

Year 7 Introduction to Drama

In this topic we will be introduced to the rules and routines of working in the drama studio and some of the activities we use to create drama

DRAMA is a practical SOCIAL subject and ARTFORM. It requires people to come together to share ideas, work COLLABORATIVELY and COOPERATE with each other to tell STORIES. Telling STORIES through THEATRE dates back to the time of the Ancient Greeks.

Stories told through THEATRE are called PLAYS. PLAYS today feature all sorts of TECHNICAL elements to help tell a STORY including LIGHTING, SET, COSTUME and STAGING.

ACTORS on STAGE use many different TECHNIQUES and DEVICES to tell their STORIES. A DIRECTOR is usually responsible for overseeing a REHEARSAL PROCESS so that all of these elements come together for the final PRODUCTION.

In drama lessons, you will be working mostly in the same way an ACTOR would in REHEARSAL and will be developing many SOCIAL SKILLS.

To participate effectively, you will need to develop a positive RAPPORT with others. This is an effective RELATIONSHIP that sees people feeling CONFIDENT to CONTRIBUTE and COOPERATE with others. This COLLABORATION is where CREATIVE ideas come from that can be developed through REHEARSAL.

As these skills develop, you will be able to work as part of an ENSEMBLE to create drama. This includes GAMES and ACTIVITIES that develop SOCIAL and PERFORMANCE SKILLS and explore THEMES and TOPICS.

Techniques that help explore THEMES and TOPICS include:

FREEZE-FRAME – a ‘picture’ made of actors in different body positions that shows a frozen moment of ACTION.

STILL IMAGE – a ‘picture’ made of actors in different body positions that communicates RELATIONSHIPS, a THEME or a MOTIF.

TABLEAUX – a collection of STILL IMAGES or FREEZE FRAMES that together communicate a NARRATIVE or THEME.

THOUGHT TRACKING – Speaking aloud the thoughts of those frozen in a FREEZE FRAME or STILL IMAGE.

CAPTIONING – Speaking out loud a word, phrase or sentence to accompany a FREEZE FRAME or STILL IMAGE.

NARRATION – a FIRST or THIRD PERSON telling of the story.

ROLE PLAY – using VOICE and MOVEMENT to communicate a ROLE.

Year 7 Mood and Atmosphere

In this topic we will explore how mood and atmosphere is created in performance through use of voice and movement.

The **ATMOSPHERE** of a room is affected by the **MOOD** of the people in it. Because we have **EMPATHY**, we can share other peoples feelings.

The **LANGUAGE** we use when speaking can encourage others to **IMAGINE** the **SETTING**. The quality of our language has an effect on how to **ENGAGE** an **AUDIENCE**. Use of **ALLITERATION**, **VERBS**, **NOUNS** and **ADJECTIVES** when speaking help set the right **ATMOSPHERE**.

The **PROPERTIES** of a **SCENE** can communicate **MOOD** and **ATMOSPHERE** because they remind us of other settings where people associate specific feelings.

We communicate our **MOOD** through our **BODY LANGUAGE**. Our **FACIAL EXPRESSION**, **POSTURE** and **GESTURES** communicate our **EMOTIONS** and our **INTENTIONS**.

We also communicate our **MOOD** through the sound of our **VOICE**. Changing our **VOCAL DYNAMICS** communicates our **EMOTION**. **VOLUME**, **TONE**, **PITCH** and **PACE** are some of the ways our **VOICE** can show how we feel.

Our **MOVEMENT** also communicates our **MOOD** and **INTENTION**. Changing the **DYNAMICS** of our movement shows how we feel and what we want. The **SPEED** and **QUALITY** of our **MOVEMENT** can have an effect on the

ACTION on **STAGE** is made **ENGAGING** as the **AUDIENCE** experience **TENSION** and **SUSPENCE**. **TENSION** is felt as the **ACTION** builds towards a moment of **CLIMAX**. This is created through **MOVEMENT** and **VOCAL DYNAMICS**.

