

Drama Glossary

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GLOSSARY

For the purposes of the Drama syllabus, the following definitions will apply. Terms indicated with a hash (#) do not directly appear in the syllabus but are in common drama use.

| Term | Definition |
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| Action (dramatic) | When a situation is presented, explored and resolved. |
| Action | Following the work of Stanislavski the actor plays an action according to their character scene or whole play objectives. This is expressed in terms of a verb according to what they want. For example an actor's action in a scene might be to impress, to please. An action change occurs when the character gets new information and has to decide if this is 'good for me or bad for me' and then undertake a new action in response. These actions may not be part of the script directions. |
| Adapted space | A space that is used in a purposeful way for a drama event but that space was not built for that purpose. See Found space. |
| Aesthetics | Exploring in performance and responses to drama the role of human senses in making meaning and creating emotional or other experiences. Aesthetics relates to the principles and science of what engages our sensory attention and leads us to respond in particular ways. |
| Aesthetic distance | Aesthetic distance is achieved by creating an emotional or cognitive break from a drama or other artwork in order to objectively analyse what is taking place. The absence of aesthetic distance is one quality an audience employs when 'suspending disbelief'. See Suspension of Disbelief. |
| Alienation (see Aesthetic distance) | This term relates to the work of Brecht who sought to remind audiences that what they were watching was just a play. He deliberately included devices such as banners of text or signs, presentational acting styles, use of music and songs to break up the performance. Also known as the Verfremdungseffekt. See also Brecht. |
| Antagonist # | The character that exists in the drama performance in opposition to the protagonist. It is the antagonist that presents often obstacles or complications for the protagonist. See Protagonist. |
| Annotations | Notes written on or next to sketches, diagrams or illustrations add succinct analysis and explanation about approach or intended effects. Annotations can also be on texts or scripts describing, for example, acting notes to record blocking, director's notes and character notes. |
| Approaches | Particular drama practitioners develop particular ways of preparing and performing drama. |
| Atmosphere | See Elements of Drama. |
| Audience etiquette | Different cultures and societies have particular expectations or 'rules' about what is an appropriate way for an audience to observe and respond to a performance. Audience etiquette will vary according to the venue and occasion as well as the form and style of the drama. |
| Audience expectations | Audience members will have particular ideas about a play, actors, company, playwrights, directors or a venue. These expectations contribute to their experience of drama. |

| Term | Definition |
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| Audience identification | Identification occurs when an audience connects emotionally or ideologically with the characters, narrative and/or dramatic action. |
| Aural support # | Technologies that assist the quality or dynamics of the sound in a performance. |
| Backstage | The production area set aside from the main performance space where the performer may withdraw from the action or non-actors (backstage or production members) can prepare and support the action. |
| Blocking | The process and record of where action takes place on the stage, where and when actors move and how this happens in relation to the script. |
| Bertolt Brecht | German theatre writer, director and scenographer (1898:1956) who built on the work of Erwin Piscator to develop theatre approaches (called Lehrstücke) that produced different emotional and thematic effects on his audiences. This work, including the creation of alienation effects in a performance, later became known under the title 'Epic Theatre'. Brecht's theatre sought to achieve social and political transformation especially in response to forces like the rise of Nazi Germany. See Processes developed by Brecht. |
| Built performance spaces | This refers to a venue that has been designed and built to be a performance space. Sometimes known as 'architectural spaces'. |
| Bumping in/ Bumping out | Bumping in: at the beginning of a performance season, Bumping in refers to moving everything in to a performance space to set up for a production. Bumping out: at the end of a production (or its relocation to a new venue in the case of a touring show) everything related to that production is cleared out of the theatre. Bumping out could also involve moving everything into trucks or containers to be transported to the next venue or storage space. |
| Catharsis # | In Greek Theatre, the emotional release experienced by a character and therefore the audience through a character's critical discoveries, journey, or downfall. In contemporary use, it reflects the emotional release of a character who vents or explodes emotionally at another character as a result of an irrational build-up of stress or anxiety. The audience, like in Greek Theatre, shares this 'venting' and may empathise with the behaviour and its irrational release. See Narrative. |
| Changeovers | This refers to the changes of set, props and actors between scenes or sections of the play or performance. |
| Character profiles | Actors develop detailed character biographies or profiles as part of their characterisation processes. The character profiles are based on what is known about the character from the script together with imagined contextual information. |
| Characterisation | This process is key to presenting a realistic character. Using the techniques developed by Stanislavski and others who followed him, actors make decisions about how their character will move and speak, what gestures and habits they might have and what they would wear. As part of their characterisation, actors develop a character profile to help them bring the character to life. Characterisation may also be developed in relation to non-realistic characters. For example, in Shakespearean texts where a psychological view of character or Stanislavski's method were unknown. See Elements of Drama. |

