**Theatre is all about creativity and collaboration, but when you’re trying to memorize your lines, it’s easy to forget that.** Gone are your castmates, costumes, and scene changes. It’s just you, the playwright’s words, and your desperate attempts to commit them to memory.

Memorizing lines can be one of the most frustrating parts of acting. Unfortunately, it’s also one of the most crucial parts. So what’s a person to do when you’re in a show or have a casting call or audition?

Luckily, there are plenty of ways to make the whole memorizing process easier. Here are a few tried and true methods that professional actors use—and that you can, too.

**1. Use a Mnemonic Device**

One easy way to memorize lines fast is to take a section of script and write down the first letter of each word. For example, let’s say you’re memorizing the famous line: “To be or not to be, that is the question.”

You’d write down the letters like this:

“T b o n t b, t i t q.”

Try saying the line while looking at the letters you’ve written out. [Here’s a good video](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Jbe1-oHnR6k) that demonstrates this method. Once you feel confident, say it again without looking. Soon you’ll have the whole soliloquy down pat!

**2. Record Yourself Saying Your Lines**

In the age of smartphones, recording your lines is easier than ever. And that’s a huge plus for actors.

Try recording yourself reading the lines, then play the recording over and over again. Listen to it when you’re folding laundry, driving in the car, getting ready for work or school in the morning, getting ready for bed at night, etc.

Disclaimer: if you live with other people, this may drive them crazy.

…But it will help you remember your lines!

**3. Sing Your Lines**

Ever noticed that it’s easier to memorize songs than spoken lines? That’s because your brain can more quickly memorize words when they’re set to music.

You can put this scientific tip to good use by singing your lines instead of just saying them. Like the lyrics to that song you heard on the radio this morning, the lines will be stuck in your head forever.

Just remember, before you practice on stage with the rest of the cast, to switch back from singing to speaking.

**4. Cover Your Lines and Quiz Yourself**

Many actors use a method that involves covering up a line with a bookmark or a folded piece of paper.

Cover everything except the line you’re trying to memorize and the cue line (the line right before). Read the uncovered lines, then see if you can say them without looking. Once you can, cover up those lines and move on to memorize the next one.

It’s not the most exciting or original memorization technique, but there’s a reason it’s so common: it works.

**5. Write It Down**

Ever heard the idea that students who take notes by hand learn faster than those who take notes on a computer?

There’s something to be said for muscle memory. If you write something out by hand, it’s easier to recall later. So if you’re struggling to memorize a script, you might try writing the lines down by hand.

You may get hand cramps, but that’s just a risk you’ll have to take if you want perfect memorization.

**6. Use Blocking to Jog Your Memory**

Some actors find that blocking helps them memorize lines. It can be easier to memorize lines when you think about what you’ll be doing during them: where you’re positioned, whether or not you’re moving, and what you’re doing with your hands.

For example, you might say “To be or not to be, that is the question” while walking slowly across the stage. Then you stop and turn toward the audience to say “whether ‘tis nobler in the mind to suffer the slings and arrows of outrageous fortune” and raise a fist as you say “or to take arms against a sea of troubles and by opposing end them.”

The lines become associated with specific actions, and you can use that to jog your memory. Plus, you’ll get your blocking down as well.

**7. Practice with Someone Else**

You can only spend so much time alone in your room running over your lines before you start to go crazy. That’s why (unless being crazy figures into your character) you might want to shake things up by practicing with a partner.

If you can’t find a fellow actor, cast member or scene partner to practice with, use a friend, roommate, or family member. Have them read the other parts and quiz you on your lines. It’s a fun way to practice and it helps prepare you for practicing with other actors.

**8. Go for a Walk or Take a Nap**

What? Taking a nap can help me memorize my lines?

Well, yes and no. Sleeping with your script under your pillow isn’t going to magically put the words in your head, but there is strong evidence that taking a nap can help with information processing and memorization.

Research shows that taking a nap after reading something can help cement it in your brain, because you’re allowing your brain time to move the information from short-term memory to long-term recall. Going for a walk can have the same effect, and exercising is also helpful for memorization.

So after spending some time memorizing a chunk of script, it’s always a good idea to give yourself a break to stretch your legs or get some shut eye. You deserve a rest anyway.

Finally, remember that what works for one actor may not work for you. Even though these are some of the best ways to memorize lines, if any of these methods seem to do more harm than good, drop it and try another one.

You’ve got this