SUSPENSE is felt as the **ACTION** is held. This is created through **STILLNESS** and **PAUSE** and is a feeling of waiting for the **CLIMAX** to happen.

Year 7 Introduction to Script

In this topic we will explore how a play script is presented on the page and how to interpret what is written into action on a stage.

A **PLAY TEXT** is written by a **PLAYWRIGHT** and can be presented in a manner of different ways. However, there are some **CONVENTIONS** that are often used in all **TEXTS** to allow **ACTORS**, **DIRECTORS** and **DESIGNERS** to **INTERPRET** it appropriately.

A **PLAY** has an overall **PLOT** that might be divided in to **ACTS** which are like sections of action that are separated by time location; usually between 1 or 5 **ACTS**.

ACTS are then usually divided into **SCENES** that are separated usually by time or location.

A **SCENE** is often structured on the page so that the **STAGE DIRECTIONS**, **CHARACTER** names and **DIALOGUE** are clearly defined.

The **ACTORS** and the **DIRECTOR** will work in **REHEARSAL** with the **PLAY TEXT** to organise the **CUES** and **BLOCKING** on **STAGE**.

STAGE DIRECTIONS that are separate from the dialogue are usually written in **ITALICS** so it is clear that it is not **SPOKEN**. If there are stage directions specific to **DIALOGUE** it is often inserted using **BRACKETS**. These are always written in present tense.

The placement of **PROPERTIES** and the **ENTRANCE** and **EXITS** of **ACTORS** are written in the **STAGE DIRECTIONS**. Descriptions of the **SETTING** will suggest to the **DESIGNER**, **DIRECTOR** and **ACTORS** what the scene should look like on **STAGE**.

CHARACTER names are often written in **CAPITALS** and placed on the left of the page in the **MARGIN**.

DIALOGUE is often **INDENTED** so there is a space between what is spoken and the name of the person speaking. **PUNCTUATION** and **LANGUAGE** will suggest to the **ACTOR** and **DIRECTOR** as to how the **LINE** is to be **DELIVERED** so as to communicate **MOOD** and **INTENTION** clearly.

BEAT and **PAUSE** are often used as **STAGE DIRECTIONS** for an **ACTOR** and show where a moment of stillness and silence might happen.

A **CHARACTER LIST** might be placed at the beginning of the play to help a **DIRECTOR** put together a **CAST**. There may be descriptions of the **CHARACTERS** also such as their age and relationships to others.

Year 7 Mask

In this topic we will develop our movement expression skills and learn about the basic principles of Mask performance.

MASKS have been used in PERFORMANCE for thousands of years and date back to ancient African RITUAL and STORYTELLING. A MASK is any covering of the face and can even include a red-nose of a CLOWN – often referred to as the smallest mask in the world. MAKE-UP can also be used as MASK, but usually they are constructed of fabric, leather or more modern materials such as latex

A MASK in performance is often use to represent a CHARACTER but can also represent other elements of a story such as animals, spirits or Gods.

MASKS can either be FULL or PARTIAL MASK. When a FULL MASK is used, it is typical that the ACTOR doesn't use their VOICE. A PARTIAL MASK will often keep the mouth uncovered allowing an ACTOR to use their VOICE.

An ACTOR will use their PHYSICALITY, MOVEMENT and GESTURE to COMMUNICATE in place of their voice. Because of this, their ACTING is often described as EXAGGERATED or HIEGHTENED and not NATURALISTIC – particularly if representing animals or spirits.

There are advantages and disadvantages of using a MASK in performance. As it hides the face, it can give a PERFORMER confidence and allows for CHARACTERS that are very different form the ACTOR playing them. However, the ILLUSION of the CHARACTER can be broken if the ACTOR isn't facing the audience.

CULTURES all over the world use MASK as part of CEREMONY and CELEBRATION, particularly in CARNIVAL where people dress as different CHARACTERS.

