



A LEVEL DRAMA AND THEATRE

PRE-COURSE MATERIAL



Course Teachers

MRS WILLS AND MRS WALKER

A Level Drama and Theatre Course Outline

The A Level course specification can be found here: [OCR Specification H459](#)

Details of each component and the content to be covered can be found on page 9 onwards.

Content Overview	Assessment Overview	
Learners will research and practically explore practitioners and the work of others. Creating, devising and performing original theatre	<u>Practitioners in Practice</u> Performing 120 marks Non-exam assessment	40% of total A level
Learners will explore one performance text. Performing live theatre	<u>Exploring and Performing Texts</u> 60 marks Non-exam assessment Visiting examination	20% of total A level
Learners will explore practically two performance texts on a chosen theme. Learners will analyse and evaluate a live theatre performance.	<u>Analysing Performance</u> 60 marks 2 hours 15 minutes Written paper	20% of total A level
Learners will interpret and explore practically a performance text considering how to create, develop and direct a performance for an audience.	<u>Deconstructing Texts for Performance</u> 60 marks 1 hour 45 minutes Written paper	20% of total A level

DRAMA

careers using drama

acting
directing
broadcasting
drama therapy
studio management
theatre production
tv and radio presenting

writing
stunt work
drama facilitation
film and tv production
lighting technology
drama coaching
entertainment

teaching
set design
arts administration
radio production
stage management
community arts work
casting agency work

Studying A Level Drama and Theatre can open doors to a variety of careers. Many skills are transferable beyond those directly linking to drama. Past students from Highcliffe 6th Form have also gone on to study for careers in media, journalism, dance, theatre design and engineering.

DANCE

careers using dance

youth work
dance teaching
health and fitness
dance performance

choreology
choreography
dance art direction
project development

community dance
arts administration
dance management
dance movement therapy

MEDIA

careers using media

editing
web design
copywriting
digital media
media planning
market research
public relations
desktop publishing

advertising
marketing
journalism
broadcasting
publishing
media research
digital marketing
multimedia development

proofreading
photography
event management
radio production
camera operation
media presenting
tv and film production
digital content editing



Summer Transition Work

OCR A Level Drama and Theatre

Contents:

- I. Contents
- II. About You: The Drama and Theatre Student
- III. Organisation is Key
- IV. Key Command Words
- V. How To Research Effectively
- VI. Useful Websites
- VII. Transition Tasks

WHAT DO I ENJOY MOST ABOUT DRAMA AND THEATRE?

List 10 things that you enjoy the most about Drama and Theatre. You might find it quite easy to start with, as you head towards completing all 10 you might have to think more deeply about what Drama and Theatre is. Why are they both in the title of the A level and what is the difference between them?

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2
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10

So you are about to begin or continue your journey as a drama student, this will involve researching, note taking, discussion work, extended writing tasks and presentations. Don't worry it is all routed in practical exploration and performance. Therefore it may be useful to think about which areas which will require more development from you, both before and during the course.

List any study skills that you feel less confident with below. This will really help your teachers identify any extra resources or support that you might need.

1
2
3
4

ORGANISATION IS THE KEY!

How to be organised for and in lessons:

- Number and date all of your notes and handouts to keep them in order.
- Use a folder and file dividers to separate each component for coursework and the written papers.
- Create folders on the computer/laptop for each component.
- Take responsibility for catching up if you miss a lesson due to illness. Find the resources that you missed and also photocopy a friend's written notes, or catch up with them on the practical work missed. Email your teacher for any resources you might have missed out on due to your absence.
- If you don't feel confident about a particular area, consult your teacher. Never be afraid to ask for help if you don't understand.
- Always come prepared to class, wear comfortable clothes you can move in and appropriate non-marking soft shoes / trainers, bringing writing equipment, class notes from previous lessons, and/or previous coursework.
- Ensure you have handed in work for the set deadline. Email your teacher at least 24 hours in advance if you need an extension.
- If at any point you feel overwhelmed by the work – call for help – let's keep the drama in the lesson!



