

Theatrical skills

1

- Freeze frame:** A frozen moment in time expressing a character / scenario.
- Still image:** frozen image that symbolises an idea or relationship
- Thought tracking:** a character saying their thoughts aloud
- Hot seating:** a character is asked questions and the actor responds in role
- Narration:** telling the audience what is happening
- Mime:** suggesting action, character, or emotion without words
- Improvisation:** creating a scene without a script
- Proxemics:** the use of space on stage to create meaning
- Levels:** the use of height to show status
- Status:** the power one character has over another
- Physical Theatre:** creating objects, set or meaning through the use of the body

4 **Command words:**

| | |
|------------------------|---|
| <u>IDENTIFY</u> | Can you find where in the performance they have used a particular skill? |
| <u>ANALYSE</u> | Why have they used this technique / skill, what was the effect? |
| <u>EVAULATE</u> | Were they successful when using this techniques / skill? If so why? If not why not? |

Vocal skills

2

- Pace:** how fast or how slow the character speaks
- Power:** how loud or how quiet a character speaks
- Pitch:** how high our how low a character speaks
- Pause:** moments where the character stops talking
- Tone:** shows what the character thinking or how they are feeling
- Accent:** a distinctive way of pronouncing a language
- Emphasis:** stressing a particular word or phrase within a sentence to indicate importance
- Rhythm:** related to pace, referring to the pattern of sound when speaking
- Resonance:** the quality in a sound of being deep, full and reverberating
- Volume:** another way to talk about power, how loud or quiet the voice is.
- Quality:** the basic sound of the voice – a character might talk with a breathy vocal quality or a creaky quality.
- Intonation:** the rise and fall of the voice. For example a clear movement up at the end of a sentence when we ask questions, intonation also helps us to show what we mean

Physical skills

3

- Facial expression:** showing emotion of the character through the face
- Body Language:** using your body to show the characters emotion
- Physicality:** using your body to show the character
- Gesture:** a movement of part of the body to show meaning.
- Mannerisms:** habitual gesture or way of speaking or behaving in role
- Gait:** the way a character walks
- Eye Contact:** how often two characters look directly into one another's eyes
- Pace:** the speed of a performer’s movements
- Quality of Movement:** helps express the type of character, e.g. a fairy character might move with a light and flowing quality
- Space:** how the performers or items are positioned on the stage
- Levels:** use of different heights
- Specialist Skills:** Mask work, mime, physical theatre, dance, stage combat, ensemble movement
- Physical Tension:** how tight or relaxed a performer’s muscles are.
- Spatial Awareness:** the ability to be aware of props and other actors around you
- Interaction with others:** This could include touch or use of close proxemics to show the audience something
- Choral movement:** where a group of actors move in the same way at the same time (synchronized)
- Posture:** How straight or slouched a character stands
- Stillness:** lack of movement for a dramatic affect

**Year 10 Drama
specific
vocabulary
Component 1**

Year 10 Com 1:

Section A: Roles & Responsibilities:

Theatre Maker:

Understudy

What they do:

Learning a part, including lines and movements, so they are able to take over a role for someone if needed when there is a planned or unexpected absence.

1

Theatre Maker:

Costume Designer

What they do:

Designing what the actors wear on stage. Making sure that costumes are appropriate for the style and period of the piece. Ensuring the costumes fit the audience.

4

Theatre Maker:

Technician

What they do:

Operating the technical equipment, such as the lighting and sound boards, during the performance.

7

Theatre Maker:

Set Designer

What they do:

Designing the set of the play and the set dressing (objects placed on the stage). Providing sketches and other design materials before overseeing the creation of the set.

10

Theatre Maker:

Performer

What they do:

Appearing in a production, for example by acting, dancing or singing. Creating a performance or assuming a role on stage in front of the audience.

8

Theatre Maker:

Theatre Manager

What they do:

Running the theatre building, including overseeing the front of house staff (ushers) and the box office staff who sell tickets.

5

Theatre Maker:

Director

What they do:

Overseeing the creative aspects of the production. Developing a 'concept' or central unifying idea for the production. Liaising with designers, rehearsing the actors and ensuring that all technical elements of the play are ready. Giving 'notes' to the actors to help improve their performances and agreeing the blocking (or movement) of the actors

6

Theatre Maker:

Sound Designer

What they do:

Designing the sound required for the performance, which may include music and sound effects. Considering if amplification, such as the use of microphones, is needed, and creating a sound plot.

