A-LEVEL
DRAMA
AND
THEATRE
Understanding and designing puppetry

7262

Teaching guide: puppet design

Please note: this guide contains references to a number of designers/practitioners, not all of whom are prescribed practitioners for the AQA AS and A-level Drama and Theatre specifications. For assessment of AS Component 2, A-level Component 2 and A-level Component 3, students **must** select from the prescribed practitioner list published in the AS and A-level specifications.

Contents

Understanding puppetry

Introduction

The purpose of this section is to introduce you to some of the different elements of puppetry, and to give you some ways of approaching and understanding puppetry in theatre design. It will suggest some key questions you can consider when you see or create a puppet design.

What is the purpose of the puppet?

Puppets can represent human, animal or fantastical characters, allowing the audience to engage with the performance in a different way. Puppets can speak directly to the audience, act as storytellers, represent a character from a play text, comment on the themes of a play, or contribute to mood and atmosphere of a performance. When thinking about puppetry, it is useful to consider two key elements of puppet design:

1. **Defined character** is essential in successful puppetry. A puppet should have a clearly defined purpose, character and personality in the production. The character of a puppet can be communicated through its physical features (for example its face, hands, arms, or legs) or through how the puppet moves or speaks on stage. The relationship between the puppet and the *puppeteer* is also essential in creating a puppet's character.

2. **Audience appeal** is the relationship between the puppet and the audience. If the puppet does not have audience appeal, the audience will not be able to invest in it during a performance. Audience appeal is closely related to defining character: if the audience can engage with the puppet's character, it is easier to create belief in the puppet and appeal for the audience. How the other performers on stage interact with the puppet will also help to create appeal for the audience.

When you consider a puppet design, ask yourself what the purpose of the puppet is, whether it has a clearly defined character (and how this is communicated), and whether or not the puppet has audience appeal. This will give you a good starting point for understanding how the puppet functions in performance.

> ***Think about…*** *when to use a puppet*
>
> Using a puppet in a performance is a unique way to communicate with the audience. Puppet designers and directors need to think very carefully about whether or not a puppet is a suitable choice for a production. When watching a production with a puppet, consider how the puppet changes your relationship to the performance:
>
> - Why do you think this character was suitable as a puppet?
>
> - Is the character intended to be played by a puppet in the original play text or is the use of a puppet a directorial decision?
>
> - What effect does the puppet create?

> ***Remember:*** *everything's deliberate!*
>
> Good puppet design is a series of deliberate decisions. Always assume that a puppet's appearance and actions are chosen for a reason and contribute to the audience's experience.

What style is the puppet?

Theatre productions use a range of styles, and the puppet designer needs to respond to the overall style of the production. It is important to be able to identify the style of a production in order to understand how and why a puppet has been used. Some examples of styles include:

Realism

Realist productions incorporate elements that are meant to look like real life. Realism can be total or partial. Total realism means a production that looks as close to real life as possible, and it is rare to see puppets in these productions, because puppets are not naturally realistic. Partial realism incorporates realistic elements into a production that might not be realistic overall, for example, using a puppet in an otherwise realistic setting.

Symbolism

Symbolist productions are more interested in communicating an idea to the audience than in representing real life. Symbolism allows the designer to create a puppet that communicates some of these ideas to an audience. Representing a character as a puppet might be a symbolist choice.

Minimalism

Not all productions have to be large-scale. Minimalist productions use empty spaces and rely on the actors to create an experience for the audience. Puppets in these productions can be an essential way of telling a story, focussing attention on characters and narrative.

Fantasy

Fantasy productions allow the designer to create a new world. For puppet designers, this might mean creating a fantasy character, such as a dragon, fairy or alien. However, it is worth remembering that a fantastical design still needs to maintain an internal logic so that the audience can understand and engage with the world of the production.

What decisions has the designer made?