KEY WORDS USED IN OCR COMPONENTS

Below are the most common command words used by the exam board when introducing coursework tasks or within the written exams’.

Command words	Meaning
Analyse	Separate information into components and identify their characteristics. Discuss the pros and cons of a topic or argument and make reasoned comments.
Compare and contrast	Show the similarities and differences.
Conclude	Make a decision after reasoning something out.
Define	Give the meaning of.
Describe	Give a detailed account of.
Differentiate	Explore and explain the differences.
Discuss	Explore the subject by looking at the advantages and disadvantages.
Explain	Describe, giving reasons and causes.
Evaluate	Give an opinion by exploring the good and bad points.
Identify	Recognise or prove something as being certain.
Illustrate	Show by explaining and giving examples.
Interpret	Explain the meaning by using examples and opinions.
Justify	Give good reasons for offering an opinion or reaching a conclusion.
Outline	Concentrate on the main points of the topic or item.
Summarise	Give the main points of an idea or argument. Leave out unnecessary details.

HOW TO RESEARCH EFFECTIVELY

Steps In Conducting Research

In order to carry out research effectively you need to follow these steps:

- **Identify** the purpose of the research – ask the following questions
 - What am I trying to find out?
 - Who is the information for?
 - Where will I get the information from?
 - How will I analyse and interpret the information I collect?
 - How will I present the results of my research?
- **Produce** a plan which includes:
 - the purpose of the research
 - what information needs to be collected
 - methods to be used for collecting the information
 - identification of potential sources of information which could include the designing of questionnaires, tests etc
 - methods to be used for analysing and interpreting the information
 - deadlines for completion of various stages of the research
 - evidence of review of completed research
- **Collect** the information you require ensuring that it is reliable and relevant.
 - keep a log of all references as you go at the end of your document, add to it each time you find something relevant or use something new; this could be books, journals, interviews, websites etc...
- **Analyse** and interpret the information and check that it is providing you with the information that you require i.e. does it meet the purpose of the research.
- **Review** your research and consider whether it has enabled you to achieve the overall purpose.
- **Present** your findings. This may be, for example, as a report or as a presentation.

USEFUL WEBSITES

Component 1 – Practitioners in Practice

This will be one of the first units we cover in year 12.

Naturalism and Stanislavski:

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/bitesize/guides/zxn4mp3/revision/1>

How Stanislavski Reinvented the Craft of Acting:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iB1fPZX5Zgk>

Epic Theatre and Bertolt Brecht:

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/bitesize/guides/zwmvd2p/revision/1>

An Introduction to Brechtian Theatre:

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=l-828KqtTkA&list=PLIWivfxZc0BeQzG1hk2dF4SgdBt2GK_z

Frantic Assembly's method:

<https://www.franticassembly.co.uk/the-frantic-method>

Processes and the Creation of 'The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night Time':

<https://www.franticassembly.co.uk/frantic-digital/curious-1#site-menu>

TRANSITION TASKS

SUMMER TRANSITION WORK HAND IN WEEK: 8th – 12th SEPTEMBER

TASK 1

1. Research **Konstantin Stanislavski** and his **system** for acting and developing an authentic character, in particular focus on the following giving a definition and an example of each:

Given Circumstances, The 'Magic If', Objective, Super-Objective, Through Line, Physical Action, Improvisation, Emotion Memory, Tempo Rhythm.

2. Now research **Bertolt Brecht** and his **Epic Theatre** techniques. Again define the following terms and give examples of how these can be used within theatre:

Narration, Direct Address, Third Person narrative, Speaking the Stage Directions, Multi-roling, Split-role, Placards, Minimal and Simple Design Elements (set, costume, props), Symbolic Props, use of Song and Dance, Gestus.

TASK 2

1. Practically Exploring Stanislavski's System - The Circus Performer

Aim

To create the character of a circus performer and design and perform a circus act.