9

Theatre Maker:

Stage Manager

What they do:

Running the backstage elements of the play and supervising the backstage crew. Organising the rehearsal schedule and keeping lists of props and other technical needs. Creating a prompt book and calling the cues for the performance.

11

Theatre Maker:

Lighting Designer

What they do:

Designing the lighting states and effects that will be used in a performance. Understanding the technical capabilities of the theatre and creating a lighting plot.

12

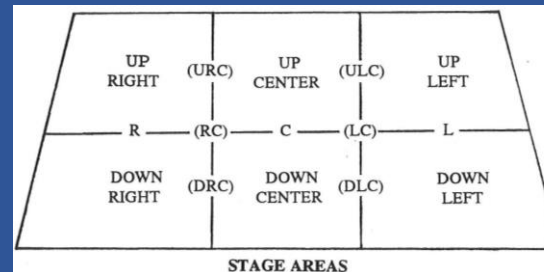
Theatre Maker:

Puppet Designer

What they do:

Designing the puppets for a production, taking into account the style of puppets and how they will be operated.

3



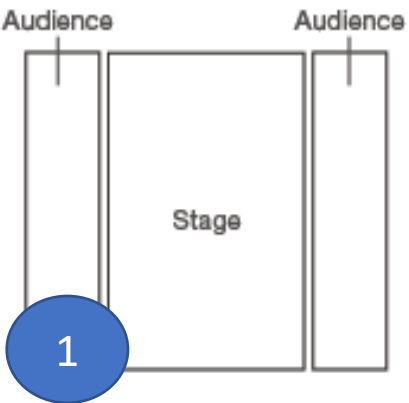
13

Stage Positioning:

Year 10: Stage Configurations:

Traverse:

The acting area is a long, central space with the audience seated on either side facing each other



Advantages:

Audience feel close to the stage
They can see the reactions of the other audience members – helping with **audience interaction**

Extreme ends of the stage can be used to create extra acting areas.

Disadvantages:

Big pieces of **scenery, backdrops or set** can block **sightlines**
Blocking can be challenging
Actors can struggle with making themselves visible to both side of the audience
Lighting needs to be carefully designed to avoid shining lights in the audience's eyes.

Advantages:

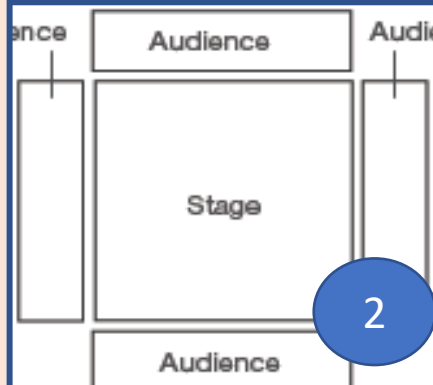
Directors and actors often find it very dynamic, interesting space because the audience is close to the stage
Actors enter and exit through the audience, engaging them
There is no easily achieved 'artificial **fourth wall**' separating the audience from the acting area

Disadvantages:

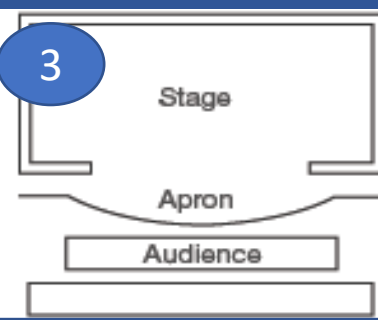
Cannot use **backdrops** or **flats** that would obscure the view of the audience
Stage furniture has to be chosen carefully so **sightlines** aren't blocked
Actors have to be carefully **blocked** so that audience aren't blocked for extended periods of time.

Theatre in the round:

is a stage configuration when the audience are seated around all sides of the stage



3



Proscenium arch:

Is a common form of theatre, popular for larger theatres. The proscenium refers to the frame around the stage.

Advantages:

Stage pictures are easily created
Backdrops / scenery can be used
There may be **fly space** and **wing space** for storing scenery
Fourth wall easily created.

Disadvantages:

Some audience members may feel distant from the stage.
The auditorium could seem very formal and rigid.
Audience interaction may be more difficult.