GENRES known for use of MASK include GREEK THEATRE, JAPANESE NOH, CLOWING, COMMEDIA DEL ARTE, STORYTELLING and

There are a set of rules and principles that are key in MASK PERFORMANCE:–
DO NOT TOUCH A MASK - it reminds the audience that it isn't real and breaks the ILLUSION
DO NOT SPEAK IN FULL MASK – as it muffles the voice and breaks the ILLUSION
CLOCKING – drawing the AUDIENCE attention to what the CHARACTER sees or wants and showing how they feel about it through gesture and movement.
PASSING THE FOCUS – if there are more than one performer in mask, they must take it in turn to receive the audiences attention.

CONTEMPORARY THEATRE COMPANIES known for using MASK in PERFORMANCE include TRESTLE THEATRE COMPANY and VAMOS. MASKS are often used alongside PUPPETRY.

Year 7 Live Theatre Review

In this topic we will develop our ability to review live theatre effectively and learn about the different areas of the auditorium .

THEATRE takes place in most cases in an AUDITORIUM. This is the place where the PERFORMER and the AUDIENCE meet for a PERFORMANCE to take place.

A STAGE can take many shapes and formations and is typically separated from the audience area. A STAGE is either situated as END-ON, THRUST, TRAVERSE, or IN-THE-ROUND. There are no set rules and as a result a PERFORMANCE may feature a mix of these STAGING types.

A PERFORMANCE may either be PRODUCED by the THEATRE that is showing it, sometimes in COLLABORATION with another THEATRE or COMPANY or it may be HOSTING a VISITING COMPANY that is TOURING a piece of THEATRE.

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The STAGE is often DRESSED with SET and PROPERTIES that set the SCENE in which the PERFORMANCE is taking place. The SET can be made from all sorts of MATERIALS and is either FIXED to the stage for the whole PLAY or carried on by ACTORS and STAGE HANDS.

ACTORS enter the stage from different ENTRANCES and leave via different EXITS. These might be in the WINGS which is typically on either side of the stage or in an AISLE which will run through the AUDIENCE. Other ENTRANCES / EXITS include a TRAPDOOR in the floor of the STAGE or from above the STAGE on WIRES from the RIGGING or FLY TOWER.

Large pieces of SCENARY can FLY in from the FLY TOWER above the STAGE and are controlled by a TECHNICIAN usually using electric PULLEYS.

The wall furthest from the AUDIENCE is often covered with SET or with a BACKDROP or BACKCLOTH which might be painted or coloured. Sometimes a large white cloth is used called a CYCLORAMA onto which different coloured LIGHTING is used.

Above the Stage and the AUDIENCE is a RIGGING on to which the LIGHTING hangs. This is made up of different types of LANTERNS that have different EFFECTS when illuminated. Basic EFFECTS include a WASH of the whole stage or SPOTLIGHTS of smaller areas. Light can be FILTERED by TEXTURE or COLOUR for different EFFECTS.

A STAGE MANGER sits in the WINGS to make sure that everything happens when it is supposed to. They speak to the other people in the THEATRE such as ACTORS and TECHNICIANS to keep a show running and keep a PROMPT BOOK which is a copy of the TEXT including all the STAGE DIRECTIONS and CUES.

Year 7 Storytelling Theatre

In this topic we will learn about the genre of Storytelling Theatre and the different elements and techniques associated with it.

STORYTELLING is a practice of humans dating back thousands of years. Even early cave paintings tell stories and nowadays we have many ways of sharing experiences and encouraging others to use their IMAGINATION.

ORAL TRADITION of telling STORIES predates printed media and some STORIES are handed down from one generation to another. STORYTELLERS were regarded as healers, leaders, spiritual guides, teachers, cultural secrets keepers and entertainers. They would PERRFORM in may ways including PUPPETRY, MASK, SONG, POETRY, CHANTS and DANCE.

STORYTELLING THEATRE may include elements of TRADITIONAL stories such as MYTHS, FABLES, FOLKTALES, LEGENDS and FAIRYTALES but can also feature more modern EDUCATIONAL and SOCIAL elements.

