



# AS and A-level DRAMA

Preparing to teach

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Teaching and Learning Resources  
7261 and 7262

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## General Advice for AS and A-level

1. Read the specification from cover to cover and use it as a working document. Underline key points. Make sure you're clear about the demands of each aspect of the course and the marking criteria for the practical components. The specification should be your constant guide!
2. Review your AQA Drama and Theatre resources:
  - The specification
  - AQA's website and e-AQA - gain access to the wealth of resources on the website including Examiners' Reports, past papers and mark schemes and exemplar student work plus much more.
3. Work out how much time you have to deliver the specification, given your allocated teaching hours for the subject; remember to allow for internal/external examinations and loss of teaching time, for example, for 'end of term events' or when students take 'study leave'.
4. Divide your weekly teaching sessions informally into practical and theoretical sessions or allot a proportion of time for each aspect within individual sessions of contact time.
5. Decide when would be the best time for your students to complete their practical component work and when they should be ready to have their AS Component 2 examination work recorded for submission of marks to AQA. Plan when you would like the A-level Visiting Examiner to examine the A-level Component 3.
6. Plan a varied schedule of theatre visits/experiences for each term – one which will introduce your students to a variety of theatrical styles.
7. Try to organise a back-stage tour of a local theatre to allow your students to get a real feel for the workings of a theatre; before or after the visit help your students to compile a glossary of theatrical terms that they can begin to use both in their practical work and in their written assignments.
8. Devise a scheme of work which allows each separate element of the course to receive adequate attention.
9. Devise a homework task routine which will allow you to monitor your students' progress and maximise their potential for development/improvement.
10. Make sure that you use the on-line standardisation materials where you will be able to see recorded example material of students' work at both AS and A-level.
11. Make sure that you know the name and contact details of your school's Drama NEA Adviser for the practical components.

## **The practical focus**

We all want students who take the AS and/or A-level qualification in Drama and Theatre to have an inspiring experience of the subject.

Students should be learning through their own experiences of seeing and making theatre, as well as through their study of a wide range of styles of theatre. Students should also explore the ideas of selected practitioners through the application of those ideas to their own performance work.

Every area of study in the AQA courses are capable of being taught practically as this is the best way both to deliver and to experience the course.

In the specification, the required content of the students' knowledge and understanding is defined as on the next page:

At both AS and A-level, students must develop **knowledge and understanding** of the following analytical framework for making, performing, interpreting and understanding drama and theatre.

Content	Details
<p>The theatrical processes and practices involved in interpreting and performing theatre.</p> <p>How conventions, forms and techniques are used in drama and live theatre to create meaning.</p> <p>How creative and artistic choices influence how meaning is communicated to an audience.</p>	<p>Interpretative processes relating to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• practical demands of texts</li> <li>• the choice and use of performance space</li> <li>• patterns of stage movement</li> <li>• stage positioning and configuration</li> <li>• spatial relationships on stage</li> <li>• performer and audience configuration</li> <li>• character motivation and interaction</li> <li>• performers' vocal and physical interpretation of character</li> <li>• delivery of lines</li> <li>• listening and response</li> <li>• playing of sub-text</li> <li>• development of pace, pitch and dramatic climax</li> <li>• relationships between performers and audience</li> <li>• design of sets, costume, makeup, lighting, sound and props</li> <li>• design fundamentals such as scale, shape, colour, texture.</li> </ul>
<p>How performance texts are constructed to be performed, conveying meaning.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• genre and form</li> <li>• structure</li> <li>• language</li> <li>• stage directions</li> <li>• character construction</li> <li>• style of play.</li> </ul>
<p>How performance texts are informed by their social, cultural and historical contexts and are interpreted and performed for an audience.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• the social, cultural and historical contexts of plays</li> <li>• interpretative and performance strategies.</li> </ul>

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## Component 1

### Set Texts

Section A (AS)

Sections A and B (A-level)

The specification content and demands for the set text sections of Component 1 are described below:

### AS

*Study should be targeted at developing ideas for how the play chosen may be interpreted and performed.*

*For the purposes of the exam all students must be prepared to answer questions from the perspective of at least two of the following three roles:*

- *performer*
- *designer (lighting, sound, set and costume)*
- *director.*

*Students must also develop knowledge and understanding of the subject content (as described in [Knowledge and understanding](#)), in particular:*

- *how the play has been constructed to be performed and to communicate meaning*
- *how the play is informed by its social, cultural and historical context.*

*Students must not answer Section A and Section B of the exam on the same play ie the live production seen cannot be their set play.*

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## A-level

*Study should be targeted at developing ideas for how the plays chosen may be interpreted and performed.*

*For plays in List A, for the purposes of the exam, students must be prepared to adopt the perspective of at least two of the following three roles:*

- *performer*
- *designer (lighting, sound, set and costume)*
- *director.*

*For plays in List B, for the purposes of the exam, students must be prepared to adopt the perspective of director, performer and designer (lighting, sound, set, costume).*

*Students must also develop [Knowledge and understanding](#) of the content listed, in particular:*

- *how the play has been constructed to be performed and to communicate meaning*
- *how the play is informed by its social, cultural and historical context.*

*Students must not answer Section A or Section B of the exam on the same play they answer on for Section C ie the live production seen cannot be one of their set plays.*

## A Practical Approach

Teachers will find that exploring the artistic possibilities of their chosen set text(s) and extracts, with their students, both through performance and design elements will be a useful way to approach the plays. And it is best to consider the various contributions that can be made in bringing the play to theatrical life, by the director, the performer and the designers. Students often respond well to taking on these roles as they workshop the set text(s) and gain experience of all three perspectives in a practical hands-on way.

