



2023-24 Mainstage Content, Mainstage Attendance, and Audience Etiquette Policy

MAINSTAGE PERFORMANCES

CA Thespians is proud to showcase the skills of California students on the Mainstage of the California State Thespian Festival (CSTF). Mainstage performances include **Judges' Choice** (selected from Thespy entries), and 30-minute pieces selected from **Play Festival** entries.

Mainstage Performances Selection:

Play Festival mainstage performances will be selected by a committee selected by the Executive Board of California State Thespians, based on the recommendations of the Play Festival judges after the Play Festival in January.

Judges' Choice mainstage performances will be selected by the Thespy Coordinators, based on the recommendations of Thespy judges on site at CSTF.

Managing Student Expectations: We recommend that Troupe directors explain and set personal goals for their troupes. Examples: Is it to make Mainstage? Is it to be Chapter Select? Is it for feedback? Is it for a superior rating? Is it for placement?

GUIDELINES FOR CSTF MAINSTAGE SELECTION

Mainstage selections for CSTF should be audience-friendly and align with our DEIA Action Plan. Material for Play Festivals and Judges' Choice will be checked by the coordinators of each to deem appropriate content recommendations.

Content Guidelines for Mainstage Performance: Performances are encouraged to be: entertaining, audience-appropriate, and timely. They should include:

- **No expletives** (a profane or obscene word or phrase that is used to express strong emotions, often anger, frustration, or emphasis. These words are considered socially or culturally inappropriate in many contexts due to their offensive nature)

- **No mature themes** (subject matter, content, or concepts that are intended for, or suitable for, mature audiences due to their complexity, sensitivity, or potentially explicit nature).

Creating content that's appropriate for a specific audience involves careful consideration of various factors. Below is a checklist to help ensure that your content aligns with our diverse audience.

- **Age Group:** Determine the age range of your target audience. Different age groups have varying sensitivities and comprehension levels. Your show should be appropriate for attendees ages 13 and up.
- **Themes and Topics:** Your show should be suitable for the entire State Festival delegation, including troupes from across the political spectrum and religious schools.
- **Complexity and Depth:** We encourage you to bring pieces that are accessible to, while also challenging, our teenaged attendees.
- **Cultural Sensitivity:** The State Festival audience is incredibly diverse. Avoid stereotypes or offensive content that could alienate specific groups in our delegation.

By considering these factors, you can bring content that resonates with our festival audience while respecting their sensitivities and preferences.

MAINSTAGE EVENTS & WORKSHOP ATTENDANCE

All students are required to attend Mainstage Events and workshops. During Mainstage Events, the quad and hospitality will be closed. **During workshops, the quad will be closed.**

On-Site Delegate Attendance Policy: Attendance is required for the entirety of all CSTF days. A CSTF "day" begins with the first Mainstage Event of the day, and ends after the last Mainstage Event of the day. Delegates are expected to attend every Mainstage Event and all workshop sessions. Early morning events and late night events are not required Festival activities.

Troupes who choose not to attend Mainstage Events and workshops, whose troupe and/or students depart from the event early (for the day or for the weekend) will not be invited back to CSTF the following year. A troupe with multiple attendance violations over multiple years will not be invited back until five years after the date of the most recent violation.

Depending on location and schedule, off campus trips for lunch may be acceptable; this will be made clear in the Festival program and schedule.

Extenuating circumstances may be accommodated by the Chapter Director.

AUDIENCE ETIQUETTE

Audience expectations will be included in registration materials and each troupe director will review these expectations with their students.

Every Thespian works very hard on their performances and presentations, from Improvs to Thespy to Mainstage. It is important to create a supportive atmosphere that respects the hard work of all State Festival attendees. In order to support performers and presenters, and to ensure that *everyone* can enjoy performances, we offer the following audience etiquette guidelines:

- Don't talk once events have started. Talking to your friends and troupe members during performances disrupts the viewing of others.
- Remind your troupe that screaming for their friends prevents others from hearing their own friends.
- Applause should be during blackouts and at the end of performances. When in doubt, follow the lead of the rest of the audience and your troupe director.
- Keep comments to yourself. Everyone has worked really hard on their performances and we want to keep the atmosphere safe, respectful, and positive.
- Unless invited by the performers, don't sing along to musical pieces.
- Filming performances is a violation of copyright laws. Recording devices (including cell phones) will be confiscated from audience members who violate those laws. Devices will be returned after a conversation between the House Manager or Event Coordinator and the Troupe Director.
- We understand that emergencies happen. If you need to take a phone call, step outside. Cell phones will be confiscated from audience members who violate this guideline. Devices will be returned after a conversation between the House Manager or Chapter Director and the Troupe Director.
- Don't send text messages during performances. Troupe directors and chaperones are allowed to do so in case of an emergency.
- Please turn off or put cell phones on vibrate during performances. Let's all be present and have fun.
- Use the restroom between performances. If you must use the restroom during a performance, quietly leave the house and go to the restroom in the auditorium lobby. You will be allowed to re-enter the auditorium at the discretion of the House Manager.

- No food or drink is allowed in the auditorium.
- Please stay awake. Everyone has worked really hard on their performances and we want to respect their hard work.

Invitation Policy: Groups who do not respect event expectations will not be invited back to CSTF the following year. Groups with multiple violations over multiple years will not be invited back until 5 years after the date of the most recent violation.

CHAPTER SELECT

CA Thespians hosts a Play Festival in multiple locations and virtually in January. Up to 6 Play Festival entries may be invited to the Chapter Select Final Round at CSTF. From these, one entry may be invited to represent CA at the International Thespian Festival.

Performances may be one-acts, cuttings from full-length productions, reader's theatre, dance, mime, comedy, drama, etc. Troupes interested in representing California at ITF should adhere to [EdTA's Chapter Select guidelines](#). Performance rights must be secured to perform at ITF *if* the piece is published. Original works are welcomed. Performances selected after the Play Festivals to be Chapter Select Finalists will perform for a panel of judges on the first day of the CSTF. The Chapter Select nominee will be announced after the State Festival.

Adjudications: Using the [appropriate ITF Chapter Select Rubric](#), plays will be adjudicated by a diverse panel of theatre professionals. The judges will equally critique both adults and students. The judges are encouraged to be open, honest, and direct with their feedback to the cast and the director regardless of the director's age.