

Corby Business Academy

A Level

Drama and Theatre



**GCSE to A Level
Transition Booklet**

Introduction

Congratulations on choosing to study Drama and Theatre at A Level!

Pearson Edexcel Level 3 Advanced GCE in Drama and Theatre is the course that we offer at Corby Business Academy.

The course:

Description: The Pearson Edexcel Level 3 Advanced GCE in Drama and Theatre consists of two non-examination assessment components and one externally examined paper. Students will complete three components, titled: *Devising, Text in a Performance and Theatre Makers in Practice*. Over the course of the two years, students can decide to either be a performer or focus on the designing processes involved in the creation of a performance (costume, hair and makeup / set and prop design / lighting or sound design). All students will be exposed to a wide range of practitioners and will experiment with different styles of theatre. Two set texts will be studied and extracts from these plays will be performed as part of the concluding assessment. Finally, students will learn how to evaluate live theatre and consider multiple interpretations of a performance. Students must also watch a number of live, professional theatre performances to complete this course.

Progression: Students develop communication, collaboration and creative skills, all of which are highly valued by universities and employers. A Drama and Theatre A Level can lead to many future opportunities and can help students to achieve their ambitions, with many students either attending university or specialist performing arts schools upon completion of their A Level studies in Drama.

CAREERS: The theatre industry is very competitive, yet very rewarding. After completing a Drama and Theatre A Level, popular career paths include: teaching, performing, directing and public speaking.

What is this booklet for?

This booklet will help prepare you for studying Drama at A-levels, by getting you to start thinking about the influences on modern theatre. You will begin by researching into key practitioners who have influenced Drama and Theatre, then move on to look at applying your research, and finally you will complete a live theatre review. There is also a glossary of key terminology for you to complete prior to beginning your A Level course in September.

Recommended Reading List

We will be selecting one of these plays from each section to study as a class. We will make these choices together in September. In the meantime, we would expect you to start reading around these texts and come up with a list of texts that you sound the most interested in (this can be from a performance or design perspective).

Performance text
<i>Accidental Death Of An Anarchist</i> , Dario Fo (adapted by Gavin Richards)
<i>Colder Than Here</i> , Laura Wade
<i>Equus</i> , Peter Shaffer
<i>Fences</i> , August Wilson
<i>Machinal</i> , Sophie Treadwell
<i>That Face</i> , Polly Stenham

Performance text
<i>Antigone</i> , Sophocles (adapted by Don Taylor)
<i>Doctor Faustus</i> , Christopher Marlowe*
<i>Hedda Gabler</i> , Henrik Ibsen (adapted by Richard Eyre)
<i>Lysistrata</i> , Aristophanes (translated by Alan H. Sommerstein)
<i>The Maids</i> , Jean Genet (translated by Bernard Frechtman)
<i>The School for Scandal</i> , Richard Brinsley Sheridan
<i>The Tempest</i> , William Shakespeare
<i>Waiting for Godot</i> , Samuel Beckett
<i>Woyzeck</i> , Georg Büchner (translated by John Mackendrick)

Transition tasks:

Task 1: Theatre practitioners

Choose one of the following theatre practitioners and research and understand their methodologies:

- Steven Berkoff (playwright, actor and director)
- Vsevolod Meyerhold (director, actor and producer)
- Anton Artaud (actor, director and writer)
- Frantic Assembly (theatre company)
- Bertolt Brecht (playwright and director)
- Konstantin Stanislavski (director, writer and actor)

You will need to find out the following information about the practitioner:

1. When and where were / are they active in the theatre?
2. What was the theatre of their time like before they started working?
3. What is the intention of their work? (What do they want the audience to think / feel / understand?)
4. What are the main features of their style of theatre?
5. What productions, writings etc. are they particularly famous for?
6. Find one quote from the practitioner which you feel sums up their practice.

You can present your information in one of three ways:

- A poster (this would be in the style of an educational poster to go on a classroom wall)
- A pamphlet / leaflet
- A PowerPoint presentation

Task 2: Applying your research

Think about a play text that you have studied in English or Drama. Imagine you are the director of a new production of this play, with an unlimited budget. You are going to use the methodologies of the practitioner you have researched (above) to create a directorial concept for the play to present to your actors and design team. Fill in the boxes below:

<p>Which play are you directing?</p>	<p>Which practitioner is your influence?</p>
<p>Where will your performance take place? Why?</p>	<p>What will your approach to rehearsing your actors be like?</p>

What design elements (e.g. lighting, costume etc.) are going to be important in your production? Why?	What do you want your audience to think / feel / understand by the end of the performance?
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Task 3: Live Theatre

Write a review of the play including your thoughts on the design (set, lighting, costume, sound etc.), performances of the actors, and the direction. If you can't go and see something, write about a production you have seen in the past or online recently.

There are plays available to watch on the following platforms:

- National Theatre
- YouTube
- BBC iPlayer

Task 4: Glossary

Knowing the key terms will enable you to understand subject-specific language and access other tasks, as well as making rapid progress when you start your course. Please complete the table finding the subject-specific definitions of all the terms:

Key term	Definition
Proscenium arch	The 'frame' around an end-on stage through which the audience watches the action.
The 'fourth wall'	
In the round	
Up stage	
Down stage	
Auditorium	
Wings	
Naturalistic	
Surreal	
Symbolic	
Immersive theatre	
Physical theatre	

Devising	
Improvisation	
Evaluation	
Analysis	
Proxemics	
Dramatic intention	
Black box	
Blocking	
Exposition	
Flood (lighting)	