Teachers should encourage students to gain a good level of understanding of individual characters within their set text(s) and extracts, as well as an understanding of the plays' structure, plot and themes. However, a purely literary/theoretical appreciation of these aspects will not allow the students to demonstrate their theatrical understanding in the exam.

Students need the opportunity to 'play' each role/character in the text at some stage in their study of their set play as well as to design settings, costume and technical elements for individual scenes or sequences of action.

The texts need to be understood in their original context as well as how it can be interpreted for a twenty-first century audience.

## Choosing your set texts at AS and A-level

Your choice might be determined by a variety of factors, for example:

- your own knowledge/experience/preference
- the length of the play, for example *Antigone* and *The Servant of Two Masters* at AS and A- Level Section A are on the shorter side, while *Metamorphosis* and *Yerma* are the shortest Section B texts
- the preferences of your students for comedy or tragedy, for classic texts or more modern plays
- the size of your teaching groups: for example, a small group might enjoy working on *Hedda Gabler* or *Antigone* while a large group might find larger cast plays such as *Much Ado about Nothing* or *Jerusalem*\* quite manageable  
\*note the extreme bad language and adult themes of the latter
- whether or not students will be able to see the play live in the theatre
- whether or not there is a DVD or Digital Theatre version available of the play
- in Components 2 (AS) and 3 (A-level) your students must choose plays that are different in period and genre from the play studied for Component 1. It would make sense to give thought to this (and to potential choices of practitioner for Components 2 and/or 3) *before* embarking on your teaching of the set play.

## General teaching strategies – Performance Texts AS and A-level

Use a combination of the following teaching strategies and ensure that you cover the entire play so that your students have a full theoretical understanding of it as well as a comprehensive understanding of its performance potential:

- formal teaching sessions which deal, for example, with the original cultural and theatrical context of the play; its period, genre and style
- discussion sessions, in which students exchange their own interpretative ideas for a specific character or scene from the play
- examplepractical ‘studio’ sessions, in which the students explore the practical challenges and opportunities afforded by the play
- adopt a practical approach to the text from the very beginning, including workshop sessions on each scene or section from the chosen play; you may even be able to mount a full production of the selected text.

See the example scheme of work that adopts this approach in a later section of this booklet.

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## Understanding the task

### AS

At **AS**, students need to study the whole play in practical terms, the examination questions are now divided into two parts. Part 1 will focus on, for example:

- a single nominated character to be interpreted from a performer's or director's perspective
- a pair or group of characters to be interpreted from a director's perspective
- a single scene or nominated scenes from the set text to be interpreted from a performer, director or designer's viewpoint.

Part 2 will focus on:

- the same perspective as Part 1 but applied to a different part of the play, as selected by the student.

Make sure that your students are familiar with the **assessment objectives** and **assessment criteria** for this part of the paper, so that they are fully aware of what they must include in their answers in order to attract the most marks.

### Assessment Objectives

- Section A assesses AO3 only
- AO3 – demonstrate knowledge and understanding of how drama and theatre is developed and performed.

### Assessment Criteria

Work is assessed against criteria related to levels of:

- Development of knowledge
- Depth of understanding
- Compatibility of ideas with the action or requirements of the question
- Potential for creating effective theatre
- Appropriateness of the selection of textual or visual illustrations
- Purposefulness of reference to social, cultural or historical context.

Additionally, all answers are assessed in relation to the levels of:

- Detail
- Structure
- Appropriate use of subject specific terminology.

Work through one of the specimen questions and mark schemes with your students so that they appreciate how their marks are apportioned according to these criteria.

## Answer-planning for success

To meet the criteria for AO3 students' answers should:

- Offer **creative performance/design or directorial suggestions** for the focus of the question
- Reveal knowledge and understanding of the **set text** that they have chosen
- Refer to a range of appropriate **specific moments** from the text in action
- Be well organised in the **structure** of their response and write in an appropriate register using **subject specific terminology** accurately
- Offer **practical suggestions that are compatible** with the play's action and with the focus of the question
- Make purposeful references to the **play's social, cultural or historical context**
- Be focused on meeting the **specific demands** of the question, supported by an appropriate selection of textual or visual illustrations.

## Understanding the task

### A-level

#### Sections A and B

**At A-level**, for both Sections A and B, students need to study the whole play in practical terms.

In Section A, questions offer students the opportunity to write from the perspective of a director, a performer or a designer.

In Section B, the examination questions are based on an extract from the chosen set text and each question is divided into three compulsory parts:

- Part 1 will require a director's perspective
- Part 2 will require a performer's perspective
- Part 3 will require a designer's perspective.

Make sure that your students are familiar with the **assessment objectives** and **assessment criteria** for Sections A and B of the paper, so that they are fully aware of what they must include in their answers in order to attract the most marks.

### Assessment Objectives

- Sections A and B assess AO3 only
- AO3 – demonstrate knowledge and understanding of how drama and theatre is developed and performed.

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### Assessment Criteria Section A

Work is assessed against criteria related to levels of:

- Security of knowledge
- Incisiveness of understanding
- Creativity of ideas **in response to the question**
- Coherence of **creative overview of the play**
- Potential for creating effective theatre
- Appropriateness of the selection of textual or visual illustrations
- Purposefulness of reference to social, cultural or historical context.

Additionally, all answers are assessed in relation to the levels of:

- Detail
- Structure
- Appropriate use of subject specific terminology.

### Assessment Criteria Section B

Work is assessed against criteria related to levels of:

- Security of knowledge
- Incisiveness of understanding
- Creativity of ideas **in response to the printed extract**
- Detail in the strategies proposed for conveying meaning
- Coherence **of interpretation**
- Potential for creating effective theatre
- Appropriateness of the selection of textual or visual illustrations
- Purposefulness of reference to social, cultural or historical context.