A puppet designer's job is to make deliberate decisions about how a character is represented through a puppet. This character could be human, animal or fantastical. Part of understanding a puppet design is considering what decisions have been made and what effect they might have on an audience. Puppet designers might make decisions related to:

Size: how big the puppet is, particularly in relation to other objects or performers on stage. It is also worth considering the relationship between the size of the puppet and the equivalent size of a person or animal in real life: is the puppet bigger or smaller than its real life counterpart? Making a puppet particularly big or small can tell the audience something about the character it represents.

Scale: how big different elements of the puppet are. Puppets need to communicate visual information to an audience about a character, and scale can be used to draw the audience's attention to different features of the puppet. For example, a puppet of a very nosy character might have a very big nose!

Shape: what shapes are used to construct the form of the puppet. Lots of very smooth curves can communicate a different sort of character to many sharp edges or straight lines. Puppet designers will communicate character through shape, either looking carefully at the equivalent shape of people or animals in real life, or by choosing very deliberate shapes to create a character or a mood through the puppet. Different types of puppets can be found on page 9.

Texture: the materials used to create the puppets and how these feel. Different textures can be used to make a puppet appear more lifelike, or to communicate something about the puppet's character to the audience. For example, a cat puppet

might be covered in fake fur to mimic a real life cat, or it might be made from leather-like fabric, to imitate a cat's smooth fur and sleek way of moving.

Remember: 'read' a stage.

When an audience looks at a puppet, they will believe that what they are seeing is important and significant. We say that audiences 'read' the design: they identify important elements of the puppet and work out what they think these mean. When you interpret a puppet, you are also reading the stage. Designers make decisions about what they think will 'read best' (that is, be most effective and clearest to understand) for an audience.

What about the audience?

Part of understanding a puppet is understanding the effect it can have on an audience. Useful questions to consider are:

Where are the audience?

Different theatre spaces create different relationships between actors and audience. For example, theatres can be *end-on*, *thrust*, *in-the-round*, or *traverse*; performances can also be *promenade*, *immersive* or *site specific*. Further information on these *configurations* can be found in the resource on set design and in the glossary.

When you are designing or analysing a puppet, you should carefully consider the *configuration* of the performance space and what influence this might have. Each of these *configurations* creates a different challenge for a puppet designer. The puppet will be seen from different angles depending on where the audience are seated. For example, if a production is *in-the-round*, the puppet will need to be able to turn 360 degrees so that all audience members will be able to see it.

What sort of experience is the puppet creating?

Some productions use puppets to create a specific experience for the audience. This can mean using puppets to contribute to the mood or atmosphere of a performance. For example, using a group of fantastical puppets as the chorus in *Antigone* would create a very different mood to using a group of actors. Puppets often add comic moments to a production but are certainly not restricted to this: in *War Horse*, for example, the goose puppet is comic, but the range of emotions achieved by the horse puppets is extensive.

How does the audience understand the puppet?

Puppets create a relationship between the actor and the audience: the audience can use the actions of the *puppeteer* and the other actors to understand the puppet. For example, if the *puppeteer* looks sad, and the other actors behave as if the puppet is sad, the audience will understand that the puppet is playing a sad character

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Think about… actors vs puppets

Obviously, using a puppet is very different to casting an actor to play a character. An actor can communicate a range of emotions relatively easily, by changing their facial expression. Puppets often have more fixed expressions, meaning that puppet designers must choose different ways to communicate emotion to the audience. One way to do this is by having a fixed emotion for the puppet: the puppet has the same emotion throughout the performance, which can be reflected in the design of its face. Alternatively, puppets can be designed with neutral facial expressions, and communicate their emotions through movement or through their interaction with other characters on stage. The approach that a designer takes will depend on the purpose of the puppet in the production.

Examples in action

Example 1: Handspring's *War Horse* puppets

Handspring Puppet Company are an award-winning specialist puppet company. In 2007, they created the puppets for the National Theatre's production of *War Horse*.

The link to the image is here.

You can read more about their work here.

- The frames follow the shape of real horses, making the puppets easy to recognise. They also keep the puppets light enough for the actors to wear and give them a partially realistic quality.