| Term | Definition |
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| Contextual knowledge | Research about the history, location, culture, economics, relationships, politics and beliefs, attitudes and values related to a character or text will provide contextual knowledge. |
| Constructions of identity and otherness | How the world around us and the way we live and act towards others constructs who we are and who we are not. |
| Conventions | The usual ways of doing something. Sometimes conventions are based on reasons of safety considerations or they relate to a preferred approach. Conventions also reflect particular historic traditions. |
| Critical Framework | A way of analysing and viewing social, cultural or dramatic elements in terms of its impact on particular members of society. It provides tools with which to consider the values central to a phenomenon and the impact of those values in particular members of society. For example, a feminist framework, sceptical framework, Marxist framework, Queer Theory and environmentalist framework. It is sometimes used to consider the impact of particular values on the marginalised members of a particular society. |
| Cues | A cue is a signal that something is about to happen. For example a lighting cue in a stage manager's prompt book is the signal to tell the lighting operator to make a planned lighting change. A stage direction may contain a cue for a character to enter or exit the stage. |
| Cultural capital | The wealth of a culture that is not able to be measured in money or things but creates a positively connected sense of community or an inspired community can be referred to in terms of cultural capital. For example, a school production might not be a financial success but it will add to the cultural capital of the school through positive relationships and increased collaboration and improved self-esteem. Cultural capital also refers to the development of values which improve the social and cultural success of an individual, especially for employment. For example, the ability to compromise, empathise, remain flexible and participate in cultural valued activities. |
| Cultural values | What a group of people collectively believe to be important, unimportant, right or wrong are their cultural values. Cultural values are not fixed but continually changing for different people in different times, places and circumstances. |
| Cyclical Narrative | A narrative in which the dramatic action ends the same way it begins. This structure is used to imply an endlessness to a human experience (that is, it will happen again) or to complete a mystery in which the action 'flash backs' to explain what lead to the opening event. |
| Denouement # | The point in the narrative in which the conflicts are resolved, the characters experience often a kind of catharsis suggesting a feeling the dramatic action is concluded. See Narrative, Catharsis, Dramatic action. |
| Design diagram conventions | The commonly accepted ways of presenting diagrams in drama practice such as how to create a stage manager's prompt book, ways of presenting lighting designs, stage design and costume designs. |
| Devising | Devised drama typically refers to drama which is created through collaborative exercises where the participants improvise and then refine their improvisations to create a final drama performance. |
| Dialogue | Characters talking to each other in a drama performance is dialogue. This also refers to the spoken word in a play. |

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| Directing | The process of deciding how to create and realise (bring to life) the dramatic action is undertaken by the director. This will include the identification of an approach to directing as well as the development of a vision of how the drama performance will be approached. |
| Director's Vision | The creation of a clear image (visual or otherwise) of how a drama event will be presented to a particular audience. This includes approaches to acting, aesthetics, design and dominant themes. It may also include an attempt to find a new approach that emphasises different aspects of a text or reflect a particular critical framework. See Aesthetics, Critical Frameworks. |
| Documentary drama | Documentary drama tries to present the facts about an event or phenomenon by presenting the points of view of a range of people. In this way it tries to educate and inform audience about some issue or event. This may be in an attempt to promote change through awareness. See Verbatim Theatre. |
| Drama | The creation of imaginative worlds and human experiences using the Elements of Drama. See Elements of Drama. |
| Drama event | Drama events include but are not limited to the performance of a play. Other types of drama events could include ritual celebration, a drama festival, improvisation competition, or an improvised performance. |
| Drama text | All of the information pertaining to the Section 1 script or script excerpt in the written component of the WACE Drama examination. This may include director notes, images, program notes and additional information about the script excerpt in performance. |
| Dramatic action | Dramatic action occurs when a situation is presented, explored and resolved or brought to a conclusion. |
| Dramatic structure | Includes the broad categories of representational and presentational or non-realistic drama and their relationship to linear and non-linear narrative structures. Structure, techniques and conventions are relevant to chosen drama form or style's approach. This includes approaches to structure as follows: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Episodic structure: the action of a drama is broken into smaller scenes often with the rapid development of narrative elements. These scenes move between settings, groups of characters • Well-made Play: expanding on the work of Aristotle's poetics, this structure featured a careful construction of an exposition, a rising conflict that increases in complexity and dramatic tension, a climax close to the end of the play, a denouement in which key events are 'explained' or unpacked for the audience and conclusion that may include a life ethic or moral for the audience. See Narratives |
| Dramaturge/ Dramaturgy | Involves researching, critically analysing and interpreting the historical, political, social, and cultural aspects of a play. A dramaturge works with the director and as a member of the production team to support the construction of a performance based on a new, published or devised text. |
| Dynamic relationship | This term is often used to describe the nature of the relationship between the performance and the audience where both react to each other so that no two performances are alike in live theatre. |
| Economic capital # | Refers to the assets of a society (including human capital) that can be bought, sold or used to generate wealth. |