Additionally, all answers are assessed in relation to the levels of:

- Detail
- Structure
- Command of subject specific terminology
- **Degrees of justification for ideas.**

## Compatible classroom and/or homework exercises for both AS and A-level

- get your students to direct each other in individual scenes or extracts from the play
- get students to prepare to perform a chosen character in a five-minute section of the play
- get students to select and justify their choice of staging form for the play
- get students to design their own settings for individual scenes from the play (pencils and rulers are invaluable pieces of equipment for your students) a ‘model box’ is invaluable for this
- get them to consider what might be an appropriate set of costume designs for the characters
- get them to consider how lighting and sound might enhance their production
- get them to consider how they would want their audience to respond to individual characters or react to individual scenes in performance.

See examples of AS answers in this booklet.

See the separate section below on A-level questions, their mark schemes and assessment criteria.

## Component 1

Section B (AS)

Section C (A-level)

### Live theatre production

The specification content and demands for this section of Component 1 is described below:

*Students must learn how to analyse and evaluate the work of live theatre makers.*

*Students should aim to understand productions in terms of the relevant content listed in [Knowledge and understanding](#) (see above) 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.*

*Students should learn how to:*

- *articulate their understanding of how the theatre makers have 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 success or lack of success.*

*Prior to seeing a performance students are expected to have undertaken background research.*

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*Live theatre could include:*

- *plays*
- *physical theatre*
- *theatre in education*
- *musical theatre.*

*Productions may be professional or amateur (not peer).*

*For the purposes of this specification live theatre can include digital recordings or streamed productions. The original production must have been performed live by the company no earlier than five years before the commencement of the student's course.*

*Teachers must ensure that students see at least one performance which will enable them to access the exam questions and mark scheme in full. We recommend that this performance is a minimum of 50 minutes in duration (excluding any intervals or breaks) and that it includes at least two actors, dialogue and a range of production values (lighting, sound, set and costume).*

*Students must not answer Section A and Section B of the exam on the same play ie the live production seen cannot be their set play.*

This content is identical for AS and A-level, however, the types of question, the level of demand and the question weightings differ across the levels.

At AS, students answer one two-part structured question (from a choice of 3) where each part is worth 15 marks. For example:

16.1

*Explain how the sound design was used to enhance the tension at two specific moments. Analyse and evaluate the success of the effects created.*

[15 marks]

16.2

*Explain how one performer used their skills to create a convincing character at two specific moments. Analyse and evaluate their success in doing this.*

[15 marks]

While at A-level, students answer a single question (from a choice of 4 options) where the answer is marked out of 25 marks and the students must analyse and evaluate the performance or production element that is the focus of the question in relation to the **total dramatic effectiveness** of the production.

**One** question from a choice of **four**:

*22 Briefly explain the effects created by a non-naturalistic approach to costume design at particular moments. Analyse and evaluate how this contributed to the total dramatic effectiveness of the production by referring to two or three specific designs.*

[25 marks]

Teachers should take their students to experience live theatre and/or streamed and/or digital theatre and give them the opportunity to see a range of theatrical styles and genres.

The wider their experience of live contemporary theatre, the more able students will be to interpret their set texts, their extracts and, at A-level, the more able they will be to devise their own work.

It is clearly useful if students can see work that is the product of one of their chosen practitioners or to see a company that is clearly following the methods of one of their chosen practitioners.

Students need to be reminded that they may **not** write about a production of their set text(s).

They also need to be encouraged to make detailed notes about each of the productions that they have seen. They many **not** take notes into the exam, so it is really important that they have detailed notes and sketches of their own to revise from before the exam and for tests and essays that you set them on live theatre productions throughout the course.

You might choose to take them to see any of the following types of theatre:

- A piece of naturalistic theatre
- A piece of story-telling theatre or a creative adaptation
- A piece of 'classical' theatre
- A highly visual production including puppetry, physical theatre skills or mask work
- Any play that you have texts of, that can be studied before the theatre visit.

They should make notes on some of the following aspects of performance/production elements:

- the theatrical style and genre of the production
- directorial interpretation
- the choice of venue/staging form
- performance skills
- integration of movement and language in performance

- 
- the stage setting and design
  - use of space
  - costume
  - technical elements: lighting and sound
  - creation of pace, mood and atmosphere/specific effects
  - creation of specific effects for an audience
  - the actor/audience relationship.

In the examination, students should be able to discuss the effectiveness of aspects of one production seen, giving a personal assessment of the theatrical elements that contributed to its success or lack of success.

As appropriate to the specific demands of the focus of the question, students are expected **to refer to particular moments** within the production and to demonstrate a knowledge and understanding of the following:

- the perceived aims of the production and success in achieving them
- the creative contribution of the director, the designers, actors and production team
- the audience experience and response.

In order to prepare your students for this part of the examination you will need to:

- introduce them to a variety of theatre forms
- choose productions for your students to see; it's a good idea to cover a variety of theatrical styles
- prepare them in advance for each theatre visit you take them on; encourage them to read the play (or part of it) in advance if the text is available
- develop their ability to understand the separate constituents of live theatre and to understand how these work together in a production
- encourage them to discuss each live production seen purposefully
- help your students to acquire and develop a specialist theatre vocabulary
- guide your students in their approach to creating sensible notes after each production seen
- help your students to 'revise' the productions in advance of the examination.

### Meeting the criteria

To meet the criteria for **AO3** students' answers should:

- Reveal knowledge and understanding of the **style** and **form** of the chosen production
- Reveal knowledge and understanding of the **production aims** of the production team

- Reveal knowledge and understanding of how **meaning is created** through the use of **conventions and techniques**
- Reveal Knowledge and understanding of how performance texts are **interpreted and performed** for an audience
- Show secure **knowledge of subject specific terminology**

To meet the criteria for **AO4** students' answers should provide analysis and evaluation relating to

- The **skills** of the various theatre makers
- The **success of the interpretation** of the performance text
- Their **own response** to the effectiveness of the piece **at particular moments**
- Be **well-structured and detailed** throughout
- For **A-level** – the **total dramatic effectiveness** of the production.

