**Props Notes**

**Prop:** A prop, formally known as (theatrical) property, is an object used on stage or on screen by actors during a performance or screen production. In practical terms, a prop is considered to be anything movable or portable on a stage or a set, distinct from the actors, scenery, costumes, and electrical equipment.

**Prop Master:** The props master/mistress is the person in charge of procuring, making, maintaining, and returning all the props in the play. The set designer and director will have specific ideas for what types of props they want and how they want them to look. Most productions use a Props Master to deal with the large number of small items that a play needs. In larger shows, there may also be a Props Designer who will decide on exactly what the props should look like, in coordination with the Directors and Set Designers.

**Vocabulary**

**Hand props:** things actors use, touch or carry out on stage

**Consumables:** props that get eaten, used or destroyed

**Edible Props:** Props that need to be safe to eat (cucumber sandwiches)

**Costume props:** worn by actor to complete the look (eg. purse, cane, glasses, gloves)

**Special effects props:** usually dangerous, pyrotechnic (flame, explosion) these are also consumable props (need replacement every show)

**Set Props:** serve the actors and the script, creates atmosphere (eg. sofa, chair, door)

**Set Dressing Props:** collection of props that defines the environment-does not interact with actors. (eg. pictures, drapes, rug, lamps, tables)

**Personal** – A personal prop is a prop an actor carries to develop their character. Sometimes these are called for in the script, but often it is the actor who is requesting it. A pipe, a cane, or a fan can are examples. Some actors are notorious for picking a prop or two at the very first rehearsal to play with.

**Greens**- Whether real or artificial, the props department is oft responsible for plants, leaves, bushes and flowers. Obviously, if the set calls for a life-sized tree to fill the stage, the props department can defer to the scenic department for its construction.

**Manual sound effects** – Though increasingly rare in these days of recorded audio, if a sound effect is generated off-stage by an actor or crew member, the props department is responsible for the apparatus that creates that noise.

**Process:**

1. Creating a prop list. The director, stage manager and/or prop master will comb the script and make a list of all the needed props.
2. Deciding what gets made and what gets bought.
3. Designing made props. Purchasing materials.
4. Purchasing props.
5. Making props.
6. Inventory and storage. The prop master is in charge of the safe storage of all props and keeping an ongoing inventory of what we have/need.
7. Taping off the prop table. Instructing cast where their individual props will be waiting during runs of the show.
8. Setting up prop table and preset props before show.
9. Returning and dismantling or storing props after the run of the show.