- The way the puppets move is important: they need to be able to move like real horses. Here you can see that the puppets are able to rear up like horses.

- Dressing the ***puppeteers*** in colours similar to the horses helps to draw the audience's attention away from them and onto the puppets and other actors.

- The use of different colours for the two horses helps the audience to quickly and easily identify which horse they are watching.

- The manes and tails give the puppets plenty of movement, helping them feel more like real horses.

- Three puppeteers are needed to operate the puppets in this scene: they must work together!

What do Handspring say about puppetry?

On their website, Handspring talk about the importance of collaboration in puppetry: "Theatre is always a collaborative process. We believe that a synthesis of disciplines and collaborative creation leads to some of the most exciting artwork. The multidisciplinary nature of puppetry has led Handspring to collaborate with some of the finest artists from South Africa and abroad. In the creation of the work Handspring seeks to draw in the skills of artists including musicians, sound designers, lighting designers, choreographers and, of course, the actors. […] In creative collaboration, Handspring always looks for the unique contribution of the medium of puppetry to the content of the production"

Kindly shared by ©Handspring Puppet Company

You can also read more about Handspring's work in the book *Handspring Puppet Company* edited by Jane Taylor (David Krut Publishing, Johannesburg, 2009).

Example 2: Handspring's *Ouroboros*

> *The link to the image is here.*

Compare the horses from *War Horse* to these human puppets from Handspring's production of *Ouroboros* (2011).

- The faces and clothing of the puppets are partially realistic, helping the audience to identify with them.

- This puppet's hands are slightly large, using scale to draw the audience's attention. This could tell the audience something about this character.

- Notice how this performer's facial expression changes how you read the puppet's face: the audience assumes that the puppet is looking at the same thing as the performer and that the puppet has a similar reaction.

- The two fish are also puppets, creating a contrast in the different sorts of puppetry used in the scene.

- Notice how the **puppeteers'** focus is either on the puppet itself, or on where the puppet is looking. This helps to direct the audience's attention during the performance. Remember that it is the **puppeteer** who is the performer in puppet theatre, not the puppet!

Do it yourself

Two more Handspring productuions.

> Here are two more links to images from Handspring Puppet Company productions. Compare the different styles of puppets. There are some suggestions below to start your discussion.
>
> *I Love you When You're Breathing*: here.
>
> *A Midsummer Nights Dream*: here.

- How many **puppeteers** are needed?

- How do the **puppeteers** operate the puppet?

- What shapes are used for the puppets?

- How have size and scale been used to create a specific mood or atmosphere?

- What textures have been used? What effect might these textures have on an audience?

- What are the advantages of using a puppet?

- How realistic are the puppets? How might this affect the audience's relationship with them?

- Do the puppets suggest that the production takes place in a specific era or location? How can you tell?

- What can you tell about the puppets' characters from these images?

- What audience response would you expect from these designs?

Designing puppetry

Introduction

The purpose of this section is to introduce you to some ways that you can approach designing your own puppets for the theatre. It will give you some starting points for design, as well as suggesting ways that you can present your designs.

What do I need to do?

A puppet designer's role is to create a puppet that is interesting, creative and engaging for the audience and that makes a clear contribution to the performance in terms of narrative, character, mood or atmosphere. Your design needs to work for the production. You need to be clear about what the production needs (this is called the production *brief*) and how you will creatively interpret these needs to develop your final design.

Your *brief* can take different forms: either from a written text or a group devised project. Essentially, the *brief* is an overview of the production project, explaining what it will be about, what ideas are already decided, and what aims you and your fellow theatre makers have.

Try making a mind map of all the things your production needs:

- What character(s) might become puppets? Are these characters in the play or additional characters?

- What do you know about these characters? What are their important characteristics?

- Do you need to create a specific mood or atmosphere through the puppet(s)?

- How many *puppeteers* are available to operate the puppets?

- What type of puppet best suits the requirements of the production (see page 9 for examples)?

