

SET DESIGNER/CREATOR CHECKLIST

The Scenic/Set Designer is responsible for the design and implementation of all scenic elements of a production in a timely manner and within budgetary limits.

In this case, the “designer” is the entire set crew.

Pre-Production

- Read play
- Clear schedule for Tech/Production Week
- Meet with director about what he/she envisions (take notes!)
- Meet with LF Assistant to sort out needs/concerns
- Coordinate with Lighting and Costume Designers – make sure ideas “match”
- Consult the Calendar for deadlines
- Generate thumbnail sketches and research
- Revise thumbnail sketches for Director's approval by "Preliminary Designs Due" date
- Gather set pieces that can be used pre-made
- Construct set pieces that need to be made (be creative!)

Rehearsal Period

- Generate “groundplans” that show layout for each scene
- Revise groundplans for Director's approval by "Designed by" date
- Generate Working Drawings for Set Crew
- Attend Staggerthrough/Stumblethrough/First Runthrough
- Work with Stage Manager to tape out floor
- Work with Stage Manager to place and spike furniture, rugs, etc.
- Dress the set

During Production

- Attend Dress Rehearsals
- Set/remove set pieces as needed for each scene
- You must wear all black

Post-Production

- Remove all set pieces
- Dismantle set pieces created
- Return borrowed set pieces to their rightful place

TIPS FOR SET CONSTRUCTION

Universal Set Construction Rules

- If the piece has to bear weight, use ½" plywood and 2x4's. In reality, for any high school or college performance, anything more than that is too heavy to move and usually more expensive than is needed.
- Use foam. Foam sheeting is light, easy to cut and manipulate, paintable (with latex paint), and it's \$10 cheaper per sheet than plywood. Spray foam can also be useful for texturing pieces. It can be used to make stones more realistic, and for tree trunks to simulate bark.
- Flats can be made out of a variety of materials. They can be made out 1x3's with canvas stretched over them; they can be made with old bed sheets, too; they can be made with luan, as well – 4x8 in size, instead of the taller, canvas/bedsheet variety. These more-sturdy 4x8 flats can be bolted together to make a sturdy wall.

High School Theater Set-Building Techniques

- Prisms are three-sided pieces on wheels. Each side shows a different scene, and if braced properly, can open up to a fourth "room."
- Almost every set piece should serve at least two purposes. Everything should be reversible, fold down into something else, or fly up to disappear.
- Objects in the distance can be built in miniature and hang from flies in the back of the stage. They can be made three-dimensional, and have lights built inside with little window cut-outs. One spotlight can be pointed right at the mini-palace or mini-town and the stage darkened to add effect. This can be used to signify that action in the front of the stage is taking place *there*, not at the place shown with the rest of the set.

Performance Stage Set Construction Timeline

Start building as soon as possible. If the set can be built before the first practice, that is best. It should be ready no later than two weeks before the first performance. At least some of the pieces should be ready before then.

Working on a tight timeline is usually what happens, and sometimes the set can't be built until a few weeks before performance due to space-sharing.