There are 6 elements that help craft an engaging audience. They are-

1 SETTING – where and when the story takes place. The MOOD and ATMPOSPHERE of these places is important to the story

2 CHARACTERS – usually each CHARACTER has a specific ROLE or PURPOSE in the STORY and will often feature a PROTAGONIST who the audience sides with and an ANTOGONIST who is creating a CONFLICT for the PROTAGONIST.

3 PLOT – the order of events in the story
The plot is the sequence of events that connect the audience to the protagonist and their ultimate goal.

4 CONFLICT – what drives the story, creating TENSION and SUSPENSE that keeps an AUDIENCE ENGAGED.

5 THEME – what the story is really about; the main idea or meaning. The story might have a one key THEME or many underlying THEMES.

6 - NARRATVE ARC – the finer detail of the plot that includes the ACTION of the STORY. A 4 point ARC includes the SETUP, RISING TENSION, CLIMAX and RESOLUTION.

STORYTELLING THEATRE as a CONTEMPORARY GENRE features typical elements such as PHYSICAL THEATRE, MASK, PUPPETRY, DANCE, SONG and NARRATION in order to communicate the NARRATIVE and PLOT. Often STORIES are ADAPTED from other SOURCES and are aimed to a younger AUDIENCE.

Year 8 Dramatic Structure – Craig and Bentley

Structural Devices

Scene	A marked moment of action in a narrative
Split Stage	Presenting 2 or more locations in 1 stage space
Cross-cutting	The movement of audience attention from one space to another
Flashback/forward	Moving forward or back in the chronology of a narrative
Transition	The marked moment of moving from one scene to another

Effective Transition

Mark opening and closing moments with stillness.
Transition with purpose. Consider eye contact – especially when using split-stage.

Presentation Devices

Using language and dialogue to communicate context
Building tension and holding suspense
Communicating status of character
Using language and dialogue to support structural understanding

Historical Context

1950s London, England
Derek Bentley, 19. Christopher Craig, 16
Craig shot PC Sidney Miles dead.
Bentley hanged for murder.
Craig detained 'at her majesty's pleasure'
Many protested against Bentley's sentencing
Bentley saying 'Let him have it, Chris' became evidence
Bentley pardoned in 1993 after discovery of police lies

Year 8 – Further Mask

Clocking

This is a technique intrinsic to mask acting, where the mask looks straight at the audience. It is a moment of connection between the mask and the audience, and gives the viewer a chance to interpret what the mask is thinking.

Character Establishment

Character Establishment introduces aspects of a new character on stage through tiny physical details.

Counter mask

This is when the actor plays the opposite emotion to the one written on the mask. Why? A mask that plays the same emotion will soon become boring and predictable. For example, a joyous mask can be sad, an elderly mask can be quickly paced, an aggressive mask can be submissive, all through the actor's body.

Giving focus

As a basic rule, only one mask should have the focus at once on stage. To give the focus as an actor, look at where you want the focus of the audience to be. If you want to go unnoticed then you need to “disappear” so not to steal focus, for example; look down, keep still or even hide your mask behind a newspaper.

Keeping the mask alive

A mask becomes lifeless if it is kept still for too long - it needs regular movement, even if this is tiny.

Internal monologue

Audiences comment on how lovely it must be for actors not to have to learn lines; this couldn't be further from the truth! We have scripts for all our productions, but they are very different from those used conventionally in theatre. The 'lines' that mask actors use are spoken internally, and this is called an internal monologue. If it is clear, well-acted, well-directed and said at the pace that matches the intension, then it should feel to the audience as if the words are in their own heads.

Internal dialogue

Internal dialogue is the mask theatre equivalent of 'lines', but differs from Internal Monologue in that it applies when more than one character are interacting. Mask actors first rehearse out of mask, saying lines aloud, just like theatre with spoken word. Once the masks go on, these lines become silent thought, played between the actors as if lines are being spoken.