| Term | Definition |
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| Elements of drama | <p>Drama is created and shaped by the elements of drama which for the WACE Drama course are listed as: role, character and relationships, situation, voice, movement, space and time, language and texts, symbol and metaphor, mood and atmosphere, audience and dramatic tension.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Atmosphere: The interaction between the audience and the mood of a drama performance. • Audience: the body of people invited or otherwise to view a drama activity, rehearsal or event. Audience includes the patterns in the composition of the audience (for example, age, gender, cultural background, drama experiences) as well as the relationship created between the drama and the placement of the audience. (See Spaces of Performance) • Character: A person or role in the drama that may have defined personal qualities and/or histories. Flat characters (or two dimensional characters) demonstrate a lack of depth or change in the course of a drama event. Rounded characters (or three dimensional characters) feature more elaborate and complex traits and histories and are changed by dramatic action in the drama event. • Dramatic tension: drives the drama and keeps an audience interested. The tension comes when opposing characters, dramatic action, ideas, attitudes, values, emotions and desires are in conflict creating a problem that needs to be resolved (or unresolved) through drama. • Language and texts: referring to the use of spoken or written words that observe particular conventions and registers that communicate ideas, feelings and other associations. Texts refers to the use of published texts, online materials and other compositions the reference of which adds meaning to the drama. • Metaphor: A metaphor is creating an image or idea of one thing by saying it is something else. For example: 'He is a lion of a man.' In drama the use of metaphor can be more subtle such as a metaphor of a mouse created through a character having a squeaky voice and small darting movements. Design and stylistic elements can also be metaphors for characterisation or provide meaning in terms of theme. • Mood: describes the feelings and attitudes (often combined) of the roles or characters involved in dramatic action often supported by other Elements of Drama as well as design elements. The mood is the emotional impact intended by the playwright, director and/or other members of the creative team. • Relationships: refers to the qualities of the connection between two or more characters or roles. That relationship may be fixed (largely unchanged by the dramatic action) or variable (challenged or changed by the dramatic action). The relationship may be cooperative (as in a friendship), adversarial (as in enemies), neutral (neither positive nor negative) or non-existent (as in total strangers). Those relationships will be defined by shared interests, common objectives, cultural values and/or human need. • Role: a performer can present in performance a role that represents an abstract concept, stereotyped figure or person reduced to a particular dominant trait (occupation, human condition or social vocation) that lacks depth or a backstory normally present in a 'Character'. • Situation: the condition or circumstances in which a character or characters are presented often at the opening of a performance. • Space: the place where dramatic action is situated and the qualities of that place including temperature, features, light levels, population levels and other environmental factors that may be presented to or imagined by the characters/audience. |

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| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Symbol: symbolic parts of the scenography or design represent and add further meaning to themes, narrative, emotion, mood and atmosphere. Different colours are symbolic. Other symbols might be found in a sound effect, music, style, images. Some symbols are literal while others infer meaning. • Time: both the time of day, time of the year and time in history or the future. Time also reflects changes in time within a scene or drama event. Time also refers to the flow of time over the length of a drama event: fragmented time, cyclical time, linear time and so forth. <p>See Vocal Techniques, Movement and Gesture.</p> |
| Elevation | An elevation is a drawing or design from the point of view of the audience. |
| Emotional space | Refers to the intangible area between characters. The intangible emotional space of live theatre is created by the performers through the dramatic action and the scenography of a production in a dynamic relationship with the audience. |
| Emphasis | Bringing the audience's attention to something by making it bigger, stronger, louder, brighter or clearer. Emphasis can be part of writing, direction, acting or design. |
| Ensemble drama production | One where all the participants have collaborated as a team to create and produce drama. It is different to a production where the actors and production team work in a traditional structure under the direction of a director. An ensemble production would typically involve equal attention and time for all the actors rather than only some as the 'stars' or leads. |
| Fictional space | The 'imagined world' created by the story of the drama such as a battle field or a house which may only be indicated through some sets and props, lighting, sound or nothing tangible at all. It can be scribed through dialogue and/or suggested by the use of selected (metonymic) stage elements or props, lighting or sound. |
| Flashback | A scene or section of a drama that refers to a previous time. It is used in a non-linear narrative where the dramatic action moves to a previous point in time often to explain an important detail in the narrative. |
| Flash-forward | A scene or section of a drama that refers to a future time. It is used in a non-linear narrative where the dramatic action moves to a future point in time and place often to explain an important detail in the narrative. |
| Floor plan or plan view | A diagram that shows the design from above or a 'bird's eye view' is the plan view or floor plan. |
| Focus | The imaginary or real point in the performance space where the audience's attention is to be directed. Focus also refers to the acting technique of concentrating gaze and body in a particular manner to direct audience attention. Lighting and scenography can direct audience attention through the manipulation of the visual elements and principles of design. See Visual elements and Principles of Design. |
| Focusing | The process of adjusting the size, shape, angle and sharpness of a lighting beam onto a performance space. |
| Focus time | Before a performance, the actors meet together to focus on the performance ahead and take on their characters and enter into the world of the drama. |
| Form | Is a broadly inclusive term: it includes the genres (different types of drama) such as live theatre, radio, television and film drama, opera, puppetry and mime. Drama forms also refers to the structure of drama where aesthetic principles and practical choices shape the drama resulting in a focus on |

