

Drama Knowledge Organiser – Year 7

Acting Skills (referred to as VFBSM or “Very Fat Bears Sing More”):

Voice

Facial Expressions

Body Language

Space

Movement



Keyword	Definition
Pitch	How high or low your voice is
Pace	The speed you speak with (fast or slow)
Volume	How loud or quiet your voice is
Tone	The emotion that you speak with
Accent	The way in which people from a particular area or country pronounce words
Diction	The style of enunciation in speaking or singing
Inflection	The modulation of intonation or pitch in the voice
Stress	The emphasis on a particular word or phrase
Projection	The strength of speaking whereby the voice is used loudly and clearly
Proxemics	How physically close or far apart you are from someone
Levels	Different heights used by performers onstage (can be used to suggest status)
Gesture	A defined movement which clearly communicates meaning

Important keywords to know and remember, including theatre roles, stage types and positioning.

Keyword	Definition
Stimulus	The starting point, idea or inspiration to create a piece of theatre
Context	Background to the play; when and where the play is set
Genre	Type of story being told and how the work is presented onstage
Audience	A group of people who participate in a show or watch a work of theatre
Devising	A method of collaborative theatre-making using improvised games, activities and exercises
Artistic Intentions	Decisions made by theatre-makers to communicate deeper meaning through their work
Play	Performance during which actors recite lines from a script and perform the actions of the characters
Narrative	An account of a series of related events or experiences – the story
Costume Designer	The person responsible for designing, making and altering the costumes
Set Designer	In charge of designing and creating the set
Model Box (Set Design)	A scale model of the set giving an idea what the real set will look like
Stage Manager	Organises each team, is responsible for health and safety and 'calling' the show (technical cues)
Theatre Manager	Manages the Front of House, audience, marketing, finance and organisation of the theatre
Director	Practical and creative interpretation of a dramatic script or musical score
Understudy	Performer who is cast to cover a performer if they are unable to attend a performance at short notice
Choreographer	Responsible for creating dance within a performance (do not have to be trained dancers)
Performer	Actor, singer or dancer whose job it is to perform within a production (will usually audition for each role)

Technician	Someone who operates and repairs technical equipment and systems (lighting, sound, props and set)
Playwright	Some who writes the plays



Proscenium Arch Stage

When there is a frame or arch separating the stage from the auditorium through which the action of the stage is viewed. The audience all sit facing the same way.

Thrust Stage

When the stage extends into the auditorium so that the audience are seated around three sides.

Site-Specific

When a performance is performed at a unique, specially adapted location other than a typical theatre.

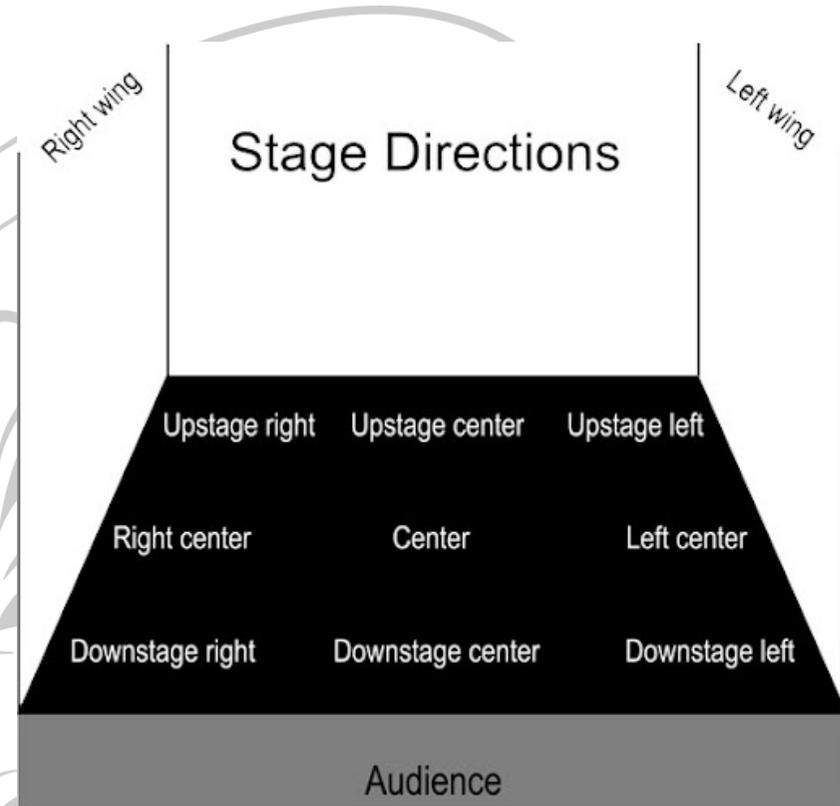


In the Round

When the stage is completely surrounded by the audience on all sides.

Promenade

When the audience move from stage to stage, following the actors, during the performance.