Once you have your *brief*, you can use it as a starting point to develop your ideas. As a designer, your role is to bring together the needs of the production with your own creative ideas and experiences. Starting with the needs will ensure that your designs are appropriate, practical and functional. As theatre is a practical art form, it is important to make sure that what you design will function in practice, in performance and be effective for an audience.

> **Remember:** *health and safety*
>
> Theatres can be dangerous places, and health and safety legislation is used in theatre rehearsals and performances to protect cast, crew and audience. Make sure that your design is safe: consider the potential risks of your puppet and try to find ways to reduce or remove them.
>
> Read more at:
>
> hse.gov.uk/entertainment/theatre-tv/index.htm

> ### Design tip
>
> Most design projects will present you with a problem or challenge to solve. Sometimes this is a puppet. Finding solutions to these problems can be a great starting point for your design work and can even determine the style of your whole design. Starting from a problem can be a very effective way to create a design. Puppets can also help to solve these sort of problems: perhaps a puppet could be a good way to represent a child onstage, if you didn't want to use a child actor or an actor pretending to be younger than they are.

What practicalities should I consider?

Like all aspects of theatre design, puppetry is a practical art form. A puppet design has to work in practice, in a performance. Here are some practical questions to consider when starting your design:

What does the puppet need to do?

Understanding what action is required from your puppet will help you to think about its design. A puppet that only needs to sit on a chair, for example, may not need controls to move its legs. If your puppet needs to do more complex actions, (walking, dancing, climbing or even flying, for example), you will need to take this into account in your design.

How will the puppet be operated?

The size and shape of the puppet will depend on the number of *puppeteers* available to operate it. If you only have one *puppeteer*, you will need to make choices about which parts of the puppet can move. For example, if your *puppeteer* will need one hand to hold up the body and the head, the puppet will only be able to move one arm at the same time. If more than one operator is used, rehearsal together is essential. You should also consider who will provide any vocals if the puppet speaks or makes a sound.

Is the puppet practical?

Puppets need to be practical to operate: if a puppet's *mechanisms* are too complex for the *puppeteers* to control or it has too many sharp edges to be safe, or is too heavy to be lifted, it will not be successful in performance. Make sure your puppet is comfortable to manage, as well as interesting to watch!

What resources do you have available?

Be creative with your resources: a puppet can be carved from specialist equipment, or it can be created on stage from a pile of *props* and some fabric. The effect of random objects coming together to create a moving creature, or even a shadow puppet, can be excellent and doesn't require complicated or expensive equipment. However it still needs precision and practice.

Is it possible?

All designers also need to be sensible about their resources: consider whether you can achieve your design within a sensible budget, and whether your ideas are possible in a live performance.

Design tip

Puppets take a lot of rehearsal: if you want to work with puppets, you need to make sure that your puppet is designed and made early in your rehearsal process. *Puppeteers* need time to experiment with a puppet and see what actions and emotions they can create. Actors need time to get used to interacting with a puppet. Rehearsals also give you as a designer a chance to spot any problems with your puppet and find creative solutions before the performance!

Where can I get inspiration?

Research is a very important part of puppet design. You can use research to develop your own ideas and to make sure that you understand the location and era of the production you are designing.

Understanding the context

Research is vital in understanding the historical, social and cultural context of your production. It can also help you to work out what sort of puppet you will make, and how your puppet will be operated. Look into different types of puppetry across the world and throughout theatre history. Different puppet traditions and productions using puppets will help you to understand how puppets work. Pay particular attention to how puppets are manipulated and the number of *puppeteers* used. There are some suggestions of puppet traditions on page 9 Areas for research might include:

- the style of the era or location where the production takes place

- puppets in different countries

- theatre companies that use puppets

- what other puppets have been made for productions of this play

- what impact you want the puppet to have on an audience.

Developing your ideas

As well as contextual research, you should gather materials relating to your own ideas. Images of puppets in paintings or photographs are also very useful for thinking about what you can create on stage. Don't restrict yourself to things you already know: visits to libraries, art galleries or museums can be great sources of inspiration.