| Term | Definition |
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| | tragedy, comedy, tragic-comedy, farce, melodrama, or history. See Dramatic structure. |
| Found space | A space that is used for a drama event but was not built for that purpose has come to be called a found space. Typically a found space might be a culturally significant space such as an old building, a factory or a space whose features add meaning and significance to the performance such as a beach. The development of sound and lighting technologies has expanded the range of spaces suitable for a drama performance. |
| Fragmented (time) | See Narrative. |
| Front of house | The area of a theatre where the commercial and logistical management of audience members occurs. This includes publicity, ticket sales, beverages and coordinates with the stage manager in relation to Occupational Safety and Health. The front of house manager also coordinates the movement of the audience into and out of the venue. |
| Gesture | Gesture involves movement of parts of the body that communicate meaning. Gesture often involves arm and hand movements such as indicating, waving or beckoning but can include shrugging of the shoulders, winking eyes etc. |
| Grotowski | Jerzy Grotowski (1933:1999) furthered the work of Stanislavski focusing on the actor, actions and psychophysical actions. He had a significant effect on drama and developed 'poor theatre' that uses minimal scenography to focus attention on the action for the audience. This may include the use of simple stage elements in creative ways. |
| Half hour call # | A tradition or protocol in Western theatre is that thirty minutes prior to a performance, actors are told by the stage manager: 'This is your half hour call. 'This is your fifteen minute call' and 'beginners on stage' follow. |
| Historical style | Refers to the time in which a drama was created. Historical style together with performance style creates the distinctive identifying elements of a drama. |
| Improvisation | <p>Improvisation is spontaneous enactment taking on roles and situations to create dramatic and extend the given stimulus. Improvisations are usually short and are structured into a complete little play. An extended improvisation is one that is reworked, shaped and refined.</p> <p>Improvisation will include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Platform #: the opening of an improvisation in which the performer or performers establish who the character or characters are, where they are (including the qualities of that setting), what they are doing in that setting and why that action is important to them (who, where, what, why). The clear establishment of a plausible platform allows for the possibility of a complication or conflict which leads to dramatic action in an attempt to solve a problem. • Offer #: one person offers a time/place/situation/conflict and another accepts the offer by going along with it and extending the offer by taking the dramatic action further. 'Blocking' occurs when an offer is not accepted. All concerned in the improvisation need to accept the offer to suspend disbelief and pretend. • Accepting #: one person offers a time/place/situation/conflict and another accepts the offer by going along with it and extending the offer by taking the dramatic action further. All concerned in the improvisation need to accept the offer to suspend disbelief and pretend. • Extending #: developing and further exploring an offer. • Advancing #: contributing a new idea that shifts the dramatic action of the improvisation. |

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| | In improvisation students should avoid: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Blocking #: one when an offer is not accepted. This can include taking an idea in the direction for comic effect (sometimes called 'Gagging'). • Gagging #: trying to get an audience to laugh at the expense of a story, character or idea in an improvised performance. |
| In the round | See Spaces of Performance. |
| Laban | Rudolf Laban (1879:1953) developed a language for describing movement. He defined movement by 'eight effort actions' and the way that each relates to flow (energy), space, time (rhythm/pace) and weight. Laban also explained the use of movement in the kinesphere (around the performer) and through the space (dynamosphere) to make meaning. |
| Levels | Levels refer to the horizontal spaces of the performance above the floor or stage. This term may also refer to the way the body is placed or moved into position on different heights within the performance space. |
| Linear narrative structures | See Narratives. |
| Memorising | Actors learn their dialogue, movement and blocking 'by heart' so that they can replicate it every time they perform. |
| Meyerhold | Meyerhold (1874:1940) began his theatre work along with Stanislavski in the Moscow Art Theatre. He created oversized, highly theatrical and symbolic scenography. He is also famous for the training system he developed, Biomechanics, focusing on the actor's movements and awareness of self. |
| Monologue | A monologue is a play or part of a play that involves one person/character speaking. Playwrights may give one character a lengthy speech so that they can explore and work towards the resolution of a key issue or problem. The monologue may offer the character an opportunity to 'discover' information important to themselves and the dramatic action. Accordingly appropriate monologues provide the actor with an opportunity to show the character's journey. There are three styles in which a monologue can be presented: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Interior monologue: where the characters speaks aloud their thoughts without directly acknowledging the audience. 2. Character directed: where the character speaks to another person on stage (see or unseen by the audience) 3. Direct address: where the monologue is spoken directly to the audience as a shared thought, account, reflection or revelation. |
| Movement and non-verbal communication | The aspects of a performer's body used to construct character or role, make meaning, convey emotional qualities as well as communicate relationships. These include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Energy: the pattern of effort and commitment used in the creation of movement and non-verbal communication. Energy may be consistent and predictable, inconsistent and unpredictable or otherwise. • Facial expressions: the shape and adjustment of face including eyes and eyebrows, mouth, jaw and head position. • Dynamic physical vocabulary #: the successful combining of non-verbal communication elements and techniques to produce integrated effects for the audience. • Gesture: involves movement of parts of the body that communicate meaning. Gesture often involves arm and hand movements such as indicating, waving or beckoning but can include shrugging of the shoulders, winking eyes etc. |