## Practical Components

### AS Process and Performance

The specification outlines the content of this component as follows:

*This is a practical component in which students are assessed on their ability to create and develop ideas to communicate meaning as part of the theatre making process making connections between dramatic theory and practice (AO1), apply theatrical skills to realise artistic intentions in live performance (AO2) and analyse and evaluate their own work (AO4).*

*Component 2 constitutes 60% of the AS.*

*It is marked by teachers and moderated by AQA.*

*For this component students must practically explore (workshop) and interpret **two** key extracts each from a different play and complete **two** assessment tasks:*

- *formally present Extract 2 to an audience*
- *produce an individual Portfolio documenting work on both Extract 1 and Extract 2.*

*Each student's contribution to the performance of Extract 2 is marked out of 30.*

*Their Portfolio is marked out of 30.*

*For the performance of Extract 2 students must apply the work and methodologies of one of the prescribed theatre practitioners on our set list (see [Prescribed practitioners](#)).*

*Performers and directors in the same group must select the same practitioner. Designers may select different practitioners. All practitioner choices must be compatible.*

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*Each student should seek to ensure that their work is fully consonant with the intentions and methods of their selected practitioner.*

*Only Extract 2 **must** have a prescribed practitioner applied.*

*The key Extract 1 may have:*

- *no practitioner applied*
- *the same practitioner applied*
- *a different practitioner applied.*

Component 2 is the practical component at AS; it is also the learning component on the methodology of a prescribed theatre practitioner and it is the component where extracts from two further play texts are studied and performed:

- It is therefore very important that you select both appropriate play texts and an appropriate theatre practitioner for your students to study.
- The most important decision you will make on your students' behalf (or they will make on their own behalf) is the combination of text and practitioner offered for Extract 2.

When you are selecting a practitioner for Component 2, or guiding your students to select one, you should bear in mind three factors:

- Available resources about the practitioner's theory and practice. Think about books as well as video clips/websites
- The practicality of implementing the practitioner's ideas and methods given the resources in your school/college. Think about the demands of Stanislavski for example in terms of set/costume/props
- Your students' abilities to acquire/develop the skills necessary to do justice to the chosen practitioner's work if you choose a group such as Frantic for example – have all of the group got the necessary physical skills to replicate their work effectively.

### **Choice of Extract**

It is a requirement of the specification that students do not choose extracts from plays that are similar to one another or to the play that they are studying for Component 1.

### **Choosing a play and an appropriate practitioner**

The Teacher may:

- Select both the practitioner and the play
- Offer formal teaching about both practitioner and play
- Advise on casting
- Advise on choice and length of extract(s) – guided by the specification

- Offer support and answer students' questions; give constructive feedback.

The Teacher may not:

- Direct the piece
- Make any artistic or interpretative decisions
- Invite any third party to direct or improve the piece.

The important thing is that the match between the practitioner and the chosen text is a harmonious one and that students do not attempt to force the ideas of a particular practitioner onto an inappropriate text.

If you are in any doubt about your choice of play and/or practitioner, you should contact your Drama NEA Adviser.

## **A-level Component 2**

### A-level Process and Performance

The specification outlines the content of this component as follows:

*This is a practical component in which students are assessed on their ability to create and develop ideas to communicate meaning as part of the theatre making process making connections between dramatic theory and practice (AO1) and apply theatrical skills to realise artistic intentions in live performance (AO2).*

*Component 2 constitutes 30% of the A-level.*

*It is marked by teachers and moderated by AQA.*

*For this component, students must complete **two** assessment tasks:*

- *produce an individual Working notebook documenting the devising process*
- *contribute to a final devised, group performance.*

*The Working notebook is marked out of 40.*

*Each student's contribution to the final devised performance is marked out of 20.*

### [Guidance on devising](#)

*The stimulus/stimuli for the devised piece must be chosen by students.*

*There is no restriction on the subject matter that forms the basis of students' devising work. For example, the starting point for the piece might be:*

- *from literature or art*
- *an adaptation of a poem, a folk tale, a newspaper story*

- 
- *theme-based or focused on an historical event*
  - *wholly original*
  - *intended to educate the audience, to express a political viewpoint, to be serious or comical.*

*The devised piece must be informed by the work and methodologies of one of the prescribed theatre practitioners on our set list (see [Prescribed practitioners](#)).*

*Each student must choose a different practitioner to that chosen for Component 3.*

*Performers and directors in the same group must select the same practitioner. Designers may select different practitioners. All practitioner choices must be compatible.*

*It is important that the content of the devised work is entirely in line with the dramatic intentions of the chosen practitioner(s) whose methodology has been adopted.*

- Teachers may guide students on their choice of practitioner and also provide feedback about appropriate subject matter or stimulus.
- Teachers should guide students to resources available on the practitioner.
- However, beyond offering feedback on initial stimulus material and feedback on the work in progress, teachers should not take any part in the artistic development of the chosen material.
- Your students will need to research/generate/explore material appropriate to their chosen practitioner. There are no restrictions on the content of the finished devised piece, provided that it is *consonant with* the theatrical purpose and methodology that students have chosen to work in.

## **Possible course outline**

AS only or AS plus A-level students

Year 1

### **Term 1**

Content:

#### **Component 1**

Begin teaching selected set text, for example, *Antigone* for Section A, through practical exploration, discussion, design and written tasks.

Preparation for a theatre visit for 'Live theatre production' Section B with follow-up lessons unpicking the production.

