

COSTUME PROCESS TIPS:

Pulling costumes for a performance class

THESE ARE SACRED OBJECTS

THE CONNECTION BETWEEN YOU AND YOUR COLLABORATORS IS SACRED TRUST

THEATRE IS MAGIC

What to do before you come to the costume shop?

Dramaturgical & Image research:

Figure out who these characters are and what they might be wearing.

Make a “Piece List”:

This is a list of the items you would like to find to create each character.

Making a list will help keep your brain focused while pulling from stock. It is easy to get overwhelmed! You will be juggling your vision with what actually exists in stock.

General measurements from your actor:

Ask the performer for some general sizing information.

These are just numbers, but they're also highly personal. Never share them with anyone outside your project team.

A good basic list would be: Waist, chest, hip, inseam, sleeve length, shoe size, shirt size, and pant size.

Now that you have your ideas and tools...

Make an appointment with the stock manager to pull items or come for drop in hours. If the costume shop isn't in the middle of a tech week, fittings, or a super intense build week, Jenny may be able to meet you in stock and answer questions.

At your stock appointment make sure you've given yourself enough time to look. It can take longer than you think to find the right objects. Stock is an object library so items should be simple to find in labeled bins and sections. Remember to put things back where you found them OR if you forgot where it goes, place it on the restock rack.

Bring a bag or a bin to carry the items you're borrowing in. Multiple bags can be useful if you're pulling for different characters to keep things organized.

Check out items with the stock manager.

Costumes can be stored in the cubbies outside of the classroom. Label them clearly! You are responsible for returning everything to stock once your project is complete.

Congratulations next is where the magic happens!!!

Discuss with the performer about where they are comfortable trying on clothes.

Once you've pulled costumes to try on your performer, but before you're throwing clothes at them to try on, **agree on a comfortable space to do fittings.**

Set up a space where they have the privacy they need to feel comfortable trying on outfits that may or may not fit properly. The dressing rooms are a great place for this if they're not in use. Sometimes a performer and director will go to stock together and try on items. This is an option if both parties agree to this less private process and costumes can be tried on over your clothes.

Organize the items they should try first and make a plan for different outfits to try. You'll have to 'think on your feet' a little because some combinations may not look like what you thought they would on the person, but that's ok and totally part of the process. You may be surprised by how something else 'makes' the character. You may also have to settle for something that just works for this moment.

Perfection isn't the game in these projects, it's about learning the *process* of creating character through costume.

When discussing costume pieces with a performer **remember to ask about comfort, movement restrictions, and speak about how the items serve the character.** Everyone's relationship with their body is very personal and we all have things we are sensitive about. Commercial garment sizes are widely variant. Focusing on garment size or commenting about a person's body will quickly break the trust you've spent so much time building in the rehearsal room.

Hopefully you have found a combination of items that will work for your piece. Clothing from the performer's closet can also be mixed in and if scheduling allows a second pull from stock is possible.

I hope this guide will help you through your costume problem solving process.

BE KIND TO EACH OTHER, BE CREATIVE, AND MAKE GREAT THINGS!

P.S. Remember to take good care of your costumes, even the ones you decide not to use. Store things nicely and clean them before returning to the stock.
Thank you!!!