Design tip

A mood board is a good way to gather your research together and compare your ideas. Include images that you think are relevant from your contextual and ideas-led research, as well as images of different puppets. You could also include samples of textures, colours and materials for your puppet, as well as anything else that is relevant to developing your final design.

How can I present my ideas?

Puppet designers use different ways to present their ideas and develop their designs. Here are four that you might like to consider when you are preparing designs for your AQA assessments:

Sketches

Sketches of your puppets can show what you want your final puppet to look like, indicating how you will use shape and scale in your design. It might be helpful to include an actor in your sketches to give an idea of size. You can also include some notes about how the puppet will move, as well as samples of materials to give an indication of colour and texture.

Technical drawings

Technical drawings are more detailed than sketches, and are usually drawn **to scale**. You can use these drawings to show exactly how any **mechanisms** will work, for example showing the puppet's joints and hinges in detail.

Models

You may find it useful to make a small version of your puppet to experiment with its shapes and **mechanisms**. You can do this from cardboard or paper. You could also make a more detailed small-scale model, including actual materials, colours and textures.

Test sessions

You may want to try out your ideas with a group of **puppeteers** or actors, perhaps using a model of your puppet or a rough mock-up. It is helpful to video these test sessions and re-watch them when you are creating your final design.

Most designers will use a combination of these methods to present their ideas.

Design tip

As part of your research, it is useful to consider the key features of the puppet you are creating. If you are making an animal, for example, what features distinguish it from other animals? These can seem obvious (for example a rabbit's ears), but look very closely: how are a rabbit's ears different to a hare's ears? Gather together a lot of pictures of your animal and consider what they all have in common: these are the animal's important features and you will need to include them for the audience to understand your puppet. As the horses from *War Horse* demonstrate, you don't need to exactly copy every feature, but getting the key features right will mean that you have more freedom in other parts of the puppet. You should also look at how your animal moves. For example, observe the animal in film footage or real life: how can your puppet mimic this movement?

Examples in action

Example 1: Four types of puppet

Puppets come in a range of types, each of which uses a different technique. Professional **puppeteers** train for many years to perfect their art, so remember that puppets aren't easy to use and need much rehearsal.

Here are four examples of puppet types. You could also look at theatre companies like Kneehigh or Theatre Alibi, who use puppets in their productions

Marionette puppets

An example of a marionette puppet can be seen here.

Marionettes are full-body puppets, usually with jointed arms, legs and head. They can be operated using **strings**, **rods** or even held by **puppeteers**. The Bunraku puppetry tradition, from Japan, involves three **puppeteers** that control the puppet's head, arms, and legs.

Footage of traditional Bunraku puppets can be seen here.

A cat puppet in the Bunraku style can be seen here.

Hand puppets

An example of a hand puppet can be seen here.

Hand puppets are worn on one hand, with the **puppeteer** sometimes using their other hand to control one of the puppet's arms or even another puppet. One example of this sort of puppet is the traditional English form, *Punch and Judy*.

You can see a clip here:

Shadow puppets

An example of a shadow puppet can be seen here.

Shadow puppets are cut-out shapes held in front of a **light source** to create shadows. These can be very simple or can have multiple joints and patterns. Altering the distance between the **light source** and the puppet can change the scale of the shadow. Wayang Kulit is a Javanese shadow puppet form.

You can see a video about Wayang here.

Arm puppets

An example of an arm puppet can be seen here.

Similar to hand puppets, arm puppets are worn on one arm, with the **puppeteer** sometimes using their other hand to control one of the puppet's arms. In the image linked above, from children's theatre production *The Sagas of Noggin the Nog*, crow arm puppets are hidden in the actor's cape.

Example 2: From inspiration to puppet

This section shows the process of puppet design from a character brief, to an inspiring image found during research, to a final puppet. It shows how a puppet can develop from an idea, and how research can be very useful in puppet design!

1. The brief

The brief for this project was to create a small dog puppet that could be used by two performers. The dog was for a piece of children's theatre, so had to be very friendly-looking and easy to recognise.

