

## General Dramatic Terminology

## Knowledge Organiser - Year 11 Drama GCSE

## Performance glossary

<b>Acting area</b>	That area within the performance space within which the performer may move in full view of the audience. Also known as the <b>playing area</b> .	<b>Mood</b>	The tone or feeling of the play, often engendered by the music, setting, or lighting.	<b>Acting style</b>	A particular manner of acting which reflects cultural and historical influences.
<b>Action</b>	The movement or development of the plot or story in a play; the sense of forward movement created by the sense of time and/or the physical and psychological motivations of characters.	<b>Naturalism</b>	A style of drama that developed in the late 19th century as an attempt to represent real life on stage faithfully and without artifice; the actions of characters tend to be dominated by determinism (societal or environmental forces).	<b>Articulation</b>	The clarity or distinction of speech.
<b>Character</b>	A person portrayed in a drama, novel, or other artistic piece.	<b>Parody</b>	A mocking or satirical imitation of a literary or dramatic work.	<b>Blocking</b>	The path formed by the performer's movement on stage, usually determined by the director with assistance from the performer and often written down in a script using commonly accepted theatrical symbols.
<b>Climax</b>	The point of greatest intensity in a series or progression of events in a play, often forming the turning point of the plot and leading to some kind of resolution.	<b>Plot</b>	The events of a play or arrangement of action, as opposed to the theme.	<b>Business</b>	A piece of unscripted or improvised action, often comic in intention, used to establish a character, fill a pause in dialogue, or to establish a scene. An author may simply suggest 'business', to indicate the need for some action at that point in the play.
<b>Comedy</b>	A play that treats characters and situations in a humorous way. In Shakespeare's time, a comedy was any play with a happy ending that typically told the story of a likable characters rise to fortune. In ancient Greece, comedies dealt almost exclusively with contemporary figures and problems. <b>Low comedy</b> is physical rather than intellectual comedy; <b>high comedy</b> is more sophisticated, emphasizing verbal with more than physical action.	<b>Plot Development</b>	The organisation or building of the action in a play.	<b>Characterisation</b>	How a performer uses body, voice and thought to develop and portray a character.
<b>Comic relief</b>	A break in the tension of a tragedy provided by a comic character, a comic episode, or even a comic line.	<b>Protagonist</b>	The main character or hero in a play or other literary work.	<b>Gesture</b>	Any movement of the performer's head, shoulder, arm, hand, leg, or foot to convey meaning.
<b>Conflict</b>	The internal or external struggle between opposing forces, ideas, or interests that creates dramatic tension.	<b>Scenography</b>	The art of creating performance environments using one or more components including light, costume, set, space and sound.	<b>Inflection</b>	Change in pitch or loudness of the voice.
<b>Contrast</b>	Dynamic use of opposites, such as movement/stillness, sound/silence, and light/darkness.	<b>Sightlines</b>	Imaginary lines of sight that determine what areas of the stage are visible to the audience from any given seat in the house.	<b>Interaction</b>	The action or relationship among two or more characters.
<b>Drama</b>	Term comes from a Greek word meaning action. The enactment of drama in theatre, performed by performers on a stage before an audience, presupposes collaborative modes of production and a collective form of reception. The structure of dramatic texts is directly influenced by this collaborative production and collective reception.	<b>Space</b>	A defined area.	<b>Language</b>	In drama, the particular manner of verbal expression, the diction or style of writing, or the speech or phrasing that suggests a class or profession or type of character.
<b>Dramatic and theatrical elements</b>	Focus, tension, timing, rhythm, contrast, mood, space, language, sound, symbol, conflict, climax theatrical: divided into literary elements: Characters, Plot, Theme, Dialogue, Convention, Genre, Audience technical elements: set, props, lighting, sound, costume performance elements: acting, motivation, vocal/physical expression.	<b>Stage furniture</b>	Elements of the production that can be used/moved but cannot be defined as personal props e.g. chair, table.	<b>Mannerism</b>	A peculiarity of speech or behaviour.
<b>Dynamic</b>	The energetic range of or variations within physical movement or the difference between levels of sound	<b>Staging</b>	Another term for <b>blocking</b> ; deliberate choices about where the performers stand and how they move on stage to communicate character relationships and plot and to create interesting stage pictures in relation to set, properties and audience and effects created by lighting, for example.	<b>Mirroring</b>	Copying the movement and/or expression or look of someone else exactly.
<b>End on</b>	Traditional audience seating layout where the audience is looking at the stage from the same direction. This seating layout is that of a Proscenium Arch theatre. See also <b>THRUST, IN THE ROUND, TRAVERSE</b> .	<b>Style</b>	The decisions made when presenting a play in performance, influenced by the social, historical and cultural context and artistic choices of the creative team. The mode of expression - the way in which characters, narrative, are expressed to an audience.	<b>Motivation</b>	The reason or reasons for a character's behaviour; an incentive or inducement for further action for a character.
