

STAGEBOX

ADVICE FOR SELF-TAPING

SETTING:

LOCATION - Find a quiet room that has no or minimum background noise/is not a thoroughfare.

BACKGROUND - The wall behind you should ideally be a black blue, white or grey. Do not shoot towards a window.

PROPS - Limit prop usage – often not necessary.

LIGHTING - Ask who is filming it for you to be aware of shadows and try to avoid them.

TECHNIQUE:

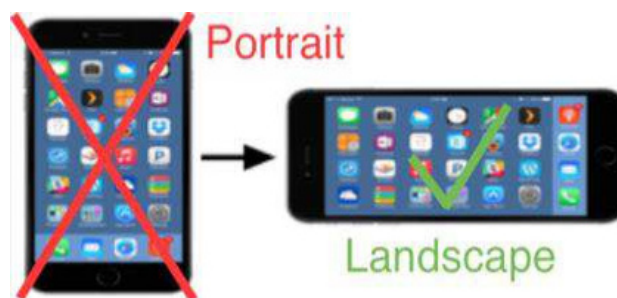
TRIPODS - Cameras should be on a tripod for steady shooting. Not everyone has the equipment but an iPhone on a cheap gorilla tripod on a chair would be fine (£11.99 on amazon).

READER - Have someone (a reader) read the other lines in the scene with you OFF-CAMERA. Ideally of the right gender for the part and preferably, another actor. Ensure their voice is not too loud, as it can overpower the take. It can be useful for actors to pair up to read for their self tapes.

ABSENT READER - Please avoid at all costs simply reading your own lines and leaving paused for imagined dialogue in between. Anyone reading in with you is better. Don't read the stage directions out loud!

APPS - There are several audition apps out there where you record your voice doing the other part too and it plays it back, but they never sound good. They can slow the scene done and sound robotic. The interaction therefore never feels real or believable.

LANDSCAPE/PORTRAIT - If you use an iPhone/Smart Phone to self tape, ensure that it is landscape, NOT portrait. See below.



STAGEBOX

HOW TO FILM:

- 1. Start with a LONG shot so we can see your full body from head to toe. Hold for a second then ZOOM in slowly to a CLOSE-UP shot of your head to just past a little bit of the shoulders (about 6 – 7 inches below the shoulders)
- 2. The Slate - IF REQUIRED - should be delivered directly into the camera, in English only, state:
 - Your full name
 - Your height
 - Your nationality
 - Do you have a valid passport
- 3. Pause for a second then begin to act out the scene. Make sure you are framed tight (from top of the head to just past the shoulder). DO NOT read directly to camera. Interact with your reader, who should be positioned next to the camera so you will be facing the direction of the camera but not looking to the camera. Keep this tight framing on you until you finish taping the entire take. Do not cut off the scene too quickly. Directors like to see the actor looking thoughtful and in repose. We DO NOT need to see the reader at all. You can move a few small steps around you if you want but the camera should follow you.
- 4. Do NOT shoot from different angles. Full face is generally desired, rather than profile shots. Equally, lots of movement is often unhelpful and distracting.
- 5. TAKES: Ensure you have taped versions of ALL the scenes requested by the CD in the instruction email - depending on what the CD asks for, it's worth doing a couple (2 at most ideally) of different takes just in case you want to show something different. Do try and find out in advance as much information as possible regarding accent, characterisation, etc.
- 6. If you know the show/programme you are taping for, think about its style and pace and try and read in keeping with it.
- 7. OFF-BOOK IS ALWAYS BEST. If you need to use the sides, please ensure that you are not looking down too much at the script during the scene, or being obscured by the script - we need to see you engaging with the other actor.
- 8. Please edit your takes and only send the best one, at most two of each scene. Make it look as professional as possible. We do not want to see any arms coming round to press the off button.



STAGEBOX

- 10. Files should be saved in MOV or MPEG-4 format - and not too big a file size (under 70mb in total). If you send the video files via Vimeo, make sure you have ticked the download option when you send it. Many CDs are also happy to receive files in a downloadable format via yousendit/wetransfer/hightail etc. If you choose to upload tapes via Youtube or Vimeo, ect. You must ensure the footage is password protected, rather than for public viewing. File sharing sites are often much better than attaching a file to an email.
- 11. Please be aware that, particularly for US productions. Files that are too small are not considered high enough quality - this is often the case with self-tapes filmed on iPhones and iPads.
- 12. You do not need to project your voice, but do make sure the sound is a good quality.

APPEARANCE:

- HAIR - Make sure your hair does not cover your face.
- LIGHTING - We advise ensuring you are lit from the front, rather than above. Above is very unflattering.
- CLOTHING - It's best to avoid wearing thin stripes on camera - they jump! Ensure your clothing is neutral (no big logos etc) and do not 'dress up for the role' unless it has been requested, although a suggestion can be useful (i.e. smarter for a lawyer, etc)
- MAKE UP - Generally keep this subtle (unless otherwise specified): if it's a hot day we recommend putting a bit of powder on to minimis shine.