2. The research

During research, this image of a polar bear puppet was found. The puppet is from a production of *The Bear* by Pins and Needles Theatre Company.

- The bear's body is made of a series of rings, that give him flexibility, but also keep him light enough to move and control easily.

- The bear has a different puppeteer operating his front feet. This gives the feet lots of potential to move. The detached feet don't distract the audience, who can identify the bear from his other features and will suspend their disbelief over his feet.

- The bear is covered in white, shredded paper. The texture of the paper looks like fur. It also moves well, and makes the bear look like he would be interesting to touch, useful in children's theatre.

3. The puppet

- The final dog puppet uses the same rings as the bear for its body shape, and the same shredded paper to create its fur. The paper is quite thick so that the fur bounces up and down. This means that the puppet can be made to look like an enthusiastic puppy!

- The dog's head is made of a cardboard frame, covered with brown adhesive paper. The *puppeteer* can place their hand into the head to move it.

- The second *puppeteer* operates the two separate front paws, which are made in the same way as the head.

- Both of the puppets demonstrate that most puppets are stylised in some way: they aren't realistic!

Do it yourself

Planning your puppet:

Planning your puppet can help you to begin your design process. This step-by-step guide will take you through some of the things you need to think about, and help you to consider how a puppet might be incorporated in the play or project you are currently working on.

1. Know your brief

Start by thinking about the play or project you are currently working on: have you considered using a puppet? Where might a puppet be useful? Think about the different qualities that a puppet brings to a character, the ways in which puppets can communicate emotion and the potential to add characters through puppets. How might including a puppet change the audience's experience of your production?

2. Know your resources

Think about the resources that are available to you. How many *puppeteers* are available? What materials could you use to make the puppet? These are important practical concerns that will determine what scale of puppet you can make. Also what will your puppet will need to do: stand, speak, walk, dance, climb or fly?

3. Know your puppet

Now look again at the text and think about the sort of character you are creating: it is human, animal or fantastical? What role does it play in the narrative? What are its important characteristics? You may need to do some research, considering the real life equivalents to your puppet. What are the key features you need to include so that the audience will be able to understand your puppet?

4. Think about style and type

With all of your puppets requirements and characteristics in mind, think about the type of puppet you want to make: marionette, shadow, hand or arm. You may also need to think about the style of your production: is it partially realistic, symbolist, minimalist or fantasy? How can you make sure your puppet fits in? What effect is the puppet intended to have on an audience?

5. Think about size, shape, scale and texture

Each of these elements of your design will communicate something important about your puppet to the audience. Is there something you want to emphasise? How could you use size, shape, scale or texture to do this?

6. Think about mechanisms

How might your puppet move? Think about how much the puppet needs to move and what sort of movements are important. Experiment with paper, cardboard and fabric to see what kinds of movements might be possible. Experiment and rehearse with your *puppeteers*. You might film this to see how effective each movement is.

7. Reflect

The purpose of planning is to identify possible problems or challenges early on in your design process. You might see a possible problem: if something doesn't work, try it a different way. Always keep a flexible approach and an open mind!

Component 1 (written paper): Section A and B set texts:

These pages offer brief, specific advice related to the three different aspects of the A-level assessment.

In addition to the brief extracts, refer to the relevant pages of the specification for the full requirements.

> Although puppetry is a stated and accepted skill in the practical performance undertaken by students, this does not mean that the use of puppets is expected or appropriate in relation to all set texts.

The Caucasian Chalk Circle does offer opportunities for Michael, as a baby and as a child to be played by a puppet.

Consider the type of puppet best suited to the role at different moments, especially when Grusha first takes responsibility for the baby and in the final scene.

Component 1 (written paper), section C: Live theatre production

'Students should learn how to:

- articulate their understanding of how the performers/designers/director (as appropriate) communicated meaning to the audience

- consider in detail how aspects of the performance piece contributed to the impact of the production

- assess how aspects of the production contributed to its effectiveness as a piece.'

