the scene happen, instead of one which happens as a result of the scene. If, in the scene, your character digs a hole, it is *totally pointless* to say that your objective is “to dig a hole.” **If the script does it for you, it is not your objective.**

A play is structured like an essay, where your superobjective is the thesis and the objectives are the topic sentences. For example, here's a thesis for an essay:

I like cheese.

Each topic sentence would support the thesis:

I like cheese.		
Cheese is creamy and sweet.	Cheese has a great texture.	I can eat cheese with anything.

The individual words of each paragraph would all support the topic sentence— for example, the last paragraph could be:

I can eat cheese with anything. I can toast it on bread for grilled cheese sandwiches, or melt it in a fondue. I can slice it into pieces and eat it with apples. I can even put it on apple pie! Cheese can go anywhere, hot and cold, with all kinds of different flavors.

With the same structure, a superobjective could be

I want to make my daughter happy.

Each beat objective would support the superobjective:

I want to make my daughter happy.		
I want to interest her in games.	I want to show her that music is fun.	I want to discover what she likes to eat.

The individual words (and stage directions) in each beat would all support your objective. If you can look at the scene and see words and actions that do *not* support your objective, you need a different objective. Remember that the beat begins *because* you have begun your objective, and ends *because* you succeed or fail at that objective.

(please forgive me for not writing a sample script to illustrate this; I hope you can look at your own script and find examples there.)