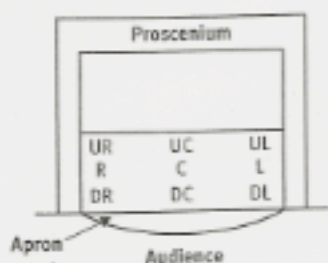


FIGURE 1

Stage Areas

In addition to the terms used for different areas of the theatre, actors, directors, and technical crews have a kind of shorthand to identify areas of the stage.



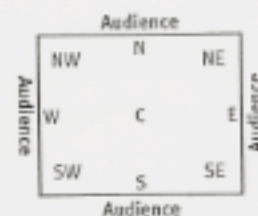
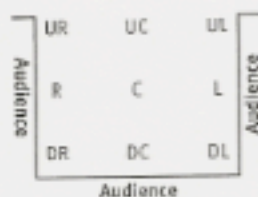
Proscenium Stage Areas

Since the terms were developed long ago by actors and directors working on proscenium stages, the perspective is that of an actor facing the audience from such a stage. **Right** and **left**, for example, refer to your right and left as you face the audience. **Upstage** is away from the audience, and **downstage** is toward the audience. **Center**, or **centerstage**, is the center of the acting area. To these nine stage areas, some directors prefer to add right- and left-of-center designations.

Thrust Stage Areas

A thrust stage can be labeled in the same way as a proscenium stage. Upstage is always away from the audience, in the direction of the wall or the scenery.

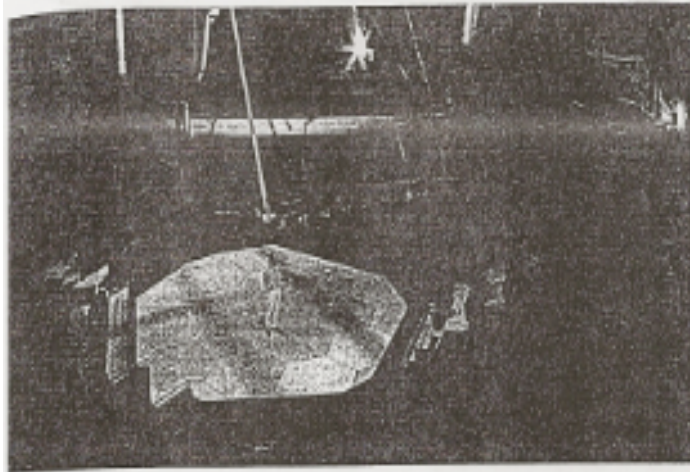
Thrust stages come in a variety of shapes. Modified thrust stages are theatres with a proscenium opening and a large apron that projects into the audience. The performance area of the thrust stage that appears on p. 58 has a herringbone shape. Shakespeare's Globe Theatre was a thrust stage. One scholar has speculated that the playwright's frequent resort to lines that break into three parts—"Tomorrow and tomorrow and tomorrow" and "Friends, Romans, countrymen"—reflects the need to address the three sides of the acting area.



Arena Stage Areas

Since arena stages have audiences on all sides, every direction is toward the audience, and up and down are irrelevant. Instead, actors may use the compass method. One area, probably a main entrance, is called **north**; the outer edge of the stage is labeled with the other points of the compass. Another method is the clock method, in which the main entrance is called 12 o'clock; the outer edge of the stage is labeled with the other hours of the clock. As with the proscenium stage, the center of the acting area is labeled **C** for **center**.

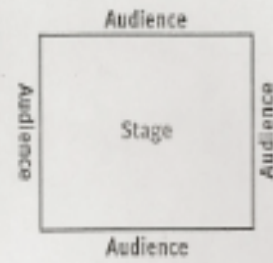
Key	
R = right	N = north
L = left	S = south
U = upstage	E = east
D = downstage	W = west
C = center	



An **arena stage** is sometimes called **in-the-round** because the audience is all around it. The actors enter and exit from the aisles or sometimes from tunnels under the audience.

Theatre Space Layout and Terms

No matter what the type of stage, most of the terms used for the stage and audience areas are the same. To be able to communicate effectively and efficiently as a director or producer, you must understand the general layout of the entire theatre space and the terms that describe it.





