

AS1: A SUMMARY OF RESEARCH – SECTION 2 – SAMPLE 2

SKILLS REQUIRED FOR AN ACTOR

From my research using the Equity website I discovered that actors need a wide range of skills and how these are used will vary depending on the medium they are working in, for example film or stage work. However, the skills below are needed across all styles, genres and forms of performance as an actor as these are the basic tools used to communicate with the audience

Vocal skills: *accent, clarity, inflection, pause, pace, pitch, tone volume:* An actor must ensure they are loud enough to be heard and enunciate their words clearly - clarity and projection. Varying pitch, tone and volume the actor can reflect the different relationships between the characters and shows the character's feelings, producing a clear interpretation of the script and the director's intentions. Accent and use of dialect is vital to show where the character is from and even their social standing. Pause is highly important to create suspense and tension within drama. When watching the National Theatre 50 years on Stage programme I particularly noticed the actors' ability to show different characters through using their vocal skills, especially their versatility in using accents. For example, the actress playing Eliza Doolittle had to show her cockney accent and RP accent in one short scene. This requires skill and concentration.

Non-verbal skills: *co-ordination, control, proxemics, gesture, pace, poise, stillness, spatial awareness, facial expression:* Stillness was one of the skills I really noticed used to utmost effect in various performances in The National Theatre - 50 years on Stage programme. The control created a focus for the audience and made the performances all the more powerful. Proxemics and spatial awareness need to be utilised by the actor to show the dynamics and relationships between the characters on stage. Gesture can indicate the character's inner thoughts and feelings that are perhaps not revealed by what they're saying - they can support or contradict so engaging the audience. I think facial expressions are the most important of all the actor's tools as they show clearly the character's feelings and thoughts. The actor must always be acting, even if they are not speaking so they have to think like their character all the time. Facial expressions is one of the key ways the actor shows they are in character. Their reactions can be subtle or exaggerated depending on the mood and demands of the piece.

All of these skills come together to create the character. However, the actor must also do research and follow the director's interpretation to create a full character.

The Equity website also emphasises the need for the actor to be lacking in inhibitions, be creative and collaborate. An actor also needs to be flexible, have stamina and resilience to cope with the varying demands on their skills, time and the uncertain nature of the work.