



LESSON 3

Observation

LESSON OBJECTIVES

- ◆ Identify observation and point of view.
- ◆ Understand the importance of observation in theatre.
- ◆ Participate in observation activities.
- ◆ Observe physical detail.

Warm Up



How observant were you this morning? What did your parents and siblings say to you before you came to school? What were they wearing?

Observation skills are valuable in appearing believable onstage. If you do not pay careful attention to people's movements, mannerisms, and dress, your portrayal onstage will be without substance.

The skill of observation requires much attention and study. When you observe people or things, you must look carefully at the details. For example, what was the teacher in your last class wearing? You have to pay close attention to every detail to observe successfully.

The way we think, feel, or act about a person, place, or situation is called our **point of view**. A point of view can be literal, such as the way you see actual objects fitting together in a given space. It can also be figurative, involving interpretation, which results from your attitude toward what you see. Your point of view will have an impact on your observation, so try to get into the habit of looking at things and people from several different points of view to get as much detail as possible.

point of view

a position from which we perceive (understand) an object, person, or place.

As an actor, you have to observe people every day and remember what they look like and how they behave. You have to pay close attention to the way your body moves—such as how you hold a cup, brush your teeth, or walk through a door.

This sounds like work, and it is. It isn't easy being an actor and creating a believable world onstage. Developing your observation skills will give you ideas to use in your performances and will make you more aware of the world around you.

ACTION



1. Daily Actions. Study these daily activities while at home, school, or places you visit. Observe each detail and be able to perform a simple reenactment of the activity.

making a sandwich	opening the door of the car
brushing your teeth	standing in line at the cafeteria
channel surfing, using the TV's remote control	carrying your books to class
working on your computer	buttoning a coat
dialing a phone number	shooting a basketball
drinking a cup of hot chocolate	throwing a football
zipping a jacket	serving a tennis ball
turning on a light	combing your hair

Ask yourself a detailed set of questions about each activity. For example: How do my hands react to the weight of this object? What is my face doing right now?

2. A Person Came In? Your teacher will make arrangements for a visitor to come to your theatre class. The person will come in, stay for a moment, and then exit. After the person leaves, have a class discussion focusing on the following questions:

- Who was the person?
- What was the person wearing?
- How long did the person stay in the room?
- What did the person do in the room?
- What did the person leave in the room?
- What time was it when the person came in?
- What time was it when the person left?
- What was the person's general attitude, and how could you tell?

3. Classroom Observation. Look around the classroom. Observe to your left, to your right, up, down, in front of you, and behind you. After 2 minutes, close your eyes and be prepared to answer questions about your surroundings. For example, your teacher may ask: What is Emily wearing? Who is sitting in the front of the room? Who is directly to your left? What color shoes is that person wearing?