Moments of stillness

Like music or dance, mask work needs moments of stillness. These moments give the audience time to interpret and absorb the action and story; it gives mask work definition, punctuation and clarity.

Moments of isolation

If the whole body is moving all the time, there will be no clarity or focus. Bringing movement down to a tiny detail, such as the tapping of a toe, can be extremely effective in creating focus

Year 8 Melodrama and Pantomime

A theatre style popularised during the Victorian era that has influenced theatre and film since.

Features and Conventions of Melodrama

- **Melodrama = Music (Melody) + Acting (Drama)**
- **Melodrama is a style of theatre created in the late 1800s (also referred to as Victorian Era)**
- **It was a form of comedy for Victorian audiences**
- **Music used to underscore the acting**
- **Exaggerated Acting and Characterisation**
- **Humour and Comedy**
- **Stock Characters – Clear Villain, Victim and Hero**
- **Stock Routine – Villain takes advantage of a Victim with a scheming plot, the Hero saves the day and rescues the Victim**

PHYSICAL & VOCAL PERFORMANCE SKILLS

PHYSICAL: an actor's body and how he or she uses it, including body language, facial expression, gesture, movement, stance, posture, eye contact.

VOCAL: an actor's voice and how he or she uses it, including **accent**, **pitch** (high→low), **pace** (fast→slow), **rhythm** (smooth→disjointed), **volume** (loud→soft), **articulation** (clarity of sounds and words), **tone** (breathy, throaty, mellow, bright, resonant, thin, harsh, etc)

LANGUAGE

The word choices made by the playwright/actor. Word choices can say a lot about a character, including social class, educational background, emotional state, relationships with others, nationality and profession.

<i>Key Word / Drama Skill</i>	<i>Definition</i>
GENRE	A type of performance that can be defined by specific key features and audience response
MELODRAMA	A theatrical genre in popular in the Victorian era. Literal translation
STOCK CHARACTERS	The term given to the stereotypical characters in Melodrama
HEIGHTENED ACTING STYLE	An exaggerated and over the top way of acting
SLAPSTICK	A comedic routine that uses humour and heightened acting to make the audience laugh
MELODRAMA ROUTINE	A stock (typical) narrative (Villain takes advantage of Victim, Hero saves the day!)
LOOP DIALOGUE	Over the top dialogue that accompanies a melodrama routine; repeated 3 times with increased exaggeration

Year 8 Physical Comedy

Clocking

Drawing the audience / other performers to what has been acknowledged and expressing a mood or intention

Passing the focus

Controlling where the audience are to focus their attention – from one performer to another.

Upping the stakes

The process of activities becoming 'sillier' or of 'greater consequence for dramatic and comedic effect.

Rule-of-three / trebling

The pattern of comedic repetition with the 'third' having a variation or 'punch-line' which can enhance the comic effect

Breaking the fourth-wall

Making eye-contact with the audience for comic effect

Slapstick

Comic violence either by intention or comic mishap

Exaggeration

Movement and expression that is presented extremely and

Comlicite / finding 'the game'

The process of a performers 'feeling' that they are part of a game which can enhance the comic effect

Prop-gag

An object being used in a manner that it is not usually used for comic effect or to tell a story

The Fall-Guy and the Straight-Guy

Comic arche-types who in their contrasting personalities create comic scenarios

Year 8 Chorus

A CHORUS is a group of ACTORS that add meaning to a NARRATIVE through the use of CHOREOGRAPHED MOVEMENT and VOICE. They may use SONG and DANCE to add meaning and will control the MOOD and ATMOSPHERE of a PLAY often showing the EMOTION of key CHARACTERS.

The ANCIENT GREEKS began using CHORUS over two thousand years ago and it is a TECHNIQUE still used today by many COMPANIES.

