

# AUDITION AND PORTFOLIO REVIEW TIPS

If you're applying to a high school magnet program, an off-campus study program, or another arts program, chances are you'll have to show your artwork and/or ability level in the arts. The audition or portfolio review process may seem stressful, but it helps a school or program determine if it can meet your needs and help you grow in the arts. It can also help *you* decide whether that school or program is right for you. Here are some tips to help you excel at an audition or portfolio review.

## BE PREPARED.

Make sure you have everything you need. Check the application carefully and meet every requirement.

**For Auditions:** Bring everything you need to help you feel confident, including:

- Proper clothing and shoes (if there is a dress code)
- Comfortable clothes and shoes you feel good moving around in (if there is no dress code)
- Band-aids or moleskin (in case of blisters or other minor injuries)
- Hairpins
- Water

**For a Portfolio Review:** Select the artworks that excite you the most. Reviewers want to see that you are aware of what constitutes your best work. Make sure your presentation is neatly organized, lightweight, and easy to look through (for example, a sketchbook, photo album, and/or a device showing digital images).

## ARRIVE EARLY.

Plan to arrive at least 30 minutes early so you have time to check out your surroundings, warm up, and get focused. Concentrate on preparing physically and mentally. Deep breathing, yoga, or other warm-ups can help center and calm you. Find out if there is a place to prepare on-site. If there isn't, leave time at home or on the way there to get ready.

## ASK AUTHENTIC QUESTIONS.

If you are unsure about directions or instructions given to you, don't be afraid to speak up. It will show the judges you want to do your best. Ask questions in a professional manner and make sure you're not asking anything that has already been answered.

If a judge asks if you have any questions about the program or school, ask things you are genuinely curious about and will help you make an informed decision about attending. It may help to prepare a list of questions in advance.

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## STAND OUT AS A LEARNER AND A LEADER.

All other things being equal, judges may gravitate toward the most engaged and enthusiastic artists. Show confidence: stand or sit in the front when you can, introduce yourself, make good eye contact, and don't be afraid to share your ideas.

## MAKE A LASTING IMPRESSION.

When you are performing or speaking to judges, focus on your audition piece or portfolio. Talk about your work, class assignments, and their purpose. Talk about what inspires you to create. Try to leave an impression of yourself as a thoughtful, creative person who loves artmaking and learning.

## STAY POSITIVE!

Some auditions and portfolio reviews can be quite competitive. If you're not selected, it doesn't mean you lack talent. Don't be defensive or defeated if you are offered critique—expert input will help you improve. Finally, remember: This isn't the end of the road. You are young and talented—there will always be another opportunity around the corner.



For more information about:

- CPS schools that offer outstanding arts programs
- Citywide performing arts and visual arts programs offered for all CPS students
- Credit-bearing AP and Honors courses offered for CPS high school students
- Resources for college and career planning in the arts

Visit the CPS Department of Arts Education website at [www.cpsarts.org](http://www.cpsarts.org) and check out the **Students and Parents** section!