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| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Posture and body alignment: the position of the body and sense of shape of the spine when standing or sitting to create role and character. Posture and body alignment affect the ability to move freely and use voice affectively. • Proxemics: the manipulation of the physical and emotional spaces between actors and between stage and audience adds meaning to the dramatic action. For example, heightening the tension between characters, showing relationships and adding to the design of the blocking in terms of placing actors in relation to one another to focus audience attention, so that the audience can see and hear them. • Space: the use of the region immediately around the performer's body in all directions (kinesphere) and through the performance area (dynamosphere). • Time: the variation and adjustment of the tempo and rhythm of movement. • Weight: the adjustment of movement to create a sense of force or (as in mime) the heaviness of an object either seen or unseen by the audience. |
| Narrative | <p>The story of the play which includes an introduction, a conflict or complication, dramatic action, climax, falling action, denouement and conclusion. A play may feature several narrative threads (events that connect to one another) and some narratives may overlap and interact with one another in the course of a play.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fragmented time: Breaking up the narrative into parts that shift between pasts, presents and futures in non-chronological order but still enable the audience to piece together an understanding of what has happened. • Leaps of time: shifts in the dramatic action ignore the logical sequence challenging the audience to create the sequence in their own mind. • Linear narratives: Narrative where the events take place continuously and sequentially from beginning to end. • Non-linear narratives: Disrupted or discontinuous sequence of events in a story including flashback, flash-forward and circular narrative structures. |
| Notes | <p>Before or after a rehearsal or performance, the director and the stage manager provide feedback to the actors about their individual performance, their characterisation and their interaction with the production elements such as sound and lighting. Notes are also given to the backstage crew.</p> |
| Notions of identity related to politics, nationalism, gender or class # | <p>This refers to the ways that people come to an understanding of who they are and their role in society based on their context. For example, their background, gender, class/status, age or interests.</p> |
| Off stage space | <p>The space that is not part of the performance but may be inferred from the drama through dialogue or non-verbal communication. For example, characters talking about what is happening in another room of the house that is presented on stage in a realistic drama.</p> |
| Patching | <p>Prepared by the lighting designer according to design and performance lighting requirements. Once lights are rigged onto the lighting bars, they are plugged into or patched into a lighting desk and dimmer racks in a complex arrangement according to the requirements of the drama.</p> |
| Performance preparation processes | <p>Actor voice and movement warm ups, focus time, and notes from the director and production team may be included as performance preparation processes immediately prior to the performance. Actors also prepare their costume and make up in the dressing room. Production team members have preparation processes according to their particular roles.</p> |

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| Physical approaches to rehearsing | An actor can develop their characterisation through exploring how a character moves, looks and sounds. Through creating the external aspects, the inner or emotional, feeling character is revealed. |
| Physical theatre and movement | Movement based drama such as mime, slapstick, Commedia dell'arte, circus, clowning and drama that uses movement, gesture and physical interaction to advance and create meaning in dramatic action. |
| Plot | The events that make up the story of the play create the plot. |
| Position audiences # | When audiences are manipulated or seduced into a particular point of view about a situation or character they have been positioned. |
| Posture and body alignment | The position of the body when standing or sitting creates role and character. Posture and body alignment affect the ability to move freely and use voice affectively. |
| Presentational drama | Non-realistic drama where the performers 'present' to the audience or overtly perform with no pretence of reality. This includes a wide range of historical drama styles and contemporary drama styles. |
| Principles of design | <p>In creating the sensory environment a scenographer or designer will select and control the follow aesthetic principles that add to the quality of the experience:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Balance: objects, colours and other stage elements can be symmetrical providing an impression of evenness or asymmetrical providing an impression of imbalance or discomfort. • Contrast: occurs when there is a marked difference between two aspects of drama. This can be used to focus audience attention or used as a symbol or metaphor, for example, use of contrasting light and dark colours in design or contrasting use of comedy and tragedy in a play. • Emphasis: bringing the audience's attention to something by making it bigger, stronger, louder, brighter or clearer. Emphasis can be part of writing, direction, acting or design. • Harmony: the arrangement of elements (for example, the use of particular combinations of colours) that create a sense of congruity, order or calm. • Movement: the sense of energy and motion created by patterns in design elements. • Pattern: the creation of sequences that encourages the audience to anticipate and expect that sequence to continue or change. • Repetition: the selection of elements to be featured in a performance to emphasise as well as surprise especially when creating new associations • Rhythm: both musical rhythms (for example, variation in tempo and beat) and the patterns form in approaches to design (simple, gentle – complex, aggressive) • Scale/proportion: the relationship between the size of objects presented on stage as their relationship with observed reality • Unity: the sense of connection and belonging created by the sharing of common qualities in the elements on stage. • Variety: the offering a new patterns to the approach to design and performance. |
| Processes developed by Brecht # | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Scenography: his work was focused on the fusion of the human sensory experiences with the text in performance. His work with the actors and the non-actors was determined to increase the impact of the drama event emotionally as well as intellectually. • Textual approaches: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Naturalism/realism: scenes in which the dramatic action and characters reflect many of the principles of naturalism and realism ○ Direct address: break in the action to speak in character or out of character about events and issues central to the text |

