

GCSE Drama Glossary

Use the words below to help you to give you ideas for practical work and to give you extra marks in the exam!

Styles of Drama

- **Naturalistic:** The performance is as close to real life as possible.
- **Non-naturalistic:** The performance is more theatrical and stylised and tells the story using a variety of techniques such as flashbacks; direct address to the audience; multiple role-play.
- **Physical Theatre:** This means the performance is literally more physical. To tell the story the performers focus on their bodies. E.g. Mask work, creating a forest using the bodies of the performers, Mime...
- **Theatre in Education (TIE):** A play that is created to teach a particular lesson. Often toured round schools and to young people. Often followed by a workshop or discussion about the topic.

Genres of Drama

- **Comedy:** The story shown is funny and ends happily. There are many types of comedy...
- **Slapstick:** Physical comedy that centres around accidents, mock fights and humiliation
- **Tragedy:** The story shown is sad and usually involves the death or downfall of its main character/s.
- **Gritty Realism:** About real, usually working class, poor people.
- **Historical Drama:** Set in a particular historical period
- **Docudrama:** Looking like a documentary with reconstructions (like 'Crimewatch')
- **Soap:** Follows the format of a television soap; long interrelated storylines; prologue at the beginning; follows the fortunes of the characters who live/work in a particular place.

Getting the Message Across to the Audience

- **Target Audience:** The sort of people the play is aimed at
- **Message:** What the play intends the audience to have learned or to think about.
- **Themes:** The general ideas that the play looks at.

Ways of Telling the story

- **Episodic:** A play is episodic when it shows particular events (episodes) that happen in the course of a long period of time, not necessarily in the order that they happen. E.g. Blood Brothers shows the key events that happen to a pair of twins from the moment they are born to the moment they die
- **Linear Narrative:** A play has a linear narrative when the story is told in the order that events happen. Each scene normally links from the last one and the story is over a relatively short period of time.
- **Framing Device:** A scene that goes at the beginning and end to help the audience get into the theme of the play.



- **Holding Scene:** a scene that literally holds the rest of the play together. It is the most important scene in the play without which the rest would not make sense.
- **Flashback/ forward:** The scene shows an event that happens earlier in the story or later in the story.
- **Split Scene:** Two connected scenes going on at the same time. Uses a freezing device to shift the focus of attention between them. Can be useful to show two points of view about the same event in the story.
- **Narration:** Telling the story directly to the audience either from within a character (narration from within) or in the role of a narrator.
- **Monologue:** A character has a fairly long speech that gives the audience a lot more information about him/herself or the story. A monologue can give information that you wouldn't necessarily expect a person to say out loud.
- **Chorus:** A character or characters that talk about events that have happened and usually say what they think about it. This is another way of telling part of the story without having to act it out in full.
- **Freeze Frame/Thoughts Out Loud:** The performance is frozen and the characters break out of the action to tell the audience directly what they are thinking or to comment on what is happening.
- **Mime:** Showing what happens through the use of detailed movement without speaking.

Structure of The Scene

- **Setting the Scene:** Introducing the characters, place, time and situation.
- **Exposition:** Tells the story up to the point when the play starts. What the audience needs to know.
- **Introduce the Dilemma:** Something starts to go wrong or a problem occurs.
- **Develop the tension:** Tension builds. Things get worse and worse causing the audience to literally get 'tense' wondering what will happen next.
- **Climax:** The height of the scene where the problem comes to a head. The emotions are very extreme: extremely funny, extremely sad, extremely shocking etc.
- **Resolution:** How the situation ends. Usually the characters have changed as a result. A new beginning.
- **Transitions:** The movements between scenes. How these are carried out in a manner that keeps the audience interested and maintains the atmosphere.
- **Anti-climax:** this is where tension builds to the point where it looks like something dramatic is about to happen but then it doesn't. It's used a lot in comedy when somebody says something funny to defuse the tension.