4



Advantages:

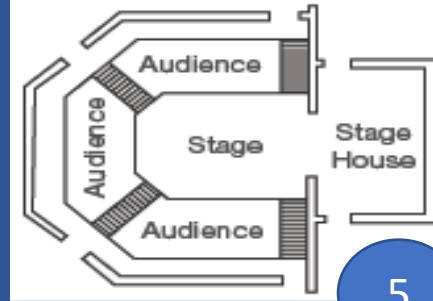
It is interactive and exciting – the audience may feel more involved.

Disadvantages:

The audience moving difficult or get tired of standing
Actors/crew need to be skilled at moving the audience around/controlling their focus

Promenade theatre:

Is when the audience stand or follow the actors through the performance.



5

Thrust stage:

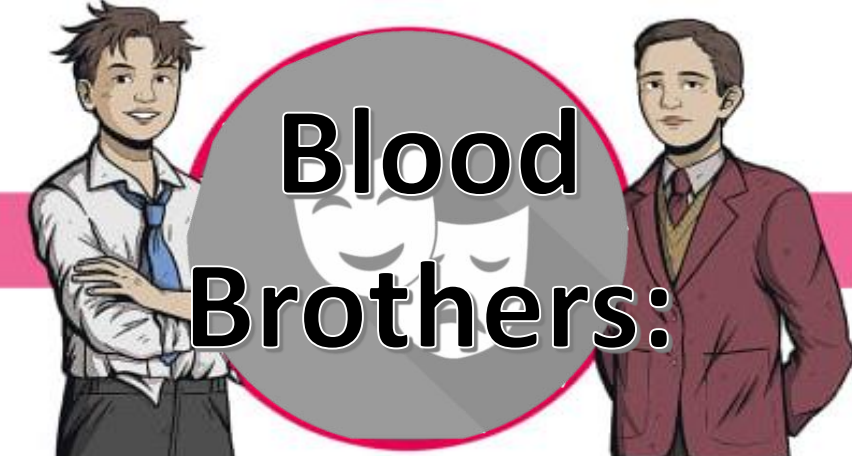
Protrudes into the auditorium with the audience on three sides.

Advantages:

Combine advantages of proscenium and theatre in the round
Backdrops, flats and large scenery can be used.
Audience may feel closer to the stage

Disadvantages:

Sightlines for those on the extreme sides may be limited or obstructed
The audience on the right and left have each other in their view
Box sets (where three sides of a room are constructed) cannot be used as this would block views for much of the audience



Brief plot Summary:

Blood Brothers, a musical by Liverpoolian playwright Willy Russell, revolves around twin boys (Mickey and Edward) who are separated at birth and brought up in completely different environments in the city. The play, set in the 1960s, is divided into two acts, with songs throughout.

Mickey is brought up with his seven older siblings by his struggling single mother, Mrs Johnstone. His twin brother, Edward, however is brought up as the only child of the wealthy Lyons family, who live nearby, after Mrs Lyons persuaded Mrs Johnstone to hand over one of her twins at birth. Mickey and Edward don't meet each other until they're seven years old, but immediately become best friends and blood brothers. The bond continues when the boys are teenagers and both live in the countryside, despite them both being in love with Mickey's neighbour Linda. However, as they get older, the huge difference in their backgrounds pulls them apart and eventually leads to their tragic deaths.

Contextual information:

- Willy Russell wrote *Blood Brothers* in 1981.
- It was first performed in Liverpool before transferring to the West End.
- It was first performed as a musical in 1983.
- Conservative Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher was in power at this time.
- There was a very high rate of unemployment at this time.
- The play is set in Liverpool, as areas of high unemployment within the industrial working class.

KEY QUOTES:

- 'Y'know the devil's got your number'
- 'And do we blame superstition for what came to pass? Or could it be what we, the English, have come to know as class?'
- 'The welfare have already been onto me'
- 'See this means that we're blood brothers, an' that we always have to stand by each other'

Key characters:

- Narrator** – takes on multiple roles
- Mrs Johnstone** – Mother of the twins, impoverished.
- Mrs Lyons** – takes Eddie, privileged.
- Mickey** – poor twin, frequently downtrodden
- Eddie** – rich twin, not streetwise
- Sammy** - delinquent brother to Mickey
- Linda** – Mickey's girlfriend and Eddie's secret love
- Mr Lyons** – Father of Edward

Genre: Book Musical.

