

QUICK QUIZ

1. Which way is DOWNSTAGE?
 - A) Away from the audience
 - B) Under the stage
 - C) Towards the audience

2. What would you do with a LIRIPIPE?
 - A) Wear it
 - B) Blow it
 - C) Pour water through it

3. Where would you find an A.S.M.?
 - A) Hospital
 - B) Army
 - C) Theatre

4. What is a SONNET?
 - A) Song of a small bird
 - B) Poem with a special pattern
 - C) Soft hat for a new baby

5. What does "BREAK A LEG" mean in the theatre?
 - A) I want your part
 - B) Can I help you?
 - C) Good luck!

6. What is a GREEN ROOM?
 - A) A place to rear plants
 - B) A place for actors to relax
 - C) A place for newcomers to learn

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7. What is a CODPIECE?
 - A) A very witty remark
 - B) Fish for lunch
 - C) An item of male costume

8. What is a CURTAIN CALL?
 - A) Signal in an emergency
 - B) Signal for the beginning of
 - C) Cast taking applause at the end of a performance

9. If you are OFF THE BOOK have you
 - A) Learned all your lines
 - B) Taken a dislike to the play
 - C) Felt it's not true to the original novel

10. If you are a PROMPTER, do you
 - A) Tell off anyone arriving late
 - B) Help people who forget their words
 - C) Always arrive on time

11. If you have MISSED THE HALF, have you
 - A) Felt lonely without your partner
 - B) Arrived late
 - C) Failed to hit a target

12. What is a CALL BOY?
 - A) An instruction to ask for help
 - B) Someone to take messages
 - C) A mannish-looking lady

ANSWERS

1. DOWNSTAGE - (C) - Big theatres used to have the stage sloping towards the audience. It was thought to make it easier to see people at the back of the stage if they were higher. Modern set designers often have inset scenes rolled in on trucks (platforms on wheels); so a sloping stage became far too dangerous! (Imagine a pit full of orchestral players being bombarded from above by runaway furniture!)
2. LIRIPIPE – (A) - A long tail hanging from the back of a hood especially in medieval or academic dress. Sometimes the tail could be worn draped around the neck.
3. ASM - (C) - Assistant Stage Managers are sometimes known as the “lowest form of theatrical life” as they are expected to do more or less anything backstage – even appear onstage in an emergency. Many famous actors began as ASMs and progressed by making the most of every opportunity.
4. SONNET - (B) - Shakespeare wrote 154 sonnets between 1593 and 1600, often about love! Each sonnet has 14 lines. Alternate lines rhyme except at the end where the last two form a “rhyming couplet”. So the pattern of rhymes is always ABAB CDCD EFEF GG. The whole poem has a skipping rhythm with 5 beats in each line: - deDA deDA deDA deDA deDA (known as iambic pentameter.) Here is an example: -
Shall I comPARE thee TO a SUMMER's DAY?
5. BREAK A LEG - (C) - There are lots of superstitions in the theatre. Some people think it's bad luck to say, “Good luck”!
6. GREEN ROOM - (B) - There are many theories about when this tradition began. One of the best is that in 1599, the Blackfriars Theatre in London had a waiting room for actors waiting to go on stage and it was painted green.

ANSWERS CONTINUED ...

7. CODPIECE - (C) - In Tudor times, upper class men covered their private parts with, sometimes exaggerated, special clothing. Have a look at pictures of Henry VIII!

8. CURTAIN CALL - (C) - Some people love to count how many “curtains” they have. That’s nothing to do with collecting soft furnishings! It is about how many times the curtain (or the lights) go up and down after a performance while the cast bow to the audience’s rapturous applause.

9. OFF THE BOOK - (A) - Some Directors give the cast a date to be “off the book” – which may or may not be helpful.

10. PROMPTER - (B) - In the past, there was always a prompter “on the book” during a performance, ready to call out a line if an actor got stuck. They would sit in the “prompt corner”, usually off stage left. Nowadays, stage performers are expected to be able to improvise and work as a team to get themselves out of trouble.

11. MISSED THE HALF - (B) - All the cast and crew are expected to be in the theatre at least half an hour before the “beginners” call. That call is given 5 minutes before the show begins. So the “half” is actually 35 minutes. Woe betide you if you miss it!

12. CALL BOY - (B) - Nowadays, calls are usually given via loudspeakers in the dressing rooms. In the old days, a person would run round the dressing rooms with messages from the stage manager – usually that someone is soon needed. (Well, “call girl” doesn’t sound right, does it?)