

JESUIT DRAMA GOES ONLINE | GUIDELINES FOR AN EASY SELF-TAPE AUDITION

Before You Film | Technical Points

1. **What kind of camera?** Whatever you have available! If you have a DSLR at your disposal, of course feel free to use it. However, using any smartphone camera is just fine. You **will not** be assessed on the quality of your camera! Do not stress about technology. 😊
2. **Find your frame!** In order to get the most from your performance, we recommend filming between a *medium shot* and *medium close-up* – **capturing yourself from your waist up**. No need to film your whole body. Just stay center frame, and do what you do best. For reference:



3. **Keep the background simple.** As much as possible, film yourself against a **neutral background**. A white, grey, or black wall is best; whatever you find available, be sure to remove anything in the background that might distract the viewer (eg. posters, pictures, tapestries, kitchen appliances, a small cat, etc.)
4. **Find your light.** We want to see you! In order to get the best quality image, make sure you are rather well-lit with a **frontlight: i.e. a light behind the camera, pointing at your face**. Avoid backlight (lights behind you, facing the camera) as much as possible.
5. **Prop up your camera.** If you have a tripod, awesome! If you have someone with a steady hand willing to help film you, great. Either way, try to place your camera on a flat or stable surface to keep a steady shot.
6. **Test your sound.** If you have an external microphone like a Yeti or Zoom mic, feel free to use it (but, again, your phone will do a great job by itself). No matter what, test your audio before you record with a few practice videos. Some things to keep in mind:
 - a. **Eliminate as much background noise as possible.** If you're around others in your home, feel free to ask them to turn down their television or music, turn off the garbage disposal, (or to slurp their cereal more quietly) while you're filming. And, when necessary, place your furry family members elsewhere while you film; we love the dulcet sounds of barking and meowing, but not at the expense of hearing your amazing work!

- b. **Close any open windows or doors.** The mic will pick up the sound of traffic, and that's no fun.
 - c. **Smaller rooms are better.** If you can film in a small- to medium-sized room, you'll reduce the amount of **reverb** (sounds bouncing across the space), and we'll be able to pick up a cleaner sound from you. **Tip:** bedrooms are great because your bedding will actually absorb and dampen sharper sounds!
 - d. **Please do not use AirPods or wired headsets to record your audio.**
7. **What to wear?** As you would in the theater, it is recommended to keep it simple, professional! On camera, colors and patterns pull more focus, so if you keep your clothing neutral (solid colors, no logos, etc), we'll be able to focus on what matters – your performance. Don't worry about perfect make-up. Don't worry about curling or gelling your hair. Just be you!

During Your Audition

8. **Introduce Yourself!** As you would in the Black Box, open your audition tape with a simple greeting: "Hi! My name is _____, I'm a [grade year] from [school name] and I'll be performing a piece from [your chosen work]." Keep it clean, clear, and *you*.
9. **Take a moment before you perform.** After your introduction, take a breath! Feel free to shift the weight in your feet, close your eyes – whatever you need to be ready to give us your best. Again, this isn't so different from an audition in the Black Box.
10. **Perform directly to the camera.** We are your scene partner here, so, please, *do not direct your focus just off camera focus.* This is a tip you'll find online for specifically film & television tapes. It's not for us. If it's helpful, ask a family member to stand behind the camera, or maybe print out a picture of your favorite scientist to stick on the wall behind camera. However you can achieve it, try to keep your focus leveled in the camera eye.

And, Finally...

Do. Not. Do. 20. Takes. *Don't do it!* It can be tempting to mull over your first take and then try for a second, better one. Then maybe a third. Or a fifth. Or maybe on the 17th try you'll get your eye to do that thing you've been trying to get "right" since take 11... This is a spiral. As one who's self-taped many times, I can assure you: *you do not get better in the spiral!*

So. Take a breath. Rehearse your piece before you decide to tape. We recommend **choosing an audition time for yourself and sticking to your self-schedule.** If you say Sunday at noon, rehearse up until Sunday at noon, and then commit! On the day, be prepared to give it your best – just as you would in the theatre. If you find that a second or third take might benefit you (because, of course, nerves happen), that's ok. But do not, for your health and sanity, go beyond that.

Have grace with yourself. And, remember, this is still *theater*. Theater is live. This means it will always have enough space for your "off-book" moments and ours. It doesn't seek perfection; it just asks that you give it all you've got.

So be kind to yourself. Be generous with yourself. Take *another* breath. Do what only you can do best.

And HAVE FUN!