Upstage/Downstage

The terms *upstage* and *downstage* have their origin in an innovation in stage design that was introduced during the Renaissance. In the playhouses of the time, audiences were seated (or stood) on a level space in front of the stage. In order to give them a better view (and to heighten the illusion of depth created by the perspective employed in Renaissance scenic design), the stage floor was actually slanted upward, or *raked*, toward the back of the stage. An example of a mobile raked stage can be seen in this illustration, which depicts a travelling company of actors in the mid-1600s.

Stage Areas

Fig. #1

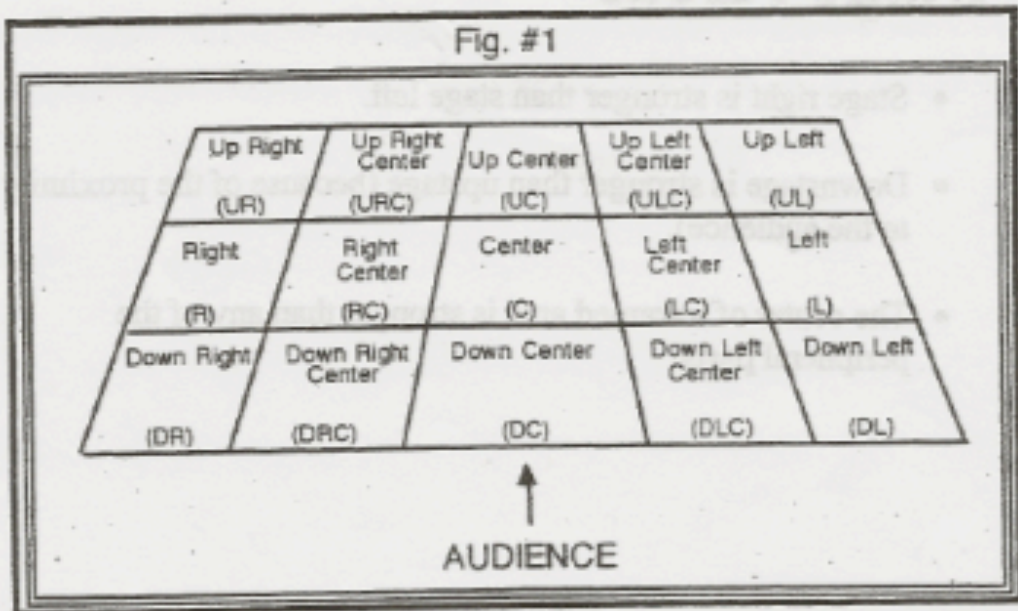
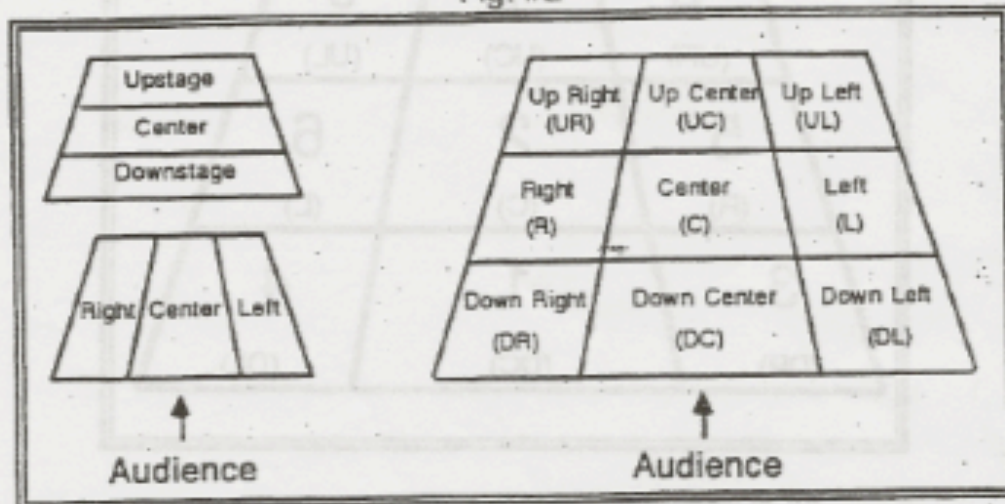


Fig. #2



Stage Areas

- Stage right is stronger than stage left.
- Downstage is stronger than upstage (because of the proximity to the audience).
- The center of a framed area is stronger than any of the peripheral parts.

Fig. #3

