Before you do anything, ensure you know the entire plot of the show that your song is from, who sings it, and where it comes in the show.

Then start by reading the text of the entire song through, out loud (things always sound different in your head than when you speak them).

Identify the arc of the song (i.e. the journey for the character - where are they intellectually, physically, emotionally, at the beginning of the song vs where are they when they're finished? Is there a big shift in their thought process somewhere through the song? It’s important to know this before you make any cuts that render the song pointless/illogical.

See if there are obvious things to cut first (e.g. repeated lyrics).

Ensure the cut makes textual sense. Don’t make any cuts that jump halfway through one sentence to the middle of another!

Speak the entire text of the song through again once you’ve cut it: if it sounds weird, or illogical, or has an enormous jump in intensity/thought process that seems too big, then see if there are better cuts that you can make.

Cutting the Music

Look to see if there are repeated musical ideas/melodies. Often you'll find that repeated lyrics you might be thinking of cutting will also be repeating the same music, so this can be easy.

See if the lyrical cut you’ve made works in a musical context. Ensure the cuts make musical sense. Things to consider here include: time signatures, key signatures, tempo markings, phrasing, accompaniment.

OTHER TIPS

Ensure there is a journey for the character through the song (i.e don’t start 32 bars before the end or stop halfway through the song).

Mark all cuts clearly and cross out parts you will not be singing.

If in doubt, run through your cuts with a competent musician who can guide you.
HOW TO MARK YOUR CUTS

It’s really important that all cuts are marked clearly for the accompanist.

You should start by using a black marker to cross out any music that you don’t want played:

NB: If you have cut a full page of music, then you can just leave the whole page out.

To clearly show where the cut begins and finishes, add brackets:
Here's the how the full cut looks (in this song, from page 149 to page 179 - a big cut)

CUTTING YOUR OWN MUSIC: OTHER IMPORTANT INFORMATION

- Make sure your music is clear and clean. If it's a photocopy of a photocopy of a photocopy, you might need to find a better version.

- That also means there shouldn't be any missing parts of the score that have been cut off during photocopying (bass lines in the accompaniment, for example, or the clef-signs on the left hand side of the page).

- And ensure you have a run through with a good accompanist before your audition - you don't want any nasty surprises by what you hear when you walk into the room, particularly when it can be avoided with good preparation.

- Please be aware that you will have to explain your song including tempo, cuts and style to the accompanist. You will have plenty of time to do this but make sure you are prepared with what to say to ensure you are best supported in your song. We do require you to use the accompanist provided so this communication is integral to a good singing audition.