

LET'S BRAINSTORM COSPLAY SKIT IDEAS

Get the gears in your head turning
with these exercises!

BIGIMOTIK



BIGIMOTIKCOSPLAY.COM

WHAT IS A SKIT?



SHORT ANSWER: THAT DEPENDS!

In the world of cosplay events, there are many different types of cosplay presentations. For the purposes of this guide, we will consider a *skit* to be a staged presentation lasting at least 60 seconds that tells the story of a *character* through performance.

WHY DO A SKIT?

One reason to do a skit is that you are entering a competition that has a stage component that goes beyond walking across a stage while an emcee talks about your costume. In that case, you'll need to put together some thoughts around what you want to do.

Another reason to do a skit is you enjoy performing in character, but you don't feel comfortable with improv events like Cosplay Chess, Death Match, Dating Game etc. Skits are 100% scripted so you have control over what happens next.

Maybe you just want to try something new! Starting on a skit is a fun and exciting journey that you can do on your own or with your friends!

PICK YOUR SKIT ADVENTURE

A

START WITH A CHARACTER

Choose this option if you have a character in mind that you want to let loose on the stage.

B

START WITH CANON PLOT

Go with this route if you have a favorite series and possibly a few characters you could go with. .

C

START WITH POP CULTURE

Pick this method if you're feeling in the mood for some satire that will tickle the funny bone.

D

START WITH MUSIC

Swing into action with this approach if you're feeling inspired by a song or vibe for your character.

START WITH YOUR CHARACTER

Or more accurately, start with what you know about your character. What motivates them? What are their fears?

If you only know your character a little, maybe try filling out a character questionnaire designed for Dungeons & Dragons players or by writers creating the characters for their stories.

Once you know the character a bit better, next step is to brainstorm a few possible ideas across genres to give you the most choices.

For this exercise, I am going to use a character I plan to cpsplay in the future: Zofis, from Zatchbell.



Zofis:

Conniving, gremlin, spellcaster, hates people



CHARACTER BRAINSTORM SHEET

Comedy

What can you do to put your character out of their element?

Zofis wants to rule and doesn't have any friends.

→ What if he's in a situation where he's being told to do something he feels is beneath him - like having to interact with nice people.

Drama

Can you force your character to make a tough decision?

Zofis is manipulative and cruel.

→ What if he was in a position where he had to choose between his goals and his conscience and it's not clear which he'll pick.

Heartfelt

When would the audience feel sympathy for the character?

Zofis has no friends, but becomes acquaintances with a former enemy.

→ Is there a way to make Zofis wrestle with his new-found empathy for his new "acquaintance"?

Action

What special abilities or physical aspects of the character exist?

Zofis can do explosive attacks, but only with the help of a spell caster.

→ Does that matter to the audience? Let's say Zofis can cast spells by himself. Perhaps he learns a new spell.

CHARACTER SKIT

After you have the beginnings of an idea, then flesh it out with more particular details.

COMEDY: ZOFIS DOING WHAT HE HATES – BEING TOLD TO WORK WITH NICE PEOPLE

What is forcing Zofis to work with the nice person? Maybe he's in prison for his crimes and his cellmate is super friendly, but he has to work with them to escape.

DRAMA: ZOFIS HAS THE CHOICE TO LISTEN TO HIS CONSCIENCE

When would Zofis have to listen to his inner voice? Perhaps he's going into a contest and has the chance to do the right thing, but elects to guarantee a win while working in the morally gray.

HEARTFELT: ZOFIS WRESETLES WITH EMPATHY FOR HIS NEW FRIEND

One way to make Zofis face his fledgling empathy is to let him think his new friend has died, but then reveal that the friend is okay. That's a lot of emotion for a little gremlin to process!

ACTION: ZOFIS LEARNS A SPELL

A spell caster learning a new spell that gets away from them made for great entertainment in *The Magician's Apprentice* from Disney's *Fantasia*. An anime-retelling could be compelling, especially with video effects!

START WITH CANON PLOT

HOW WELL DO YOU KNOW YOUR SOURCE?

One of the easier ways to pull together a skit concept is to start with the canon material and “fill in the gaps” . This is very similar to writing fan fiction where fanfic writers try to read between the lines.



Examples:

Pretend your characters are “offscreen”. What might they do in their spare time?

Remake an existing scene. Exaggerate! Use a different perspective. Change the outcome!

Continue the story. Fast forward past the finale. What are the characters doing now?