#### **Component 2**

Introduction to theatre skills – direction, performance, design.

Introduce students to the work and methodology of Stanislavski – his work and significance (context, purpose, methods, influence) including practical workshops using extracts from **one or more** of the following plays:

*A Doll's House*: Ibsen

*The Three Sisters*: Chekhov

*Look Back in Anger*: Osborne

*Whale Music*: Tony Minghella.

### **Term 2**

Content:

#### **Component 1**

Continue and complete teaching selected set text: *Antigone* for Section A, as above.

Preparation for one or more further theatre visits for 'Live theatre production' for Section B with follow-up lessons unpicking the production(s).

#### **Component 2**

Exploration of late twentieth, early twenty-first century contemporary drama through extracts from **one or more** of the following plays:

*Ash Girl*: Timberlake Wertenbaker

*Tristan and Yseult*: Kneehigh Theatre

*pool no water*. Mark Ravenhill

*Little Sweet Thing*. Roy Williams.

**(Optional)** Exploration of the work and methodology of **one** of the following practitioners:

Frantic Assembly

Kneehigh

Eclipse

Application of the work and methodology of Stanislavski to workshop **one** of the plays explored in Term One

Workshop performance of, for example, *Three Sisters*

Guide students to prepare for the Portfolio by writing a draft for Section 1 of the Portfolio relating to the workshop performance of *Three Sisters*.

### **Term 3**

Content:

#### **Component 1**

Revision work on *Antigone*.

Revision work on 'Live theatre production'.

#### **Component 2**

**(Optional)** Application of the work and methodology of Frantic or Kneehigh or Eclipse to workshop one of the plays explored in Term Two

Workshop performance of *pool no water* as influenced by Frantic Assembly

Choose which of the **two** workshops to polish into the assessed performance - 'Extract 2'.

Perform the selected extract in performance conditions, recorded for external moderation

Complete work on the Portfolio

Submit marks to AQA

End of Year 1

**AS (only) students sit Component 1**

**AS plus A-level students may sit Component 1**

NB: There is no **requirement** for students to apply the methodology of a practitioner to Extract 1 but there are benefits for the A-level cohort, if they have already looked at **two** practitioners before they start Year 13.

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Year 2 A-level students only

**Term 1**

Content:

**Component 1**

Begin teaching selected Section B set text, for example, *The Glass Menagerie* through practical exploration, discussion, design and written tasks.

**Component 2**

Introduction to Devising Skills

Revision of the the work and methodology of Stanislavski **or** the methodology of Frantic or Kneehigh or Eclipse

Devising exercises applying the methodology of Stanislavski **or** the methodology of Frantic or Kneehigh or Eclipse

Begin drafting Working Notebook Section 1

**Term 2**

Content:

**Component 1**

Continue and complete teaching selected set text: *The Glass Menagerie* for Section B, as above

Preparation for one or more further theatre visits for 'Live theatre production' for Section B with follow-up lessons unpicking the production(s)

Brief revision of *Antigone* with A-level questions

**Component 2**

Devising work continues, refining and polishing – performance of Devised piece using influence of **one** of the chosen practitioners studied in AS year

Students complete their Working Notebook; submission of marks to AQA for Component 2

**Component 3**

Revision of second practitioner

Preparation of 2 or 3 workshops using extracts from **one or more** of the following plays:

For **Stanislavski**

*A Doll's House: Ibsen*

*The Three Sisters*: Chekhov

*Look Back in Anger*: Osborne

*Whale Music*: Tony Minghella

For **Frantic or Kneehigh or Eclipse**

*Ash Girl*: Timberlake Wertenbaker

*Tristan and Yseult*: Kneehigh Theatre

*pool no water*: Mark Ravenhill

*Little Sweet Thing*: Roy Williams

Workshop performance(s) of, for example, *Three Sisters and Whale Music* (Stanislawski)

### **Term 3**

Content:

#### **Component 1:**

Revision work on *Antigone*, *The Glass Menagerie*

Revision work on 'Live theatre production'

#### **Component 3:**

Application of the work and methodology of Frantic or Kneehigh or Eclipse to workshop one of the plays explored in Term Two, for example, Frantic Assembly applied to *pool no water*

Choose which of the three extract workshops to polish into the assessed performance – Extract 3

Guide students to produce the Reflective report

Students perform the selected extract in performance conditions to a Visiting Examiner

**NB:** There is no **requirement** for students to apply the methodology of a practitioner to Extracts 1 and 2, so these could be performed using the same practitioner as students are applying to the devised piece

Students may re-use extracts that they have performed for the AS examination in the A-level exam as these are two distinct (de-coupled) qualifications.

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## An example scheme of work for teaching a set text

### Sophocles *Antigone*

The scheme of work that follows comprises suggestions for teaching your students how to approach the text *Antigone* at AS and/or A-level.

You may need to adapt the question tasks depending upon whether you are teaching the text for AS or A-level.

The scheme is not intended to be prescriptive, nor does it claim to be exhaustive.

Each lesson plan is devised to be covered in a 2 hour lesson.

THIS SCHEME/APPROACH MAY BE ADAPTED TO SUPPORT ANY OF THE SET TEXTS

#### Lesson 1

*Formal* – Teacher introduces students to the performance conditions of Classical Greek drama, taking account of the **original social and cultural context** of the play.

Who was Sophocles?

When did he live/write?

What were the theatrical conventions that informed his writing?

What was his social context?

What kind of audience did he write for?

Why do we still think his plays are worth studying/performing?

What is tragedy?

It could be useful to tell the story of Oedipus and his tragedy as a preliminary to the story of *Antigone*.

It would be useful to provide students with sketches/pictures of the original Greek amphitheatre arrangements and to introduce them to theatrical terms that are specific to Greek drama.