- Choose a character that performs in the circus.
- Create the before time for your character. Where you grew up, how you ended up with the circus, include a few childhood memories that led your character to joining the circus. If your character is a knife thrower, you could imagine that your father collected knives and on Sundays he would practise throwing them at a tree. Your character would watch with fascination as the knife flew through the air before imbedding itself in the tree.
- Research your character and the skills and training needed for your act. Phineas Taylor Barnum for example. (Remember base your character on fact and use your imagination to create the character.) Page - VII

- Decide on your character's super objective from the outset, communicate this through action and dialogue (for example internal monologue).
- Start to rehearse your act, decide on an objective and action, creating the given circumstances. You will need to design an impressive act to satisfy the audience, hungry to be amazed.
- Imagine what you can hear, touch, taste, smell and see. The circus big top will have very distinctive smells; you will hear music, children and families laughing.
- For this exercise you will imagine you are performing in front of a packed house. Imagine the audience all around you and how you want them to react to your show.
- Rehearse your act several times; build in the interaction with the audience and others in the ring. If you are a lion tamer you will need to imagine the lions and your relationship with them. You would train with them nearly every day and have a good understanding of their behaviour.
- You can start to think about your costume and if you are showing your circus performer to the class you can design and wear a costume.
- If you are showing your circus act to an audience remember that in the Big Top there would be hundreds in the audience and music and clowns etc.

Be creative with this exercise and really use your imagination. Where is your character from? As the character imagine an eventful past that led you to the circus. Create an impressive act that will thrill the audience. Think about how your character would use movement and voice to fill the whole big top. Enjoy the performance and enjoy the character, it's not every day you get to join the circus!

2. Present your research and keep a brief log of how you developed your character and performance.

TASK 3

1. If you were to perform your circus act one last time, but this time in the style of Brecht's Epic Theatre how would it differ? What would you add in? Or leave out? Or change and develop so that it has a different emphasis? Why? Ensure that you identify key aspects of Epic Theatre to back up your ideas and points.

Practically Exploring Brecht's Epic Theatre - The Circus Performer

Aim

To develop the character of a circus performer, design and perform a circus act in a different style.

- Perform your circus act again this time narrating the stage directions in the third person.
 - Now add a monologue over the top of the performance. Tell us the story of this performer, use the information that you gathered about this character in Task 2 to help you.
 - Apply Brecht's 'Magic If' rehearsal technique ... what if the Circus performer was explaining their circus act to their grandchildren? What if they were at an interview explaining their circus act?
 - Choose your final performance in the style of Brecht's Epic Theatre from your improvisations to finalise your performance.
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2. How has this now changed your performance? How do the two performances differ? Your Stanislavski original and your developed Epic Theatre version? How far could you take the set, lighting and perhaps even some accompaniment for either of your performances? Would you add more actors for example?
 3. Which is your favourite style for your performance? Naturalism or Epic Theatre Storytelling? Why?

CAREER PATHWAYS IN DRAMA AND THEATRE

University Pathway

Bournemouth University – [Media Production BA \(Hons\)](#), [Visual Effects BA \(Hons\)](#)

University of Surrey – [Acting BA \(Hons\)](#), [Applied and Contemporary Theatre BA \(Hons\)](#),

University of Exeter – [Drama, Film and Television Studies with Employment Abroad BA \(Hons\)](#), [Drama BA \(Hons\)](#)

University of the Arts London – [Acting and Performance BA \(Hons\)](#), [Costume for Theatre and Screen BA \(Hons\)](#),

Apprenticeship Pathway

National Theatre London –

Backstage Apprenticeships:

Creative Venue Technician Apprentice (lighting, sound & video, and stage crew)

Scenic Artist Apprentice

Scenic Carpenter Apprentice

Scenic Metal Fabricator Apprentice

Props Maker Apprentice

Business Operations Apprenticeships:

IT Support Engineer Apprentice

Facilities Apprentice

Marketing Data Analyst Apprentice

Events Apprentice

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Supported using public funding by
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