CHORAL DYNAMICS

CANON – all together at the same time
UNISON / REPEAT – one after another
FORMATION – The positioning on stage in relation to the width and depth of space / shapes made
LEVELS – The positioning on stage in relation to the height of space

DYNAMICS / QUALITY

The expression of VOICE and MOVEMENT in the use of CHORUS is similar to that used by an individual ACTOR.

PACE – the speed of movement or lines spoken

VOLUME – how LOUD or QUIET the lines are spoken

PITCH – how HIGH or LOW the melody of a voice

TONE – the TEXTURE of the voice whether it is SOFT, HARSH, TIGHT or FULL. This can also be considered for movement.

WEIGHT – whether movement is SOFT or HEAVY

What makes an effective chorus?

An effective chorus will use the stage space effectively and consider LEVELS (heights) and PROXEMICS (distance) to add meaning. They will also use GESaTURES to add emphasis to words spoken. These can be EMOTIVE (showing feelings) MIMIC (rerepresenting a literal object) or ABSTRACT (representing something that is non-literal).

The quality of movement, especially together as a chorus, is INTERPRETED by the AUDIENCE and adds meaning to what is said.

MUSIC often accompany CHORAL MUSIC and is used to complement the performance, particularly in communicating the right MOOD and ATMOSPHERE. Like in DANCE, the RHTYM, PACE and QUALITY of the music should match that of the VOICE and MOVEMENT on stage.

Year 8 The Arrival - Non-verbal Narratives

AUDIENCE AWARENESS

This means, being aware of where your audience is positioned and making sure your drama is presented towards them so they can appreciate it. Often we encourage actors to face the audience (although sometimes it can be effective to decide to have your back to the audience). It can also be useful to think of the 80/20 rule: imagine you're standing in the middle of a circle, straighten your arms and move them behind you until you can only just see your fingertips in your peripheral vision. 80% of the circle – in front of your body between your hands – is visible to the audience, whilst 20% of the circle is behind you and cannot be seen.

STILL IMAGE & BFG

This is also called a 'freeze frame' or a 'tableau'. Actors freeze in position to represent a moment from a drama in detail, giving the audience time to think about what they see. When creating a still image, it's important to think about your Body language, Facial expression, and Gesture (BFG). You should also think about space and levels and what they might mean.

THOUGHT-TRACKING

Within a still image, the actors speak the thoughts of the characters they are representing. This is a useful way of finding out more about a character's reactions to other characters of the events they are experiencing

FLASHBACK

This is a scene within a scene where the action jumps back in time and we get to see what happened earlier in the story. Flashback can be a useful way of building tension in a storyline and can let the audience know more about the characters.

IN-ROLE NARRATION

A character speaks to the audience to narrate. Can be used effectively to support a non-verbal sequence that is happening at the same time.

MUSIC TO SUPPORT ATMOSPHERE

Selecting music to enhance the mood of the performance can evoke pathos and empathy in an audience. Movement pace can compliment music and vice-versa.

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Year 9 Devising

Devising Techniques

A method of theatre-making in which the script originates from a performing ensemble (team) working collaboratively. They often use improvisation to develop the script.

When an actor performs a character as if they are a real person with real memories and beliefs. This requires **Empathy** (when an actor puts themselves in the character's shoes).

Suggesting action, character or emotion without words, using gesture, expression and movement. Effective mime requires the actor to:

- ✓ Have complete belief in what is being mimed
- ✓ Apply imaginative and convincing movement/facial expression
- ✓ Maintain size / shape / weight / location / positioning of objects that are mimed

When the character is speaking his or her thoughts aloud, directly addressing another character, or speaking to the audience.

Effective monologues require:

- ✓ Eye Contact with the audience
- ✓ Vocals & Movement to suit the character
- ✓ Emotional sincerity

A resource which inspires ideas for creating drama.

How performers move from one scene to another theatrically.