Writing about puppetry in a play you have seen.

Puppetry is a specialised skill and if you intend to discuss the puppets in a piece of live theatre you have seen, remember that the term 'performer' in a question would have to refer to the puppeteer not to the puppet, however realistic.

When discussing the play seen, make accurate and confident use of the vocabulary from this document.

Before the exam

- As soon as possible after your visit to the theatre, write notes and make detailed sketches from which you can revise (don't expect to remember everything in several months' time).

In the exam

- Read the question: you need to ensure the wording of the question allows puppetry to be an appropriate choice. It may be that puppetry could form part of a fuller answer relating to performance and performance style, for example.

Make clear what the design of the puppet was:

- If discussion of the puppetry is appropriate to the question, describe the puppet's appearance, character and role within the performance in as much detail as possible.

- Could someone who has not seen the production imagine the puppet precisely?

- Consider the practical aspects; in the case of puppets, the scale is of particular importance.

Assess the production in relation to the requirement of the question:

- For example, the question might refer to the way performers created the mood/atmosphere or the effect for an audience.

- Define precisely what aspects of the mood/atmosphere and effects were created by the puppets and outline when this happened during the performance?

- How did the use of puppets affect the audience response specifically?

- Assess the effect of the puppets in enhancing the presentation and helping the audience's understanding and appreciation of the play.

Always refer to particular moments.

Consult the glossary for key words that you can use when talking or writing about theatre design, and for definitions of important terms.

Any words in **bold italics** can be found in the glossary.

Components 2 and 3 (practical performance)

'Students should aim to understand productions in terms of the relevant content listed in **Knowledge and understanding** [page 11], and in addition:

- the perceived or stated aims of the production team and their success in achieving them

- the creative collaboration of the performers, the designers, the director and other members of the creative team

- the audience experience and response.'

Read all the details for puppetry designer on pages 18 and 19.

'It is the student's puppet **design** that is assessed. Although students are expected to construct and/or operate the puppet(s) when possible, this will not form part of the assessment.'

The devised piece must be influenced by the work and methodologies of one prescribed practitioner. See pages 19, 20 and 21 for the list of practitioners.

Apply the variety of aspects discussed in the whole of the material in 'Understanding puppetry design'.

Where applicable:

- **research**

- **refine**

- be prepared to **apply** the **influence** of your **chosen practitioner**.

Create your brief

- In consultation with the rest of the group, define exactly what the practical piece requires.

- What type of character/creature is to be represented?

- Ensure that everyone agrees and that you all have the same overview, concept and intentions.

- Consider the effect your puppet design will have on an audience and whether this is exactly what is required.

Review the practicalities

- Be realistic in your approach to designing your puppet. Will what you visualise be possible to create with the facilities you have available and will the design work within the demands of the practical piece?

- Explore different styles and constructions of puppet, remembering that the performers working the puppet will need to be able to manipulate it effectively and may need guidance and advice

- Consider the structure, scale, fabrics, textures and colours needed to achieve your intended effect.

- How is the puppet to be brought on and off stage and by how many puppeteers?

- Do your ideas for the design of the puppet reflect the role and purpose of this creature, whether human, animal or fantasy?

- Is the puppetry appropriate to the style of the piece as a whole?

Rehearsal dates

- Create a schedule which allows for changes and alteration; there are always unexpected challenges, problems or opportunities.

- Your puppet needs to be ready in time for the actors to rehearse with it and to see how it fits within the intention of the scene(s).

- Your deadline is not the day of the exam.

Create your design

Now create your mood board or sketches/ including examples of fabric then the design itself, paying particular attention to the method by which the puppet is to be manipulated.

Review the practicalities again

- Does your design work well under the intended lighting and within the intended space?

- Can the puppet be constructed within your budget?

- Can your actor(s) move the puppet on and off the stage appropriately?

- Is the design and the working of it safe?

Watch rehearsals with an open mind

- Your puppet is there to serve the piece as a whole, not to be just a piece of art work.

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