



All-of-us Express Children's Theatre Glossary of Theatre Terms



For many participants and families, an All-of-us Express Children's Theatre production may be the first theatre experience you've had outside of being in an audience. If that's the case, there are some terms that might be new to you. This glossary is provided to help new theatre participants and their families become more familiar with common terms. Information specific to AECT appears in italics below the main definition.

Term	Definition
Backstage	The area out of view of the audience, especially in the wings or dressing rooms.
Blocking	The path the actors take onstage as decided upon by the actor and director, and notated by the SM. Once blocking has been solidified, it's not to be changed for any reason without approval from the director.
Call Time	The time actors and crew members show up for rehearsal or performance. This will be clearly communicated by the director and crew heads and will be listed on the production calendar (all rehearsals) and tech week letter (tech week rehearsals and performances). Call times may vary by cast group and by crew. <i>At AECT, a general rule of thumb is that most rehearsals run 6:30-8:30pm Monday-Thursdays. Tech week rehearsals are longer. Performances are typically at 7:00pm on Fridays and 3:00pm for Saturday and Sunday shows.</i>
Cast	The cast is the group of actors who perform on stage in a production. A small cast might include only 10 roles, where a larger show might have 50 cast roles. Sometimes an actor might play two or more different characters in a show.
Crew	Crew members work behind the scenes help bring the production to life. Crews include those who build sets, make props, design makeup, create costumes, and design light and sound cues.

Term		Definition
	Experience Crew	<i>At AECT, participants can serve on “experience crews” to gain experience and earn a crew point. Some experience crews are especially well-suited to young participants (usher crew or part crew). Older youth can also participate if they need a crew point but aren’t able to serve on a guild crew. Experience crews that are a good fit for older participants are the concessions crew and auditions crew.</i>
	Guild Crew	<i>At AECT, the guild system allows youth participants to move through the ranks of apprentice, journeyman, and master in developing skills on a specific crew. The crews that provide the guild experience are: Sets, Props, Makeup, Costumes, Light, Sound, Puppetry, ASM, and AD.</i>
Crossover		The crossover is the space behind the stage where actors and crew can cross from one side of the stage to the other without being seen.
Curtain Call		The time for actors to come out for bows at the end of a show. Cast members also acknowledge the backstage crews during the curtain call.
Curtain Speech		The short speech before a show, usually given by the Director and/or AD. The curtain speech contains information about the show (e.g., if there is an intermission, if strobe lights or loud bangs are used, where to purchase concessions) and is also used to thank sponsors.
Director		The person who is ultimately responsible for all creative and artistic decisions in the production. <i>At AECT it is common for each show in a season to have a different director.</i>
	Assistant Director (AD)	<i>At AECT, the AD is a youth crew member who wants to learn more about directing. The AD attends all production meetings and assists the director as requested. The AD must have served on specific crews in preparation for being selected as an AD.</i>
Dress Rehearsal		This is the first time that the actors are in full costume and makeup. <i>At AECT, there are usually two dress rehearsals prior to opening night.</i>
First Read		First read generally consists of the full cast assembling together in a room, sitting in a circle, and reading the full show out loud, with the stage manager reading the stage directions. It’s the first opportunity for cast members to meet their director and one another, and for crew members to meet their crewmates and crew heads.

Term	Definition
Green Room	<p>The space in which cast and crew rest and wait for their next cue.</p> <p><i>At AECT, the green room is usually the dance studio down the back hallway from the auditorium.</i></p>
Q2Q	<p>Shorthand for “cue to cue.” The Q2Q rehearsal does not involve any actors, and no crew except the light and sound crews. During Q2Q, the crew jumps from cue to cue through the whole script practicing sound and light cues.</p>
Stage Manager (SM)	<p>The SM is responsible for coordinating every aspect of the production from scheduling to calling all the cues during a performance to maintaining the director’s artistic vision of the show once performances have begun.</p>
	<p>Assistant Stage Manager (ASM)</p> <p><i>At AECT, the ASM is a youth crew member who wants to learn more about stage management. The ASM attends all production meetings and assists the stage manager as requested. The ASM must have served on specific crews in preparation for being selected as an ASM.</i></p>
Strike	<p>To strike the set means to take down the set and make way for the next production. This happens after the closing performance, and some work continues the following week.</p>
Tech Week	<p>This is the week prior to the opening night of a production in which all the technical elements (such as costumes, lights, sound, sets, and makeup) are present during rehearsal for the first time. Tech week rehearsals are long—twice as long as normal rehearsals—and can be stressful.</p> <p><i>At AECT, families receive a “Tech Week Letter” via email prior to tech week. This email contains crucial details and should be read carefully.</i></p>
Theater vs. Theatre	<p>Some people distinguish between these two spellings (-er is the American English spelling, -re is the British English spelling). Some Americans take the argument a step further, making the spelling a condition of the definition. A theatER is a venue you visit to enjoy entertainment. The theatRE is a performance-driven art form. Thus, AECT performances are usually held in the Hannah Center’s theatER, and AECT exists to bring youth theatRE to the community.</p>