Status on Stage

The position of a person within a group. The position of a group within a society. Status can be measured in many forms:

- ✓ **Social Status:** Status within a group in society (i.e. Class – Upper / Middle / Working **OR** Leader of a Gang / Follower)
- ✓ **Financial Status:** Status in relation to earnings (i.e. Rich / Poor. Links to Material Status – Homes / Cars / Clothes / Phone)
- ✓ **Job Status:** Status in relation to level of responsibility (i.e. High Power jobs compared to Low Power Jobs)
- ✓ **Marital Status:** Status of relationships (i.e. Married / Single)
- ✓ **Emotional Status** – The state of your feelings (i.e. Happy / Sad)
- ✓ **Power Status:** Status in relation to strength or influence (i.e. Positioning within a Group / Business)

Performance Skills

Facial Expression	The feelings expressed on a person's face.
Body Language	The way in which a person communicates using gestures, movements and mannerisms.
Vocals	The way in which the voice is used to present emotion using Tone (Emotion) / Pitch (High or Low) / Pace (Speed) / Volume (Loud or Quiet) / Accent (Region).
Space:	The area between and around the actors / The theatre space in which the drama takes place.
Levels	Used to show how high or low status a character is.
Proxemics	Telling the audience what the relationship of the characters is like through the use of space. Links with STATUS.
Tension	When the body feels tense / The concept of making the audience want to know what will happen next.

General Terminology

Actor	Someone who pretends to be someone else while performing in a film, play, television or radio programme.
Audience	The spectators or listeners at a public event such as a film, play, concert, television or radio programme.
Character	A person represented in a film, play or story.
Dialogue	Speech / Conversation between two or more people.

Technical Terminology

Prop	Objects used on stage or screen by actors during a performance or production.
Costume	A set of clothes worn by an actor in a particular role.
Set	Scenery used to identify the location of a scene / play.
Lighting	The arrangement of theatre lights to achieve specific effects.
Sound	The sound used to create atmosphere, emphasise what is happening on stage, set the scene, and indicate time or location.

Research and Exploration

Mind-map
Thought-track
Hot-seat
Improvisation
Role-Play

Historical Context
Social Context
Critical Reflection / Opinion

Year 9 DNA: Acting

Characters

John Tate
Leah
Mark
Jan
Danny
Richard
Phil
Cathy
Brian
Lou
Adam

Themes

Hierarchy and status
Responsibility and Morality
Friendship and Bullying
Violence and Empathy

Context

Period - Contemporary
Setting - A Wood, A Street,
A Field

Synopsis

A group of teenagers do something bad, really bad, then panic and cover the whole thing up. But when they find that their cover-up unites them and brings harmony to their once fractious lives, where is the incentive to put things right.

Style

Naturalism – emotions and personalities are presented as in real life. Actors should consider the mood of their character and any *Given Circumstances* to portray the role convincingly.

Movement Direction

Consider the role that *proxemics* has in communicating *status* – who is each character addressing when speaking (including themselves). Use movement and stillness to support communicating their intention. Consider where in the stage space the character frequents in communicating their *status* in the hierarchy. How can movement create tension?

Acting Direction

Vocal Expression
Facial Expression
Posture
Gesture
Movement

How does the use of acting skills communicate the character convincingly? The mood of each character establishes the atmosphere through expression. Consider how each character reacts with one another in communicating the status and hierarchy of the group.

Year 9 DNA: Staging and Design

Staging

End-on



In-the-round



Thrust



Traverse



Semiotics / Aesthetics

Colour	Shape	Texture
Light	Dark	Dimension
Line	Depth	Form

Sound FX

Underscoring
Soundscape
Diegetic
Non-diegetic

Background music that sets communicates
Background sound that communicates atmosphere
Sound effects that is heard by the characters in the play
Sound effects that is heard by the audience only

Lighting FX

Fixtures
Filter Effects
Lighting effect

LED Par, Fresnel, ParCan, Profile
Gobo / Texture filter, Gel / Colour Filter
Wash – a wide soft edged area of light
Pool – a small soft edged area of light
Spot – a small defined area of light
Flood – a large bright light filling the whole space
Strobe – a fast and bright flashing of light
Intensity – how 'bright' or 'dim' an effect is
Projection - an image made of light

Year 9 A Monster Calls – Live Review

Context and Synopsis

A 13 year old boy comes to terms with his mothers terminal diagnosis having been visited in his nightmares by a monster that tells him stories.