Encourage your students to begin a **glossary of specialist terminology** related to classical Greek theatre and performance.

Show them drawings/plates that depict Greek costumes so that they can picture the characters in the play and also describe their costumes using appropriate terminology.

## BIBLIOGRAPHY and Webliography

Source material is plentiful. Highly recommended books on Greek Tragedy/Sophocles include:

Kott, Jan. *The Eating of the Gods: An Interpretation of Greek Tragedy*. New York: Random House, 1973

Walcot, Peter. *Greek Drama in its Theatrical and Social Context*. Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 1976.

Ample information about staging conventions and terms can also be found in any general history of the theatre, for example:

*The Oxford Illustrated History of the Theatre* edited by John Russell Brown, OUP, Oxford, 1995.

## WEBLIOGRAPHY

One very useful site with links to many more on theatres and drama of Ancient Greece is:

[www.didaskalia.net](http://www.didaskalia.net)

Information and video illustration of theatres throughout Europe from the Greeks onwards:

<http://www.theatron.org/download.html>

More research sites about Greek theatre:

<http://www.whitman.edu/theatre/theatretour/home.htm>

[www.theatreodyssey.com](http://www.theatreodyssey.com)

Useful video clip of a Greek Chorus in action:

<http://www.chrisvervain.btinternet.co.uk/page8.html>

A useful demonstration of some masks:

<http://www.chrisvervain.btinternet.co.uk/page9.html>

Link to a company dedicated to productions of the Greek classics

<http://www.actorsofdionysus.com/>

*Reading Assignment* - read the opening section of *Antigone* (the first 115 or so lines) from the very beginning of the play up to the exit of both Antigone and Ismene before the first appearance of the Chorus. Seek and find a definition of 'tragedy'.

## Lesson 2

The BBC Two 1984 production of *Antigone*, with Juliet Stephenson in the title role, would be a good introduction to the play. Your students can view clips from this production on YouTube. Alternatively, you may prefer to save this experience until your students have formed their own opinions about the characters and their possible interpretations.

**Formal** – remind your students of the events that take place in *Antigone*. Explain the social and religious purpose of Greek theatre. Share student found ‘definitions’ of tragedy.

**Teacher-led** – discussion of the opening section of the play, canvassing students’ reactions to Antigone’s intentions to bury her brother and to Ismene’s response. Consideration of the characters’ **motivation and interaction**.

Consideration of some of the following:

- Casting ideas for each the of roles of Antigone and Ismene in terms of age, height, build, physical appearance, colouring
- Vocal qualities, pitch, pace, tone, accent
- Posture, movement, gesture, mannerisms, use of stage
- Facial features and expression
- Delivery of the lines
- Ideas for communicating Antigone’s energy, conviction and determination and her feelings both for her brother and for Creon her extremism
- Ideas for communicating Ismene’s uncomprehending response to her sister’s plan, her own sense of duty and place, her genuine fear for Antigone’s safety
- Ideas for conveying the growing antagonism between the sisters.

**Practical** - armed with some ideas generated by the discussion, students undertake a practical exploration of the scene in groups of three; two performers and one inventive director per group.

Try giving each director a slightly different task in terms of how they should approach the section in order to elicit different audience responses.

You might try giving the director **a list of adverbs** that might be applicable to each character in action to guide him/her in achieving a specific interpretation.

For example, Antigone delivers her lines **quickly, urgently, impulsively, spiritedly, dismissively, sarcastically, poisonously** etc. while Ismene delivers her lines, **quietly, softly, despairingly, anxiously, nervously, tremulously** etc.

Each group could be given a different set of adverbs which would result in a slightly different interpretation of the scene.

This exercise often helps to get the students thinking about their delivery in their practical work and once it begins to inform their written work it can help to make their ideas for characters and scenes more vivid for the reader.

They should also consider **patterns of stage movement** and **listening and response**.

**Reading Assignment** - Students should read the first Choral ode and make some brief notes about how they think it might be performed. They should be encouraged to use a Thesaurus to compile a list of performance related adverbs or adjectives.

### Lesson 3

**Formal** – Explain the origin and function of the Chorus in Greek drama and the development of their role in Sophocles' work, standing as if between the action and the audience, mediating events for them as 'an emotional bridge' between spectators and audience. Add relevant terms to their glossary.

**Practical**- a practical exploration of the first Choric ode, based on students' ideas about performance. This will take up the whole of this lesson. Students should be encouraged to consider, for example:

- The number, gender and age of the Chorus members
- Their physical qualities, height, build, colouring, facial features (if appropriate)
- Their costume and/or mask, make-up, props
- Their vocal qualities, accent, pitch, tone, emphasis, choral speech, song
- Their movement and/or dance
- Delivery of the ode
- Division of lines
- Ideas for accompanying action/s
- Use of stage
- Their expository function
- Their first reaction to Creon
- The intended effects for the audience, the **performer/audience configuration**.

### Written Assignment

*How would you direct the opening section of Antigone from the beginning of the play up to Creon's first appearance? Explain what effects you would wish to create for your audience.*

*You must make specific reference to the social, cultural and/or historical context of Antigone in your answer.*

Encourage your students to write as vividly as possible about the actors' movement, gestures, facial expressions and delivery of lines, using adverbs/adjectives to support their ideas for performance.

### Lesson 4

**Formal** – review of the original staging conventions/conditions of classical Greek theatre with a summary of specialist terms for staging elements, for example, *skene*, *orchestra*, *parados*, *ekkyklema*, etc. to be added to their glossary.

**Teacher-led** – read-through of Creon's first exchanges with the Chorus, followed by a discussion of his character and how it might be presented. In particular, consider his attitude to the law, its making and breaking.