Creating a Character

- **Given Circumstances:** What we already know about the character from the text.
- **Objective:** What the character wants in the play. (This will influence how the character acts and reacts to get it)
- **Arc:** The emotional journey of the character. How the character changes from the beginning of the play to the end.
- **Status:** How much power and importance the character has. (High or low)
- **Emotional Memory:** Finding moments in the actors life where he/she felt the same or similar to the character and trying to remember what it felt like.
- **Inner Dramatic Dialogue:** The thoughts going through the characters mind. This can be very different from what they are actually saying and will make for a much more interesting performance.
- **Empathy:** Being able to get inside the character to think and feel as they do.
- **7 Levels of Trestle Theatre's Tension states (exhausted; tired; neutral; Alert; scared; petrified; rigor mortis):** Each character will have a usual level of tension but will also get more tense and more relaxed depending on what happens to him/her.

Staging

Upstage Right	Upstage	Upstage Left
Stage Right	Centre Stage	Stage Left
Downstage Right	Downstage	Downstage Left

(audience)

- **Enter:** To come onto the stage
- **Exit:** To leave the stage
- **Levels:** The height of the character or the positioning compared to others.
- **In the Round:** The audience are seated in a circle facing in.
- **End On:** The audience are seated facing the stage area straight on (as above)
- **Traverse:** The audience are either side of the stage area. (Like a catwalk)
- **Thrust:** A combination of End On and Traverse
- **Proscenium Arch:** the stage has a frame that creates a picture effect.



Performing

- **Physicality:** How the actor creates meaning with the body
- **Gesture:** a movement made with the hand/arm/head that means a particular thing. E.g thumbs up.
- **Facial Expression:** the expression on the face. It needs an adjective such as 'fierce' or 'sad'. Don't just talk about 'good' or 'lots'..
- **Vocal Expression:** How the actor creates meaning with the voice not just words.
- **Pitch** (high or low); **Pace** (Speed); **Projection** (Volume) and **Emphasis** (Stressed words)
- **Signature Gesture:** A mannerism or repeated gesture that gives an indication about the character's personality and creates interest.
- **Vocal Mannerism:** As above but for the voice.
- **Reactions:** How the character reacts to others (especially when not speaking).
- **Performance Energy:** the amount of effort put into the performance.
- **Tone:** A general description of the voice. E.g. a sarcastic tone of voice.



In Section A of the exam, you will be asked to write about the following:

1. A description of the piece you have created
2. An explanation of the nature of the work
3. An analysis of how you worked
4. An evaluation of your final performance

It is therefore, crucial that you keep a log of what you have been doing in lessons and how your work has been created.

Failure to do this could result in undeveloped and vague exam responses.

Example exam questions:

- a. Describe the style and genre of the piece, your target audience, the chosen performance space, the use of technical and design elements and what you did as your contribution. (10 marks)
- b. Explain what the first ideas for the piece were and give details of how you and your group developed them. (10 marks)
- c. Analyse what improvements you made to the piece during the rehearsals and your reasons for making them. (10 marks)
- d. Evaluate what you felt were the strengths and weaknesses of your own practical skills in the final performance. (10 marks)

- a. Describe what the piece was about; state the style, period and genre of the piece, the performance space, and any technical or design elements used and your target audience. You should state whether your contribution was as actor, designer or technician.
- b. Explain how you applied your chosen skill to at least one aspect of the piece
- c. Analyse the improvements that you made during the rehearsal processes. You should refer to at least one specific occasion where you developed your own skill.
- d. Evaluate the success of your contribution to the piece as a whole. You should refer to particular moments from the piece to support your answer.

LOG BOOK:

Today's date: _____

Your first ideas	
The group's first ideas	
What you have produced today and what performance skills did this involve? How did you go about creating this work?	
Specifically, what can be done to improve what you have done today?	
What do you need to do / create in the next lesson	

Your ideas today	
The group's ideas today	
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