Characters

CONOR O'MALLEY

A thirteen year old boy who lives with his mother.

MUM

Conor's mother, who is divorced. She has been diagnosed with cancer and is receiving chemotherapy and other hospital treatment.

GRANDMA

Conor's maternal grandmother.

MONSTER/YEW TREE

The yew tree, which is centuries old and visible through Conor's window. The Monster emerges from the tree.

HARRY, ANTON & SALLY

Three students who bully Conor at school.

LILY

Conor's school friend who steps in when Harry and his friends threaten Conor.

DAD

Conor's dad, who has moved to America and remarried. He has another child with his new wife.

MISS GODFREY

A teacher at Conor's school.

MR MARLA teacher at Conor's school.

Themes

Family

Grief

Suppressed Emotions

Truth

Dealing with others

Bereavement

Friendship

Adaptation

Directed by Sally Cookson and devised by her Bristol Old Vic Company, the play was adapted from the novel by Patrick Ness.

Style

The piece of theatre is an ensemble production that features a mix of Physical Theatre, naturalistic acting, dance, song and circus. The staging is bare and uses lighting, sound, digital projections and live acoustic and electronic music. The play features chorus, multi-role, physical storytelling and moves seamlessly from one scene to other

Writing a review

Using **DESCRIPTION** of the action, staging or design, **EXPLAIN** how the action, staging or design created meaning in the production.

You may want to comment on the following:

its effectiveness, how it communicates setting, mood, atmosphere, how it is representational / communicates metaphor / symbolism

Then **EVALUATE** this in regards to its impact on you as an audience member.

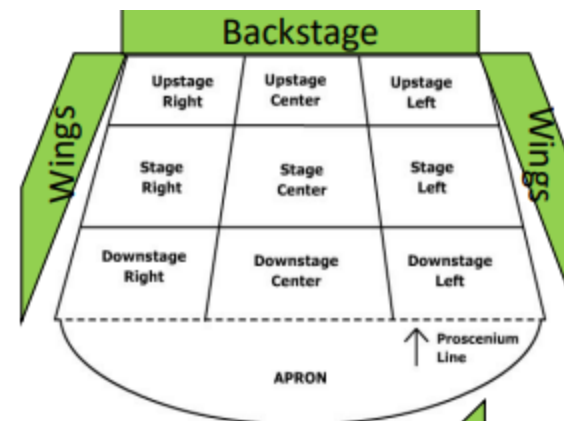
For example...

"The use of a digital projection across the backdrop of the upstage wall to show swirling dark smoky animations communicates Connor's thoughts and anxiety as he experiences a nightmare. The way in which it covers the whole stage and the way that the chorus mimic Connor's movements suggests that he is consumed by his nightmares. This impacted on me in the audience as it reminds me of how stressful it is to deal with a loved ones illness."

Year 9 Live Theatre Review

Terminology and areas of the stage space	
Realistic	A performance style that is life like or naturalistic.
Multi role	When an actor plays more than one character in performance.
Physical comedy	The use of (over exaggerated) body movement, gesture, and facial expressions to create comedy.
Pause, silence, beat	A stop in the script. Often used for the dramatic effect of creating tension or to make an important moment in the performance.
Plot	The main events of the play.
Tension	A sense of anticipation or anxiety.
Playwright	The person responsible for writing the play.
Act	A Play is divided into acts.
Scene	An act is divided into scenes.

Mood	Atmosphere
Fear	Dangerous
Rushed	Chaotic
Anxious	Tense
Happy	Optimistic
Excited	Tense
Panicked	Nightmarish
Vulnerable	Ominous
Romantic	Love
Peaceful	Relaxed





KS3 Drama Knowledge Organiser



Year 7 Mood and Atmosphere