

This tutorial, **Magic Talent Show Guidelines**, is authored and copyrighted by **Carol Esterreicher**, Ed. S. Carol is an Educational Specialist and a member of the **International Brotherhood of Magicians** as well as the local chapter of **The Intermountain Magician's Assembly**. Carol has tutored numerous students as they learned magic tricks. She uses her book, **Now You See it, Now You Don't—Sequential Tricks for Developing Language**, in teacher workshops, national convention presentations, and in her work with school students.

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Magic Talent Show Guidelines

Preparation, Practice (with props and patter), **Performance** (with props and patter), **Promotion**

Opening and Closing: This magical performance is almost like giving a speech—only it's a lot more fun! Plan some opening remarks that lead logically to your performance Here is just one example:

Hello, Magic Lovers! My name is _"Mary the Magnificent" "Rowdy Robert the Rage of the Stage!" Be creative with your stage name.or simply state your name. Today we are going to enjoy some magic you never knew scissors could do. Of course, mine are no ordinary scissors. Follow with a paper and scissors "crazy loop" illusion and any other trick that uses scissors. Make up a story about why your scissors are magically endowed. How did your scissors get their magic power?

Set Up and Performance

1. Be sure to conceal (hide) anything that would give away secrets to your tricks.s
2. Be sure your audience can see you clearly.
3. Make your actions big and specific. You are communication with your
 - a) body language
 - b) facial expressions
 - c) words
 - d) mood and energy

Focus: Your Table "etc."

1. A decorative or dazzling cloth made from sparkling material will draw attention to your performance.
2. Light-reflecting fabric sparkles and adds "pzazz!"
3. Choose a table covering to match your theme or purpose if you have chosen one.
4. If you like this idea, pick a season, a holiday, or a topic that will suggest your theme. It can be a simple as "The World Loves Magic!" or "Howling Magical Halloween."

“Patter” and Distraction: The magician’s story, comedy, and conversation are tools called “patter.” The magician often uses this patter to attract attention and to get your eyes to connect with his or her eyes. That way the magician can distract you from paying careful attention to the performance of the many steps of a trick. Sometimes an entertaining joke fits right in perfectly.

Props: Patter, music, and lighting are among the “props” that make your show appear more “magical.” Other props include every imaginable thing you can think of. Some examples include: eyeglasses, gloves, combs, hats, scarves, blindfolds, scissors, bottles, straws, string, rope, masks, silly clothes, close-up mats, balls, flowers, stuffed animals, other ridiculous “stuff.”

Music: Sometimes you can choose to create different moods using background music.

1. You can turn the volume down so your audience can still hear you speak
2. You can turn the volume up and pace your actions to go along with the music in a pantomime performance

You will want to choose music that lasts as long as it takes to perform the trick! Check your library for music to create different moods: mysterious, funny, slow-moving, past-paced.

If you are using a CD with many different music selections, be sure to get a helper to turn the music on and off for you when you give a signal you both agree on. This way you can proceed to the next trick or to your ending statement (story or “patter”) smoothly. A helper who has practiced with you is really important.

Lighting: You can focus on your act by dimming the lights in the whole room and directing a spotlight onto your space where you are performing. That spot-lighted space should include everything you want your audience to see.

You may be able to prop up a large flashlight to create the effect you want. For a more dazzling effect, direct a strobe light toward the spot where you will perform. Use a remote control or get a helper to turn on the strobe light when you give a pre-arranged signal. This helper will also turn off the strobe light on signal. You can find an inexpensive strobe light in some novelty stores. Be wise and use this effect only enough to bring variety to your performance—being careful to avoid overuse.

Time Frame: Know what amount of time your performance will be. If needed place a clock where you can see it. This will help you pace yourself.

1. Time each trick when you practice it. Include
 - a) trick sequence
 - b) patter and use of props
2. Honor the time. Your performance may include only 1 really good trick or 2 to 3 tricks and patters done well with a masterful and magical closing!

Promotion: Be sure to introduce yourself during your opening. Sometime during your closing statement, remind your audience that your name is _____. If you have just performed for your school-wide talent show you may want to promote the enjoyment of magic by suggesting that you would be happy to accept individual classroom teacher's invitations to do

1. a repeat performance or
2. a performance with several different tricks and entertaining patter.

Helpers: if you are using music or lighting, set these props up ahead of time before the talent show begins.. For your school's talent show you may want to arrange to be first on the list of performers. Your parent or teacher can help you with this if needed.

Get a responsible student or teacher to practice with you at least once so he or she knows when to turn the lights and/or music on just when you need it. Your helper will need to turn lights and/or music off just at the right time too. Be sure to practice at least once with your helper.

Advanced Feature

Audience Participation: When you have just the right trick that could use someone from the audience, go ahead and plan on how you will invite someone to join you on stage. A clever "patter" (speech) will be useful here. A good friend or a family member can practice with you. That way you can practice your magician's "patter." You can also practice giving directions and getting the audience member to do what you want so the trick will go as planned. You may want to wait until your second or third talent show performance when you are most comfortable relating to (talking to, joking with) audience members you invite to the stage.

References

1. Your school library and local public libraries have many books at beginning, intermediate, and advanced levels. Remember this for a school or classroom talent show, you want students in the back rows to see your performance and hear your "patter." Be sure to speak like a professional—loudly and clearly. Save close-up and intermediate magic (like cards and coins) for smaller groups.
2. Videos demonstrate step-by-step how to do simple to more difficult tricks. As you watch a video to learn the steps of a trick, be sure to listen to the "patter"—the Magician's speech or story. This way you can talk and tell the story that goes with the trick. You can even make up your own "patter."
3. Many of the beginning and intermediate tricks you will find use materials or "props" that are inexpensive and easy to find or make.
4. Some joke books may have just the bit of humor that fits a specific trick.

MagicTalent Show Resources

These are available through Salt Lake County Libraries!
A computer search at any county library reveals 92
references to "magic tricks."

Activity TV. Magic, Vol. 1 <http://www.activitytv.com>
20 magic tricks (mostly beginner and
intermediate)
Teen age magician; upper elementary
"volunteer"
Appealing tricks demonstrated, explained,
repeated
On-line step-by-step instructions <http://www.actiitytv.com>

Barnhart, Norm. (2009). Amazing Magic Tricks --Beginner
Capstone Press Mankato, Minnesota: Edge
Books J793.8 Bar
Balls, candy, cards, cups, handkerchiefs, props, rabbits,
ropes
secret helpers, volunteers, and more!

Barnhart, Norm. (2009). Amazing Magic Tricks --Apprentice
Capstone Press Mankato, Minnesota: Edge
Books J793.8 Bar
Assistants, balloons, cards, ghosts, wands, words, powers,
parties, predictions, puzzles, toys, volunteers, and more!