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| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Third person narration #: characters referring to their own actions using third person point of view. 'Mother Courage: Mother Courage reaches down to pick a flower' ○ First person narration #: characters referring to themselves in the first person, narrating the actions being mimed. 'Mother Courage: I reach down to a pick a flower' ○ Spoken stage directions #: to speak lines of stage direction (including design elements) to the audience. This may be done in character or not ○ Song and dance: performance of songs or dance/movement pieces usually in support of important narrative or thematic elements ○ Titles #: opening a scene with an announcement of the main theme or purpose of the scene. These may be spoken or projected onto the performance space. |
| Processes developed by Stanislavski | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Affective memory #: also known as emotional memory where the thoughts of something similar that has happened in the actor's past informs their approach to characterisation. • Beats #: the sections of a script that combine psychological gesture, tempo and circles of attention that reflect a particular goal, motivation and state of mind. A new beat is created when one or more of these shift in the script. • Circles of attention #: identifying the proximity to self a character's attention is directed. Close meaning within their own immediate space (as in when remembering an important detail). Middle meaning directed towards someone outside a character's personal space with whom the character is dialoguing. Distant meaning directed across the theatre space or beyond (as in regarding a horizon or spotting an approaching figure in the distance). Changes in circles of attention often reflect changes in thought processes. • Given circumstances #: the cues and clues found in the dramatic text such as the setting, time, action and situation, what other characters say and do. • Magic If: What would I do if I was this character? The imaginative process of sympathising with a character's values, attitudes and worldviews. • Objective #: what the character wants or their goal at a particular moment in the script. This may include what the character wants to avoid or escape from. • Obstacle #: what stops a character from achieving what they want. • Psychological gesture #: an extended action performed by a character designed to achieve a particular goal or outcome. For example, rummaging through a dusty old attic to find a long lost journal. • Super objective #: the life goal of a particular character. • Tempo: identifying the pace with which a line or an action is completed to reflect attitude, mood or motivation. Often changes in tempo reflect changes in motivation or intention. • Through line #: the thread of a character that is consistent through the scene or text and links to the character's objectives. • Units of action #: represents a change in the objectives of a character communicated through the overall patterns in the 'beats' of a scene. <p>It is important to note these processes changed over the course of Stanislavski's work with his actors. Many of his processes have been developed and extended by other directors including Stella Adler, Lee Strasberg, Michael Chekhov, Richard Boleslavsky and Sanford Meisner.</p> |
| Production | <p>The technical aspects of realising drama production.</p> |

| Term | Definition |
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| Production roles | The non-acting tasks undertaken by the designers and managers and backstage staff in a theatre. See Roles in the Drama syllabus. |
| Programming | Managers of theatre companies select performances sometimes years ahead to create an engaging program for their audiences. Programming may be undertaken by the directors or the Boards of Directors. |
| Prompt book | The stage manager coordinates and operates a performance using a digital or physical prompt book. The script is pasted into the prompt book so that the script is on the right hand side and the stage directions, blocking cues for lighting, sound, special effects and stage properties are annotated on the left hand page. |
| Props | This term is short for properties and refers to the objects that a character uses. Hard props such as chairs and tables and soft props such as table cloths, cushions are placed on the stage as part of the set or scenography while others such as a sword or a book are carried on by a character. |
| Protagonist | The character that drives the action is the protagonist. Often they are the 'hero' of the drama. See Antagonist. |
| Protocols | The rules or commonly accepted ways that things are done. |
| Psychological approaches to rehearsing | Psychology is the study of human behaviour and drama involves the performance of human behaviour. Psychological approaches to rehearsing could involve getting the actors to explore emotional memory, focus and concentration exercises and/or collaborative workshopping using emotional stimuli. In this approach, the feelings of the character inform the movement and vocal choices the actor makes which in turn reflects a psychological understanding of human behaviour. |
| Realise/realisation | The staging and performance of a drama brings it to 'life' and makes it 'real'. |
| Relationships | In drama this refers to the emotional connection between characters and the dynamics that affect the depth and quality of that connection. |
| Representational drama | Representational drama reflects a psychological view of human behaviour, familiar dialogue and situations in terms of observed life experiences, often a linear narrative with a causal view of events and limited interactions with the live audience. |
| Rigging (lights) | Stage lanterns are attached to lighting bars above the performance space and in the auditorium area according to the lighting design plan. |
| Ritual celebration | Historically, most societies have examples of using drama as part of a ritual or celebration. |
| Scene | A section of a play that occurs in a particular place and time. |
| Scenography | The design of the whole performance environment to create a sense of time/place/context/emotion is referred to as the scenography. It is a more recent term that incorporates the possibilities offered by contemporary technologies which can use filmic elements, special effects sound and light and even smell as part of the design. It involves the consideration of all performance elements working together to engage the audience's human senses. |
| Set | The environment of the stage space constructed to show the place and time of the dramatic action. Settings, scenery and the environment of the play (scenography) are created to look effective from the point of view of the audience. Natural features, walls, doors and windows for example, can be made of material, canvas or other light and easy to move materials. |