Look at the next section with the Sentry and see how far their opinions of Creon are modified by his treatment of him. Read together up to the exit of the Sentry. Focusing initially on the audiences' shifting perceptions of Creon, encourage your students to consider, for example:

- Creon's entrance and stage position
- His physical appearance, height, build, facial features
- His costume, mask or make-up
- His posture, gait, movement, mannerisms
- His vocal qualities, pitch, pace, pause, tone, accent
- His attitudes, complacency, arrogance, faith in himself.

**Practical** - each student to spend some time thinking about how an actor might perform Creon's opening speech. As time allows, give them each an opportunity to 'perform' Creon's entry and first twenty or so lines, taking account of points already discussed and concentrating on creating an appropriate initial impression of the character. Remind them to identify qualities that they wish to highlight through the performance of his first appearance.

**Reading Assignment**- students to read on from the Sentry's exit up to the point in the play where the Sentry, having arrested Antigone and presented her to Creon, beats a hasty retreat.

## Lesson 5

**Formal** - *introduction* to the genre of tragedy, taking account of students' 'definitions' and with some reference to Aristotle's *Poetics*. Give some consideration to his division of the form into plot, character, diction, thought, spectacle and song. Offer students a working definition of the term to be returned to later. Add to the glossary, terms such as *stichomythia*, *choric ode*, etc.

**Teacher-led** - discussion about the nature of the Sentry, his function within the play and the performance potential for the role, giving some attention to, for example:

- The physical characteristics and appearance of the Sentry in terms of build, height, facial features
- His movement, gait and posture
- His vocal qualities, accent, pitch, pace, tone
- His down-to-earth nature
- His trepidation about Creon's reactions to his news
- Delivery of his speeches; interaction with Creon, **development of pace and pitch**
- His description of the discovery of the 'burial' – role-playing within his speech
- His sudden boldness in the face of Creon's anger
- His escape and vow never to return
- His re-entry with Antigone and his new found confidence
- His awareness of the Chorus' presence and/or the audience
- Audience response to his character.

**Practical** - divide your group up so that you have one or more groups with enough actors to play Creon, the Sentry and some form of Chorus plus a 'director'. See how different groups interpret the sequence which begins with the Sentry's first entrance and ends at his final exit. Let them devise their own interpretation this time. They should consider their actors' stage positioning, their movements, gestures, facial expressions and delivery of lines.

### **Written Assignment -**

A-level

*How would you want your audience to respond to the role of the Sentry? Explain how you would perform the role to achieve your aims.*

*You must make specific reference to the social, cultural and/or historical context of Antigone in your answer.*

AS Level

*You are performing the role of the Sentry in his first appearance in the play.*

*Explain how you would perform the Sentry in his interaction with Creon in order to achieve your preferred effects for the audience*

*You must make specific reference to the social, cultural and/or historical context of Antigone in your answer.*

### **Lesson 6**

**Teacher-led** – read-through and discussion of the next section of the play, from Antigone's entrance, led by the Sentry until the moment where both Antigone and Ismene are led away by Guards into the palace. Encourage your students to give consideration to both Antigone's and Creon's attitude to the law, to the gods and to each other.

You should encourage your students to consider some of the following:

- Physical appearance of Antigone, Creon and Ismene
- Vocal qualities
- Delivery of lines
- Costume/mask or make-up ideas
- Movement, posture, gait, mannerisms
- Use of stage
- Antigone's behaviour during the speech of the Sentry; passivity, nervousness or some other response
- Possible interaction with the Chorus, silent appeal or apparent indifference
- Delivery of Antigone's first speech to Creon
- Her engagement with Creon, variety of tones, use of stichomythic exchanges
- Apparent resignation to her fate
- Antigone's attitudes towards Ismene and Creon
- Creon's attitudes to his nieces
- Ismene's surprising decision to seek death with her sister
- Creon's lack of response to Ismene's entreaties

- The exit of the girls, under guard
- Audience response to the unfolding events and to each character.

**Reading Assignment** - Students to be directed to read some 'secondary source' material about Greek theatre. This might be something as accessible as reading the introduction at the beginning of an edition of the set text or involve wider reading from general theatre history books such as Phyllis Hartnell's *The Theatre- A Concise History* (Thames and Hudson, 1998).

Set texts vary in the amount of introductory information that they provide, but, for example, in the Penguin Classics edition, which is translated by Robert Fagles, there is a very manageable and quite compact introduction to "Greece and the Theatre". You will be able to direct those of your students with a real interest in Greek theatre to other, more demanding texts. You may also like to assign different students specific areas for investigation.

## Lesson 7

**Teacher-led** - discussion of the fruits of the reading assignment. A pooling of 'findings' with some additions to the 'glossary'. Let this lead into a consideration of appropriate setting(s) for the play. You might like to discuss, for example:

- Choice of staging form
- Original staging conventions
- Alternatives to original Greek staging conventions
- The setting/space to be used
- Use of levels, steps, platforms, ramps, balconies
- The positioning of the palace doors, of an altar (if required) of a throne of state (if required)
- Use of colour, texture, scale, shape
- Provision of entrances and exits
- Accommodation of the Chorus
- Consideration of the play's themes/atmosphere/action to be served by the setting.

**Practical** – divide your students into groups to tackle the section of the play that was read through and considered in Lesson 6, paying particular attention to movement within the space and necessary/desirable stage settings/furnishings

**Design Assignment** - Outline and justify your setting design for *Antigone*. You must provide a sketch to support your design ideas.