Stage Directions

- From the point of view of the ACTOR
- Stage positions are often abbreviated eg. CS = centre stage, DSL = downstage left

Dramatic Techniques

Keyword	Definition
Still-image	A frozen picture which communicates meaning
Hot-seating	Where a character is questioned by the group about their background, behaviour and motivation
Role on the wall	Explore how a character feels about themselves and what other characters think about them
Thought-track	When a character steps out of a scene to address the audience about how they are feeling
Conscious Corridor	Explore a dilemma faced by a character, using 'angel vs devil' to analyse a decisive moment in greater detail
Split-stage	When two different scenes are performed/present at the same time, side by side on stage
Cross-cutting	A device to move between two or more scenes – one scene is played out while the other remain in still-image, directing the audience's focus
Soundscape	A series of sounds that create a setting or suggest a scene
Role-play	The act of pretending to be somebody else/taking on a character by thinking, acting and even feeling differently
Improvisation	Invent and create content on your feet/making it up as you go along
Flashback	Interrupting the chronological order of the main narrative to take the audience back in time to past events in a character's life
Flash-forward	Takes the narrative forward in time from the current point in the story
Forum Theatre	Encourages audience interaction and explores different options for dealing with a presentation of social oppression
Narration	Spoken commentary for the audience about the action onstage (storyteller)

Marking the moment	Highlighting the most important moment to draw the audience's attention to its significance
Mime	Suggesting action, character, emotion without words using only gesture, expression and movement to play out a role.

Melodrama

Melodrama is a style of theatre which originated in 18th century Britain. It became increasingly popular across all social classes. Typically, a sensational dramatic piece with exaggerated characters and exciting events intended to appeal to the emotions, interspersed with songs and orchestral music to accompany the action. Melodrama also uses audience interaction and participation. You may recognise this style of theatre today if you have seen a pantomime, watched a Disney princess story or a superhero story.

Stock Characters:

Hero/Heroine

Villain

Damsel in distress

Hero's sidekick

Old Hag/Witch

Mad Scientist

Village Idiot



World Theatre

Japanese Kabuki Theatre

Japanese Kabuki theatre is traditional Japanese performance art that vividly represents society. Performances have a central theme between morality and human emotions and are heavily influenced by the religious philosophies of Shinto and Buddhism. Stories consist of “rewarding the virtuous and punishing the wicked” (kanzen-choaku). Kabuki performers use stylised acting which can be virtually indistinguishable to dance, with some interplay between themselves and the audience. Make up is an important part of a Kabuki performance; white faces to show that their character is refined and aristocratic, neutral tones show servitude, red shows passion and anger, while blue shows sadness.



Japanese Noh Theatre

Japanese Noh theatre uses visual appearance to tell a story, including masks (omote), of which there are sixty basic types and 200 different kinds. There are also five character categories: God, Man (warrior), Woman, Madness and Demon. Noh theatre also uses Kyogen (comic pieces performed during the interval) that include satire, witty jokes, rhythmical language and exaggerated characters.

Classical Chinese Theatre

Classical Chinese theatre makes use of very little set but bright and bold costumes. Performances are revolved around ritual and include martial arts and stock characters. Colour is very important and used symbolically; red shows appreciation, loyalty and bravery, black shows neutrality, vigor and wisdom, while blue and green show rebellious heroes.



Traditional African Performance

It's important to remember that Africa is a large continent with 54 countries and around 2,000 different languages. Pre-colonial African performance was rooted in myths, rites and folk celebrations. They took place in public spaces and in the home, with scripts typically being passed down by memory rather than written. Performances included music, dance and verbal parody that would landmark social events such as initiation rites, hunting, marriages, birth, death and harvests. Performers had to be highly skilled acrobats and dancers, although the lines between performer and spectator were blurred. Post-colonial Africa saw the influence of Western theatre and an increase in playwrights who narrated the

experience of colonial Africa through a mixture of script and traditional African performance.

Kathakali

Kathakali theatre is a mixture of dance and pantomime, originating from India. Plays describe extraordinary events involving gods, demons and legendary characters but the God's always triumphed over evil/the demons. Performances were usually held outside temples and accompanied by a four-piece orchestra. Performers wear vibrant costumes and bright make-up while delivering sharp and controlled movements with trademark eye and facial gestures.



Shakespeare (A Midsummer Night's Dream)

Four love-drunk teens, escaped from the confined of an oppressive regime, caught in a dispute of increasingly magical proportions. A posse of wannabe actors, determined to put on a play against the odds. The Fairy Queen and King at war, and one wild spirit hell-bent on causing as much havoc as possible.

Keywords	Definition
Aside	A device where a character speaks to the audience so the rest of the characters are unaware of what they have said
Dialogue	Spoken conversational exchange between two or more characters
Monologue	Extended speech performed by one person
Soliloquy	A type of monologue where a character directly addresses the audience and speaks their thoughts aloud while the other actors keep silent
Comedy	Identifiable as plays full of fun, irony and dazzling wordplay, disguise and mistaken identities with convoluted plots
Tragedy	Story of a seemingly heroic figure whose major character flaw causes the story to end with his tragic downfall
Foreshadow	A device used to give an indication/hint of what is to come later in the story – creating suspense, a feeling of unease, sense of curiosity and a mark that things may not be as they seem
Prologue	A speech, often in verse, addressed to the audience by one or more of the actors to open the play

Physical Theatre – Frantic Assembly

Frantic Assembly are a world famous physical theatre based in the UK. They have an ethos of collaboration, empowerment and a constant desire to improve. They like to tell stories in a voice that isn't always heard and find talent in places that isn't always searched.

They work in a specific way called The Frantic Method. They devise each performance using a series of tasks and breaking them down into building blocks. Frantic Assembly aim to take each moment back to its' simplest truth using physical theatre as a 'language' that feels accessible and honest.

Tasks include:

Chair duets

Round-by-through

Hymns hands

Bodies as props

Lifts