Links to Epic Theatre

Themes:

- Nature vs nurture
- Class divide
- Superstition
- Motherhood
- Fate/destiny
- Power
- Judgement
- Love
- Violence

Stylistic features and symbols:

- Reprise** – a song or part of a song that is repeated. Often it is intermingled with a new song. E.g. Marilyn Monroe.
- Motif** – A dominant or recurring image or idea in a text e.g. the gun.
- Juxtaposition** – Two opposite ideas are near each other in a piece of writing.
- Foreshadowing** – when the author alludes to what is to come in the text.
- Parallel** – two corresponding things that run side by side, e.g. the school scenes.
- Cyclical** – the structure of the play is cyclical as it starts and ends in the same place.
- Soliloquy** – when a character speaks their thoughts aloud, to themselves. It is different to a monologue which is one-character speaking, but in front of others
- Antihero** – a central character in a story, film, or drama who lacks conventional heroic attributes.
- Narrator** – echoes the function of the Greek Chorus, asks the audience to detach and judge.
- Stage Directions** – used prolifically by Russell to describe the movement and actions of characters.

How to approach question:

Technical language – use the accurate terminology to describe each aspect of a production, such as performance skills, design features and stage configurations

Examples from the play – include examples (e.g. quotes, context or events) that demonstrate understanding of the play and support the point your making.

Detailed suggestions - give specific details on how you would perform, design and direct a production that will help the examiner to visualise your ideas.

Effect on the audience – describe the desired effect of a production on the audience., as well as how this effect might be created using theatrical techniques.

Overview:

1

You will have to answer **one question** worth **32 marks** from a choice of **three questions**. These could cover **acting, lighting, sound, costume, set**. You will spend around **40 minutes** answering this questioning the exam

12 marks for DESCRIBING

- Excellent **knowledge and understanding** of how drama and theatre is developed and performed.
- The range of **theatrical skills** referenced is **extensive** and **entirely appropriate** to the focus of the question.
- The description of how skills were used is **exact, well-developed** and supported throughout with **precise details**.

20 marks for ANALYSIS AND EVALUATION

- Highly developed skills in **identifying and investigating** how successfully theatre-makers **communicated meaning** to an audience (analysis)
- **Highly developed skills in** assessing the merit of **approaches** and **formulating judgements** (evaluation)
- **Critical and insightful**
- Points **fully explored** and supported with **thorough exemplification**.

General Guidance:

- You are writing about the production we saw and how it was brought to life through acting and design NOT the play text written by the playwright
- Refer to the actor’s surname when describing what they did. Ensure you also state the character name.
- Use the language of the question and pick out the key words to target your response.
- Focus on the description, analysis and evaluation of what practically happened on stage as this is where marks are awarded for



3

Common feature of a play:

2

| | |
|---------------------------|---|
| Genre: | a category of drama, such as historical drama or musical. |
| Dialogue: | what the characters say. |
| Monologue: | a long speech spoken by one character. |
| Plot: | the main events of the play presented in a particular sequence by the playwright. |
| Dramatic climax: | the moment of greatest dramatic tension in a play. |
| Resolution: | the end of the plot when the problems of the play are resolved. |
| Stage directions: | descriptions of aspects of the play not conveyed by the actors’ speeches. |
| Character: | a person or other being (such as a talking animal) in a play, novel or film. |
| Performance style: | the way in which something is performed. A realistic performance has a believable or life-like performance style, or a comedy might feature |

Intro:

State the production you saw (title, playwright, theatre company)
Give a brief summary of the
A very brief statement which answers the question and gives a judgement on the production.

Paragraph (X4) Each paragraph MUST contain:

Description of a moment:

- **Brief context** for the moment– what was happening / which characters were involved?
- Excellent description of the moment (**6-7 elements theatrical skills**) explain exactly what happened practically on stage.
- **Quotations** from the dialogue. Each paragraph should have **at least one quotation** linked to the description.
- **Keep focused on the question** (link back to the question)

Analysis of the moment:

- Explain in detail the **meaning** created by the moment, relating to the **audience**. E.g. how it made the audience **understand the character, themes or story**, how it created **empathy, comedy, tension** or communicated a **message** for the audience etc.
- Your personal– how did you: **think/feel/react/respond/engage**? What **meaning** was **communicated** to you at this point.

Evaluation of the moment:

- Make a **clear judgement** on the **success/effectiveness** of this moment

Conclusion:

BREIF. A couple of sentences summarizing your arguments about the effectiveness of the production. An overview which draws together your examples to offer an overall response to the questions. Ensure it answers the question with a **concluding evaluation on the overall effectiveness**.

