

Actor interview questions

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What to expect

Interviews for acting roles usually combine a conversation about training and experience with a practical demonstration, such as a cold read, monologue or improvised scene. Panels are checking craft ability alongside how well a person takes direction and copes with the uncertainty built into the profession.

- **Behavioural:** Questions about past productions, working with directors and handling audition rejection, used to gauge resilience and professionalism.
- **Process:** Questions about how scripts are prepared, memorised and rehearsed, testing method and discipline.
- **Scenario / judgement:** Hypotheticals about last-minute script changes, difficult scene partners or on-set problems, testing adaptability under pressure.
- **Practical demonstration:** A cold read, prepared monologue or short improvisation performed live for the panel or camera.

Panels typically open with background and training questions, move into behavioural and process questions about rehearsal and direction, then close with a practical read or scene, sometimes followed by direction given on the spot to see how the actor adjusts.

1. Tell me about a time a director gave you a note that changed your whole approach to a scene.

Why they ask

Tests whether the actor can take direction without becoming defensive and can translate feedback into a changed performance.

How to structure your answer

STAR: describe the situation and the original approach, the note given, the action taken to adjust, and the result in the performance or final production.

Example answer

"In one production I'd built a character around quiet restraint, but the director felt the scene needed more visible urgency in the second act. I asked for a run-through where I pushed the physicality further while keeping the internal logic of the character intact. It took a couple of passes to find a version that felt true rather than forced, but the director confirmed it landed the way the scene needed, and I kept that adjusted energy for the rest of the run."

2. Walk me through how you prepare and memorise a new script.

Why they ask

Checks for a genuine, repeatable process rather than relying purely on natural talent, since reliability matters to directors and producers.

How to structure your answer

Process walkthrough: describe the stages in order, from first read to performance-ready, noting any tools or techniques used at each stage.

Example answer

"I start with a full read-through to understand the story and my character's arc before memorising anything. Then I break the script into scenes and work on lines in short blocks, saying them aloud and moving as I would on stage, since physical memory helps me retain dialogue. I use script analysis to note motivation and objectives for each scene, then run lines with a scene partner or recording once I'm off the page, adjusting pacing as rehearsals with the director progress."

3. We'd like you to do a short cold read from this scene. Take a minute to look it over.

Why they ask

Directly tests core craft: how quickly the actor can find character choices and commit to them under time pressure.

How to structure your answer

Practical demonstration: use the preparation minute to identify the character's objective and one clear physical or vocal choice, then commit fully to the read rather than hedging.

Example answer

"Given a minute, I'd read for the character's want in the scene and pick one strong choice, for example whether they're trying to hide something or push for an answer, and let that drive my pacing and eye contact. I'd commit to that choice fully in the read rather than playing it safe, since a clear, confident choice gives the panel more to respond to than a technically correct but flat delivery."

4. How do you handle a string of unsuccessful auditions?

Why they ask

Rejection is a constant part of the profession, and panels want evidence of resilience rather than burnout risk.

How to structure your answer

STAR, focused on emotional management and continued professional behaviour rather than the outcome of any single audition.

Example answer

"I keep a simple log of auditions and feedback so I can look for patterns rather than treating each rejection as personal. After a run of unsuccessful auditions for screen roles, I went back to my reel and realised my self-tape lighting wasn't doing my work justice, so I invested time in improving that setup rather than just submitting more tapes. It didn't guarantee a result, but it kept me improving instead of just waiting for the next yes."

5. You're paired with a scene partner you've never met, for a scene requiring strong emotional connection. How do you approach the first rehearsal?

Why they ask

Tests interpersonal skill and practical technique for building chemistry quickly, which matters in ensemble casting.

How to structure your answer

Scenario and judgement: outline the immediate approach, the technique used to build trust quickly, and how you'd adjust if the first attempt fell flat.

Example answer

"I'd start with a straightforward conversation off-script, just getting a sense of how they work and what they need from a scene partner. Then I'd run the scene once loosely, without pushing for the full emotional weight, to find a shared rhythm before adding intensity. If the connection wasn't landing, I'd suggest trying a different physical proximity or tempo rather than forcing the same approach again."

6. What acting techniques do you draw on, and how do you decide which to use for a given role?

Why they ask

Assesses depth of training and whether the actor can articulate craft decisions, not just perform instinctively.

How to structure your answer

Technical/craft explanation: name the frameworks you use, then explain the decision process for matching technique to role.

Example answer

"My training leans on Stanislavski's work on objectives and Meisner's focus on reacting truthfully to a scene partner. For a naturalistic screen role I lean more on Meisner-style listening and reaction, since the camera picks up subtlety. For a heightened stage piece I go back to objective-and-obstacle work to keep the performance grounded even when the style is bigger. The choice usually comes from reading the script and talking with the director about the tone they're after."