| Term | Definition |
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| Set strike lists | The Stage manager is in charge of the order for setting, striking and storing sets and props before, during and after a performance. |
| Setting | The place where the dramatic action is situated either through design elements, dialogue or non-verbal communication. This includes qualities about that place including temperature, features, light levels, population levels and other environmental factors. |
| Setting sets and props | Sets and/or props are set in place on stage before a performance or during a scene change by the backstage crew. |
| Settings | See Space in Elements of Drama. |
| Signing in | This protocol involves a list or book where performers and/or those involved in a production sign in as they enter the theatre each day for work. By the hour or half hour call, the stage manager can see at a glance who has not arrived and then problem solve a potential absence that has consequences for a production. |
| Social capital # | Social capital is wealth and assets that are not monetary but reflect the value of human interaction and connections. See Cultural values, Cultural Capital and Economic Capital. |
| Social cultural and economic particulars of the audience members | An audience that has in common, particular backgrounds, social status, age, wealth and/or politics, may respond to drama in a similar particular way based on their beliefs, attitudes, values, points of view and expectations. |
| Soundscapes | A collection of sound effects (SFX) are sourced or recorded, and then edited to create the ambience or impression of a particular setting such as a factory, train station or beach. Soundscapes can also be used by actors using their voices and bodies (e.g. clapping), available props or improvised instruments such as tin cans, sticks etc. |
| Spaces of performance | Spectators and actors interact and relate in spaces of performance: the dynamic relational space between the performance and the audience; the physical space of the 'theatre' including the auditorium and the stage in particular but also the front of house spaces. Spaces of performance also includes the fictional, imaginary spaces created by the world of the drama. It also includes the physical space of the stage with its organisation and scenography of particular stage spaces (See the list below) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promenade stage: a performance in which the action takes place in multiple spaces. The audience may be guided from one performance space to the next (especially if the performance has a particular structure in terms of narrative and time) or be free to explore the various spaces independently (where narrative and time are less important to the performance experience). Medieval theatre often used this structure as well as performances that make use of different qualities of the performance space (for example, garden, building, landscape, water feature). • Proscenium Arch stage: the proscenium arch frames the stage in traditional theatre spaces such as His Majesty's in Perth. Also called 'picture frame' stage before of its ability to control sightlines and opportunity for presenting elaborate sets. • Theatre in the round (arena): involves a central performance space with the audience surrounding it. This staging allows for the most intimate connection with the audience with limited use of stage elements to avoid obstructing the audience's view. |

| Term | Definition |
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| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Thrust stage: in this performance space, the audience is seated on three sides of the stage. This staging allows a more intimate connection with the audience whilst allowing one side (where there is no audience) for stage elements to be used without visual obstructions for the audience. • Traverse stage: this performance space is a rectangular area with the audience seated on the two long sides of the rectangle. This staging allows for an intimate connection between the audience and actors with two sides upon which staging elements can be placed. |
| Spatial awareness | The perceptions of and control of movement within the performance space as well as audience space. Spatial awareness helps an actor to move efficiently and effectively on stage knowing the whereabouts of other actors, sets, props, the limits of the stage and lighting as well as maintaining their movements within the same proportion of the stage even when the size of the stage changes in different venues. |
| Spontaneous improvisation | Improvisation that has little or no preparation time often based on a given stimulus. See Improvisation. |
| Stage crew | Lead by the stage manager, the stage crew work mainly back stage to maintain the safe operation of the performance space/stage. The stage crew will set and strike sets and props. They operate the mechanics of the performance environment space of the stage including the curtains, trucks, scenery, rostra, fly ropes, winches and special effects. |
| Stage directions | The instructions in a script that describe where, what, when and how something is to occur and who is going to do it. |
| Stage management | The stage manager is in charge of and coordinates the performance of a play. They ensure that both actors and crew are in the right place at the right time with the necessary sets, props, lighting, sound and other special effects. |
| Stanislavski | Konstantin Stanislavski developed a detailed approach to acting and production in reaction to the very stylised, larger than life, overacted performance style of the late nineteenth century. His work is connected to playwrights who focused on portraying what was 'natural' or 'realistic'. See Processes developed by Stanislavski. |
| Status | The sense of power, authority, control and value a character or role holds in terms of themselves and also in comparison with other characters or roles in a drama performance. |
| Striking sets and props | Sets and/or props are removed from the stage after a scene or section of the play or at the end of the performance. |
| Style | <p>Style in drama refers to the distinctive identifying elements of particular dramatic texts. There are three dimensions of style: historical, performance and personal style.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Historical style: refers to the distinctive uses of language, approaches to subject matter, themes, characterisation and dramatic action that can be linked to particular times and contexts. For example, Theatre of the Absurd, Theatre of Realism. • Performance style: refers to the ways of approaching dramatic text in performance – two major performance styles are representational and presentational styles. (See Presentational Drama and Representational Drama) • Personal style: the distinctive use of voice, posture, gesture and body that can be associated with a particular actor or director. Style can be observed in performances, direction, design and the application of conventions to dramatic texts. This includes the work of particular practitioners like Bertolt Brecht, Robert Wilson and Barbara Kielhofer. |