CANON PLOT EXPANDED



IN-BETWEEN SCENES - EXAMPLE

In my Yu Yu Hakusho skit "I have a dream", I imagined a conversation between the fame-obsessed Beautiful Suzuka (clown) and already famous Shishiwakamaru (pretty boy idol). Suzuka was worried about his legacy. Shishi offered him advice. Then things go off the rails.



REIMAGINING - EXAMPLE

In my Seven Deadly Sins skit, "Dude, Where's My Plushy?", I took the existing plot of drunken thief Ban stealing all the plushies in the kingdom. In the original, straight-laced King returns them all overnight. In my skit, I had him realize too late, so the only thing he could do was punish Ban!



STORIES NEVER END - EXAMPLE

In my Violet Evergarden video performance, my sister and I picked plot from Episode 6, where Violet meets Leon and they promise to travel the world and meet again. In our video we imagined they had been exchanging letters, that Leon was making the decision to finally travel and Violet was giving him advice.

START WITH POP CULTURE

You can draw inspiration from content that already exists, but be mindful that any recent pop culture references might no longer be popular by the time you perform your skit.

Picking elements of pop culture that have “staying power” can be safer. That said, if the timing works and you can use a recent meme that was popular right before or during the con, then that can be a huge comedic element.

- ✓ Draw from the formulas of shows like reality tv dating or survival shows, court cases, police procedurals, sitcoms, or game shows
- ✓ Pull from real-life aspects of culture like Influencers / YouTubers, V-Tubers, Game Streamers, or maybe TikTok challenges
- ✓ Musicals are a great way to tap into a character since the songs are designed to convey the feelings of a character. Change up the lyrics to suit your character!

Staying Power vs. Recent Hits

In my Star Guardian skit, I heavily used the social-media heavy culture portrayed in Yuri!! On Ice!!! which overlapped with actual streamer culture, so the references had a timeless quality that made the skit funny even though it was a few years old.

In my Rimuru Tempest skit, I picked Frozen songs and I lucked out that Frozen II was coming to theaters less than 8 weeks after my skit, so the Disney marketing engine was in full swing and the songs were recently fresh in everyone's minds.

START WITH A VIBE

Have you ever found a piece of music that simply resonated with you and you immediately connected it with a character or a scene?

Have you ever had an image of yourself in cosplay as a character in your mind that you couldn't forget?

Starting with a piece of music or a *feeling* is also a way to start a skit!

FIND THE BEAT

I'm not talking about BPM or the drumline here. I'm referring to the emotional beats in the song.

What is the emotional feel in the beginning? Where are the subdued moments? Where are the powerful emotions coming through?

You will want to pair those emotional beats with actions onstage that match.

PICK A SPOTLIGHT

For the big moments, determine how you're going to go big on stage. A difficult technique? A special effect? Something the audience won't expect?

Make sure you can execute your spotlight moments with lots of practice.

MAKE IT FIT

Most songs are longer than what a contest allows, so you will need to splice your song down to size.

When splicing down songs, I generally follow a consistent formula:

- Recognizable parts of the opening, especially if those bars are well known (*Black Parade*, anyone?)
- Part of the first or second verse to help build up energy.
- If I have time and if the song works for it - part of the bridge.
- The final chorus - but only the first iteration after the bridge, rather than the full repeated version.
- Closing bars to avoid an abrupt cut-off.

MORE ON NON-SPEAKING SCRIPTS



★★★★★

YOU DON'T HAVE TO DANCE

Dance is one way that we can tell a story without words, but if you're trained or don't have the range to do a dance. Performers of all types can show emotion through their movement.



★★★★★

TIPS FOR COMEDY

Check out traditional sources like Charlie Chaplin or the Three Stooges, but you could also have a look at theater shows designed for children, which often feature over-the-top physical expression to garner laughs from kids.



★★★★★

TIPS FOR DRAMA

If you have the opportunity, Cirque du Soleil shows do an excellent job telling dramatic stories through motion, like a ballet. Not an acrobat or ballerina? Focus on how the performers are miming their emotions through their face, arms, hands, and body placement.



★★★★★

IT DOESN'T HAVE TO BE COMPLICATED

You don't have to tell a story. If you have a fun song and cool ideas for steps you want to put on the stage - go for it! It's your performance and I have seen *plenty* of skits (including winners) just be about the moment.



BIGIMOTIK

BIGIMOTIKCOSPLAY.COM