

Designing a Show? Don't know where to start? Try step 1

1. **Read the play.** Ignore all stage directions and just read the story. All the other information is distracting to your first understanding of the show. Don't try to multi task and get it all done at once. You'll be limiting yourself. Then you can actually get a feel for the play itself. Some plays are dark. Others are light. Some are very fast paced – others are very slow and brooding ... all of these descriptions have certain colors and emotions associated with them in our minds- all of these descriptions have certain colors and emotions associated with them in our minds.
2. **Annotate.** Write down all of your immediate thoughts and motivations about the script, the characters, anything that crossed your mind.
3. **Research.** Yes- research! Research the time of year, location of the story, type of housing, kind of props that would be used. What would the floors look like? What would the walls look like? What is the style of the decor? What is the reasoning for the style of the decor? If it's an era of full skirts (costumes) there wouldn't be a lot of small props on the floor to be knocked over. What kind of fabrics would be used?
4. **Read the Play AGAIN.** Go back through after your first pass – and make your notes. Don't apply these to your stage limitations yet – just be aware of them. Now you can go look at how other people have done this play and get some ideas BUT this is very controversial in terms of having your own original thoughts and ideas on stage and not sealing other people's ideas. If you need a little kick start though, by all means, just remember- you can't copy.
5. **Pre Design Vision with Sketches & Research**-More Research, consider other plays that have similar elements (you might be able to reuse your set pieces if you do things right!)
6. **Thumbnail Sketches** of each scene with research inspiration.
7. **Rendering.** A polished drawing of each scene the way you would like to look. Add people into the rendering for scale, even though the costumes won't be for the show.
8. **Meet with Director** to approve design
9. **Draft!** Draft the ground plan, section/sight line view, front & side elevations of each scenic item. If renderings cannot serve as accurate paint elevations, those must be created as well.
10. **Scale Model** if needed
11. **Estimate** build time& cost for pieces & props
12. **Get Materials**
13. **BUILD BUILD BUILD!!!!!!!!!!!!!!**