| Term | Definition |
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| Subtext | The meaning or narrative that underlies the main action of a drama is the subtext. It may be evident through the voice or non-verbal communication and/or the design of a drama. The subtext might never be openly stated or revealed. |
| Suspension of disbelief | The audience and/or the performers agree to suspend their disbelief and accept the 'make-believe' world of the play even though they know it is not 'real'. |
| Technical rehearsals | The rehearsals where the focus is on the organisation, coordination, timing and running of the technical requirements (for example, design and stage management processes) of the production. See Topping and tailing. |
| Theoretical approaches | Particular theatre practitioners such as Brecht, Stanislavski or Grotowski developed ways of approaching the creation and production of theatre. |
| Top and tail | During technical rehearsals the actors are often asked to just perform the beginning and end of a scene or the parts that link to changes in lighting, sound and staging. This is known as topping and tailing. |
| Transitions | Transitions involve the changes from one scene or section to another. It is important to achieve smooth transitions between scenes on and off the stage. |
| Traverse stage | See Spaces of Performance. |
| Ushers | Front of house staff who check tickets, show patrons to their seats and manage health and safety considerations in the auditorium and refreshments areas. |
| Verbatim theatre | This is a form of documentary theatre where the exact words of people are used to create the drama text. Verbatim theatre involves the working with extended interviews or transcripts (for example, of court or government proceedings) which are selected and shaped by the playwright or ensemble to share impressions of that phenomenon or incident. The participants will often make themselves part of the performance event identifying observations, biases and feelings in reaction to what is presented. See Documentary Theatre. |
| Visual elements | In the visual arts, these refer to the aspects of the visual medium that can be manipulated and controlled to create meaning and evoke responses. These include line, shape, texture, colour, tone/value, 3D form and space. |
| Voice and vocal techniques | With the support of good posture and breathing vocal clarity and flexibility can be achieved through the effective use of: Articulation: the precision used in the formation of sounds and speech to ensure a live audience can understand what is being said. Audibility: projection appropriate to the space so spoken sounds carry to the intended audience. Clarity: the accurate formation of sounds with the voice to communicate the words and sounds in performance. Emphasis: the use of particular stresses in the spoken delivery of a sentence to highlight important words or phrases to improve comprehension for a live audience. Fluency: the successful combining of the qualities of vocal performance to produce integrated effects for the audience. Inflection: the variation of the pitch and tone within a sentence to clarify emotional quality and intended meaning within a sentence for a live audience. Modulation #: the careful variation in pitch to communicate meaning and emotion. |

| Term | Definition |
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| | <p>Pace: the speed with which a sentence or passage is delivered to balance the needs of a live audience (variety and maintaining energy) with intended meaning (importance, subtext, emotional state etc.)</p> <p>Pause: a planned break in the delivery of a phrase, sentence or passage. These breaks can denote many important meanings to a live audience and are therefore used with control and careful selection. Pause lengths also are important to making meaning for a live audience. Pauses also can indicate change in 'objectives' for a character (See Processes developed by Stanislavski).</p> <p>Pitch: refers to the intensity of the vibrations in the voice making it seem higher or lower. Variation in pitch creates inflection (See Inflection in this section).</p> <p>Projection (loudness): the strength or power used when speaking to carry speech to a live audience.</p> <p>Resonance: the use of muscle control and focused projection to intensify the use of the body's resonators that supports and enhances projection as well as the tonal qualities of a vocal performance.</p> <p>Rhythm and variety: variation in vocal performance including the use of pace, inflection and beats (the use of patterns of soft and hard syllables) sometimes called 'iamb'. Rhythm also refers to shifts in an overall vocal performance and the structure of that vocal performance.</p> <p>Tone: the emotional qualities added to a vocal performance by adjusting the types of sounds produced by the voice. These in particular can help convey a sense of a character's subtext. (See Subtext)</p> <p>Vocal dynamics: appropriate variation of vocal techniques to denote intensity of emotion, meaning and mood.</p> |