Remind students to consider **design fundamentals – scale, shape, colour, texture**

## Lesson 8

**Teacher-led** - read-through/walk through of the next section of text, the Choral ode and the scene of confrontation between Haemon and his father. Students should give some consideration to the following:

- The Chorus' reaction to Creon's harsh treatment of his nieces
- The Chorus' communication with Creon and the audience through movement, song, delivery of lines
- Haemon's entrance, his physical appearance, similarity or difference to Creon
- Performance techniques for each actor
- The calm beginning of the interview
- Haemon's apparent respect for his father
- Creon's delivery of his expansive speech about the nature of the law
- Haemon's response and patient reasoning
- Performance ideas for the stichomythic exchanges
- Increased pace and tempo as the characters reach a crescendo of opposition
- The interjections of the Chorus
- Creon's increasing frenzy and abuse of his son
- Haemon's hurried exit and parting lines
- Audience response to the scene and the characters.

### **Written Assignment -**

*How would you want your audience to respond to the characters of Haemon and Creon in their scene of confrontation? Explain how you would direct the scene in order to achieve your aims.*

*You must make specific reference to the social, cultural and/or historical context of Antigone in your answer.*

Remind your students to use descriptive language in their answer to bring the scene to life.

## Lesson 9

**Teacher-led** - read through/walk through of the next sequence of action including the Choral ode before Antigone is brought from the palace for her final appearance.

Some discussion would be useful here of students' opinion about whether Antigone is an innocent victim of Creon's malevolence or is the author of her own destruction. In their interpretation of this section, they should give attention to the following points:

- The performance of the Choral ode
- Antigone's appearance and possible change of demeanour
- Performance strategies to elicit pity, sympathy or other audience response
- Antigone's self-pity; her self-esteem and self-righteousness
- Delivery of her speeches
- Engagement with the Chorus, fear of mockery
- Their attitude towards her
- Antigone's tortured recollections of the cursed House of Laius
- Her address to Polynices' spirit

- Resignation to her fate
- Attitudes towards Creon
- Creon's performance and cruel indifference to Antigone's suffering
- Use of the stage area
- Antigone's appeal to the justness of the gods
- Her pitiful exit to her death chamber.

**Reading Assignment** - read to the end of the play and choose a short section of the play (5-10 minutes' worth depending on group size) to present to the whole group – this might be done singly, in pairs or in small groups.

## Lesson 10

**Formal** – a review of what constitutes tragedy, according to previous definition.

A consideration of whose tragedy this play depicts; Antigone's or Creon's.

A discussion of the concept of the 'tragic flaw', of fate and of *hubris*.

Invite opinion and discussion about this.

Addition of terms such as catharsis, 'pity and fear', reversal and discovery,

(*peripeteia* and *anagnorisis*), to the glossary.

**Teacher-led** - read through/walk through of the next section of the play, paying particular attention to the presentation of the role of Tiresias in his exchanges with Creon and to Creon's sudden recognition of his error. Students should give some consideration to the following:

- The stage positioning of all the actors in the scene, Creon, the Chorus, the Chorus Leader, Tiresias and the boy who leads him
- The physical appearance of the actors, the contrasting appearance of the blind old man and the boy, of the 'King' and the prophet
- Costume ideas, mask or make-up
- The calm beginning to the exchanges between Tiresias and Creon, the appearance of mutual respect
- The delivery of Tiresias' long speech with its pervasive images of augury
- The reaction of the chorus to the speech and to the gradual increase in tension between the Creon and Tiresias
- Creon's explosive response to Tiresias' words and his recourse to insult
- Tiresias final speech and his withdrawal from the scene
- Creon's appeal to the Chorus, his vacillation and final capitulation
- Creon's energetic exit and sense of urgency
- The intended effects for an audience of all performance decisions made.

**Practical Assignment**- students should continue to prepare for their presentation, singly, in pairs or groups.

## Lesson 11

**Teacher-led** - read through/walk through of the final sequence of the play. Follow this with a discussion of the students' shifting responses to Creon and his personal plight.

Return to the concept of tragedy and explore the idea that Antigone is actually only a catalyst to Creon's central tragedy.

In looking at the final sequence of action, students might consider some of the following:

- The reaction of the Chorus to Creon's change of heart; their movement and delivery of lines
- The arrival of the Messenger, his appearance, costume, mask or make-up
- The delivery of his speech about the nature of fortune
- The troubled response of the Leader
- Increased pace and tempo as the Messenger reveals the horror of Haemon's death
- The entrance of Eurydice, her appearance, costume and vocal qualities
- The brief exchange with Eurydice – the Messenger's lengthy speech and subsequent anxiety
- His exit into the palace and his ominous manner
- Creon's entry escorted by attendants carrying Haemon's body on a bier
- His appearance and utterly changed manner
- Creon's delivery of his speeches of regret and self-debasement
- His reaction to the news and vision of his dead wife
- The Messenger's dialogue with Creon at the play's terrible ending
- The exchange with the Chorus Leader
- Creon's complete collapse
- The final lines of the Chorus
- Potential audience response to the final moments of the tragedy.

**Practical** - Students continue to prepare for their presentation

**Reading Assignment** – Re-read the whole play.

## Lesson 12

**Teacher-led** - review of the theoretical and practical exploration of *Antigone* that has been undertaken. Discussion of the ways in which Sophocles has presented the issues of the law, of man's law and the law of the gods. Discussion of Antigone's need to bury her brother and the whole complicated mesh of family issues that the play explores. Consideration of themes such as love, duty, civic and family obligations.

Check the list given in the Specification about aspects to be covered.

**Practical** – students present and then assess and discuss their performance sequences.

**Half Term/Christmas or Easter project** - Each student to prepare their own detailed set of production plans for *Antigone* including ideas for a selected staging form, for setting and costume. These should include relevant sketches. Attention should also be given to lighting and sound if appropriate. Students should consider all the major characters in terms of casting and performance ideas; the Chorus and its composition should also be considered. Students should identify the audience responses that they would wish to achieve in each section of the play.

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