



Getting Ready for...

KS4 (GCSE) Drama

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Activities

1. Roles

Knowing who works in the theatre process is an essential part of GCSE Drama.

There are lots of careers in the industry, here are some to look at first:

- Actor
- Playwright
- Lighting designer and technician
- Sound designer and technician
- Set designer, technician and stagehand
- Costume designer and maker
- Puppet designer and puppeteer
- Stage Manager
- Theatre Manager
- Front of House staff
- Choreographer

Make sure you can define their role outline as well as their responsibilities.

Create a chart, diagram or podcast to help you remember who is who.

2. Set Design

Set designs can be made on the computer using programmes like PowerPoint or Sims.

Or, set models can be made by hand, which is often what the professionals do after they have done their computer design.

- Consider what you have at home to make the sets for a play of your choice, usually shoe boxes work well.
- Think about how the colours and objects you choose all have symbolic meaning – what are your choices communicating?

Top tip! Sight lines – this means consider whether the audience can actually see all parts of the stage.





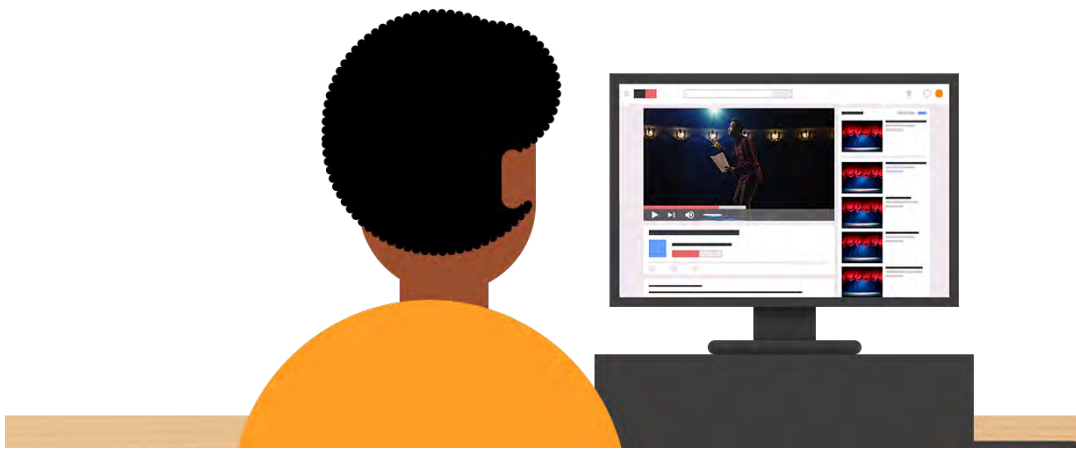
3. Live Theatre

Analysing and evaluating live theatre is an important part of GCSE Drama.

Have you watched any digital theatre?

- Choose a production from the National Theatre on YouTube and watch it all the way through.
- Choose one short moment to focus on and watch it again. What did you like about it? Why is it successful? What are the actors doing in that moment, can you describe it in detail?

You may choose to write down your ideas or do a podcast or vlog to record your analysis and evaluation of the production. This is known as a review.



4. Spaces

Drama can be performed using different shaped stages. These are known as configurations.

- Research the following configurations and comment on their advantages and disadvantages for a performer AND for the audience:
 - a. Apron
 - b. Black box
 - c. In the round
 - d. Promenade
 - e. Proscenium arch
 - f. Site specific
 - g. Thrust
 - h. Traverse

You may wish to draw them, or create a poster or film to help you remember the different formats.



5. Stage Positions

Stage positions is the term for describing where on the stage a person or object is based.

These terms are crucial for directors to be able to explain their ideas, or for stagehands to know where props or set furnishings need to go.

- Draw a diagram of a simple stage and label the stage positions.

You will notice that the stage positions have abbreviations too. Here are the most common terms:

Centre Stage [CS]

Upstage [US]

Downstage [DS]

Upstage right [USR] / left [USL]

Downstage right [DSR] / left [DSL]

Tip! The most common mistake is people forgetting that stage positions are from the ACTORS' view, not the audience's viewpoint.

- Take it further – can you turn this into a game and test your friends or family?

6. Scripted

In GCSE Drama you will perform an extract from a published play.

- Choose a short monologue, or a small extract from a book you have at home.
- Read through it and think about what is being said. Who is speaking and how do they feel?
- Try acting it out. Can you make it big and melodramatic? Now try it more controlled and natural, like you are on TV. Which style was most appropriate for your piece?
- Be creative – try the monologue with costume, try saying it lying upside down, or in the bath! How does the speech change as you try it different ways?
- To extend this, try writing your own monologue.



7. Lighting

Stage lighting can communicate the time of day and the place but also the mood of the scene.



- Try out your lighting ideas here: <https://scenicandlighting.com/lightlab/> [Created by Matt Kizer]
- Think about the symbolism of colour – this is really important for a lighting designer.
- Consider what a designer is communicating if a stage is lit with dark red, light blue, soft yellow or warm purple.
- Research key terms such as hue, blackout, colour wheel, gobo, cross fade and focus spot.
- Consider making your own key terms quiz and test your friends. Look for a glossary of lighting terms online for support.

8. Costume

Costume design also includes make up, hats, jewellery, swords and masks.

- Create your own costume design for a character of your choice. Try and choose someone who would wear quite elaborate outfits so it gives you more creative freedom.
You could hand draw your ideas, or stick material together to make a mini model, or make a full life-size outfit.
- To extend this, try using household recycling to add an eco-twist to your design – make sure it's clean though!



9. Voice

- Try writing a script imagining it's a radio play. Record yourself and act as all the different characters. Focus on how your voice changes in order to communicate the different characters and emotions.
- Think about accent, pace, tone, pitch and volume. Don't underestimate the power of pauses and silences too, even on radio.
- Try out different length pauses and silences, what happens to the mood when you do? If you're interested in this, then check out Harold Pinter, a playwright famous for his use of pauses and silences.



10. Practitioners

Practitioners are people or companies who create theatre and new ideas for how it can be made.

Learning about practitioners can give you ideas about different styles you can try out in your own acting or design.

- Do some research into these people/companies and their style.
- Try creating a poster, podcast or revision sheet on each one.
 - a. Berthold Brecht (playwright, poet and practitioner)
 - b. Bunny Christie (set and costume designer)
 - c. Paule Constable (lighting designer)
 - d. Frantic Assembly (theatre company)
 - e. Graeae (theatre company)
 - f. Kwame Kwei-Armah (playwright, actor and director)
 - g. Konstantin Stanislavski (actor, director, practitioner)
 - h. Talawa (touring theatre company)