Glossary of Terms

Apron
The very front edge of the stage/parts of the stage that are between the audience and the curtain.

Arena stage/Thrust stage
Form of stage where the audience are seated on at least two (normally three, or all four) sides of the whole acting area.

Blocking
The process of determining the placement or location of actors on stage and planning their relative movement in a scene.

Center stage
Middle area of stage.

Dramatic elements
Dialogue, movement, scenery, costumes, make-up, props, lights, and music.

Dramatize
To put in dramatic form.

Dynamics
Variation in pacing to create emotional response.

Down stage
Portion of the stage closest to the audience. Comes from old stages that were raked or inclined and were actually lower at the edge closest to the audience.

Ensemble
Group collaboration. This can include actors, stage hands—anyone involved in the production.

Formal presentation
A performance staged for an invited audience.

House
Space where audience sits.

Improvisation
Portrayal of a character or scene without benefit of a script and little or no preparation.

Informal presentation
Shared experiences within a classroom.

Intention
What a character wants.

In the Round stage
Theatre in the Round is a form of audience seating layout where the acting area is enclosed on all sides by seating. There are often a number of entrances through the seating. Special consideration needs to be given to onstage furniture and scenery as audience sightlines can easily be blocked.

Levels
Blocking actors or staging work using high, medium, and low positions.

Motivation
Reasons for plausible character behavior.

Movement patterns
Traffic and blocking.

Open Up/Cheat Out
Term used to ask actors to turn their bodies so they face more toward the audience.

Physicalize
Through business and body movement communicate the intent of a character.
Pit
Slang: Orchestra pit; can form a buffer between the audience and the performers.

Play making
The process of planning, improvising, and refining a script.

Playwright
The writer of the scene or play—the person who “wrought” the work.

Playwright’s concept
Playwright’s viewpoint expressed through written word and stage directions.

Presentation
Includes everything that happens in the house, on the stage, and in the backstage area.

Production elements
Technical aspects (e.g., lighting, scenery, costumes, sound).

Properties ("props")
All objects on stage, exclusive of scenery and costumes.

Proscenium Stage
Traditional audience seating layout where the audience is looking at the stage from the same direction. This seating layout is that of a Proscenium Arch theatre. The proscenium arch is the opening in the wall which stands between stage and auditorium in some theatres; the picture frame through which the audience sees the play. The "fourth wall". Often shortened to Proscenium or Pros Arch.

Raked stage
A stage with a permanent or temporary slope. Theatre stages were traditionally built with them, but now, more commonly, the auditorium is raked to facilitate the audiences view.

Rehearse
Experiment with options and choices in characterization, vocalization, and blocking requirement.

Stage Business
Physical action taken by the actor to support his/her character; e.g., pouring a glass of water, sitting and waiting for a bus, tiptoeing to escape the monster.

Stage left
Side of the stage to your left if you are standing on the stage looking out to the audience.

Stage management
Coordination of all production elements.

Stage right
Side of the stage to your right if you are standing on the stage looking out to the audience.

Staging
Physicalizing the written or spoken word.

Staging choices
Blocking, movement, and choreography in formal and informal presentations.

Up stage
Portion of the stage farthest from the audience. Comes from old stages that were "raked" or inclined, and were actually lower at the audience edge.

Wings
1) The out of view areas to the sides of the acting area.
2) Scenery standing where the acting area joins these technical areas.