<b>Ensemble</b>	The dynamic interaction and harmonious blending of the efforts of the many artists involved in the dramatic activity of theatrical production.	<b>Realism</b>	An attempt in theatre to represent everyday life and people as they are or appear to be through careful attention to detail in character motivation, costume, setting, and dialogue. Plays from this period (from 1820 to 1920) seek the truth, find beauty in the commonplace, and focus on the conditions of the working class. Henrik Ibsen is an exemplar of the movement; he influenced others such as George Bernard Shaw and Anton Chekov.	<b>Pace</b>	Rate of movement or speed of action
<b>Flashback</b>	In a non-linear plot, to go back in time to a previous event; a <i>flash forward</i> would move the action into the future.	<b>Scene</b>	A small section or portion of a play.	<b>Performance elements</b>	Include acting (e.g. character motivation and analysis, empathy), speaking (breath control, vocal expression and inflection, projection, speaking style, diction) and nonverbal expression (gestures, body alignment, facial expression, character blocking, movement).
<b>Form</b>	Formal elements and characteristics (e.g. structure and content) of a particular play e.g. a well-made play usually consists of three acts.	<b>Set</b>	The physical surroundings, visible to the audience, in which the action of the play takes place.	<b>Pitch</b>	The particular level of a voice, instrument or tune.
<b>Fourth wall</b>	The invisible wall of a set through which the audience sees the action of the play.	<b>Setting</b>	When and where the action of a play takes place.	<b>Posture</b>	Physical alignment of a performer's body or a physical stance taken by a performer which conveys information about the character being played.
<b>Genre</b>	A category or 'type' given to plays that include a particular form, content or technique, based upon the conventions used e.g. tragedy, comedy, farce, and melodrama.	<b>Sightlines</b>	Imaginary lines of sight that determine what areas of the stage are visible to the audience from any given seat in the house.	<b>Projection</b>	How well the voice carries to the audience.
<b>Irony</b>	An implied discrepancy between what is said and what is meant. There are several forms of irony. <i>Verbal irony</i> is when a writer or speaker says one thing and means something else (often the opposite of what is said). When the audience perceives something that a character does not know, that is <i>dramatic irony</i> . <i>Situational irony</i> can be described as a discrepancy between expected results and the actual results.	<b>Sound</b>	The effects an audience hears during a performance to communicate character, context, or environment.	<b>Proxemics</b>	Contemporary term for 'spatial relationships', referring to spatial signifiers of the relationship between different performers or a performer and elements of the set which convey information about character and circumstances.
		<b>Sound elements</b>	Music, sound effects, performers' voices.	<b>Rhythm</b>	Measured flow of words or phrases in verse forming patterns of sound. Regularity in time or space of an action, process or feature.
		<b>Space</b>	A defined area	<b>Role</b>	The character portrayed by a performer in a drama.
		<b>Story line</b>	The plot or plan of action.	<b>Spatial awareness</b>	Traditional term for what is currently referred to as 'proxemics', referring to spatial signifiers of the relationship between different performers or a performer and elements of the set which convey information about character and circumstances.
		<b>Structure</b>	The arrangement of and relationship between the constituent parts of a whole as in 'prologue, exposition, denouement' or scenes and acts within a play.	<b>Timbre</b>	The distinctive character or quality of a musical or vocal sound apart from its pitch or intensity such as in a nasal voice quality.
		<b>Stylisation</b>	The shaping of dramatic material, settings, or costumes in a deliberately non-realistic manner.	<b>Vocal projection</b>	Directing the voice out of the body to be heard clearly at a distance.
		<b>Suspense</b>	A feeling of uncertainty as to the outcome, used to build interest and excitement on the part of the audience.		
		<b>Symbolism</b>	The use of symbolic language, imagery, or colour to evoke emotions or ideas.		
		<b>Tempo</b>	Relative speed or rate of movement in pace over time, e.g. the speed at which the music for a dance should be played. Can be applied to dramatic contexts such as in 'tempo rhythm'.		
		<b>Tension</b>	The atmosphere created by unresolved, disquieting, or inharmonious situations that human beings feel compelled to address; the state of anxiety the audience feels because of a threat to a character in a play.		
		<b>Text</b>	The basis of dramatic activity and performance; a written script or an agreed-upon structure and content for an improvisation.		
		<b>Theme</b>	The basic idea of a play; the idea, point of view, or perception that binds together a work of art.		
		<b>Timing</b>	Includes setting cues for effects and lighting, synchronizing two or more things that must happen simultaneously, and establishing the pace at which lines will be delivered or the play performed.		
		<b>Turning point</b>	The climax or high point of a story, when events can go either way.		
		<b>Wings</b>	Offstage areas to the right and left of the acting/onstage area.		