Year 10 Component 1:
Section C Live Theatre
Review



Year 10 Drama

1

LIGHTING:

- **Fresnel** = soft edged light, with a diffused lens. Its useful for good overall light. Coloured gels can be added
- **Spotlight** = fixed light with a hard edge effect, used to light characters or set pieces. Can create a restricted space. Gels can be used.
- **Follow Spot** = same as a spot light but can follow the movement around the stage
- **Flood light** = clear wide-angled light, with little control over its spread. Gels can be added
- **Birdie** = lantern that can be place on the set or at the front of the stage (not very strong)
- **Gobo** = projects a shape onto the stage in order to create an effect
- **Gel** = a coloured film that can be added to specific lights to change the colour
- **Focus** = where on the stage is being lit up (e.g. center stage)
- **Intensity** = how bright or dim the lights are, high intensity = bright lights

2

SET:

- **Positioning:** scale, perspective, sightlines, levels, entrances/exits, location (SL/SR/CS/US/DS), relationship, to stage space (**Stage Configurations:** proscenium, in the round, traverse, thrust, promenade, end-on)
- **Furniture:** style, period, material, colour

Key Terms:

- **Truck** = A moveable piece of staging that is on wheels.
- **Projection on a cyclorama** = a projected image is shone onto the back of the stage creating a location (this image can be changed during the show)
- **Flats** = can be used to create temporary back drops for scenes. A flat can be decorated in any way to depict locations.
- **Backdrop** = a painted background used at the back of the stage to create location
- **Revolving stage** = the stage can revolve allowing for quick scene changes or to suggest movement
- **Automation** = this is a piece of furniture that is controlled with a controller and can therefore move around the stage seemingly independently
- **Naturalistic set design** = attempts to create a completely realistic representation of the location – absolute attention to detail.
- **Mminimalistic set design** = used symbols to emphasize themes, used props to represent location e.g. bed = bedroom

3

COSTUME:

- **Material** = communicates the context of a performance (the period, the year, the time frame)
- **Fit and Condition** = communicates background information, for example if their clothes is obviously too big and has holes in it, it could be a sign that it is a hand-me-down item given by an older sibling, perhaps suggesting they don't have much money.
- **Colour** = Can foreshadow elements about a character, for example: violent= red, or innocent=white.
- **Link to character = Costume** can be used to reveal information about the characters in the play. For example, where the characters come from, their background and the surrounding context. It can also be used to **communicate status** to your audiences showing who has power / money / authority or not.
- **Things to describe:**
- **Hair, makeup**, (are integral to costume design – special effects can be used to age an actor or complete the look.), **shoes, whole outfit, personal props**

4

SOUND:

- **Live sound:** actor voice, on-stage action, live instruments, vocals.
- **Recorded sound:** music, sound effects, soundscape
- **Music:** style, atmosphere, effect, bass, treble, tempo
- **Effects:** echo, distortion, volume, amplification, pitch, reverb, fade, crossfade.
- **Microphones:** radio mics, microphones/stands, hanging mics.
- **Underscore** – Sound and music can be used to underscore a scene, adding tension and atmosphere to a particular moment. For example: A low drone played underneath a scene that foreshadows something bad happening.
- **Ambient Sound** – or 'background' sound. This can be used to help the audience understand the setting or location of a scene. For example, a scene set in a train station might have the sound of a train engine huffing and the conductors whistle blowing.
- **Direction of sound** – Sound can be used to focus the audience's attention. You could use speakers coming from behind the audience to make them feel like they are part of the action. Or you might have the sound coming from off stage to signify something happening in an area that we as the audience can not see.

Acting Elements: What is the aim for the character? What is being communicated to the audience about the character/theme/narrative?

PHYSICALITY:

1

- Posture
- Gesture
- Movement
- Facial expression
- Eye contact
- Positioning and spatial
- Ensemble/choral movement
- Mime
- Relationships
- Dance/physical theatre/lift
- Pace/rhythm/timing
- Balance
- Poise
- Gait

VOICE:

2

- Pace (tempo/rhythm/speed)
- Pitch (high/low)
- Inflection
- Pause
- Tone (emotion)
- Expression
- Emphasis
- Diction
- Volume
- Projection
- Articulation
- Choral speaking
- Intonation (rise and fall)
- Verse speaking
- Accent (regional/national)

USE OF SPACE:

3

- Proxemics
- Space and staging
- Levels
- Positioning
- Spatial relationships
- Patterns of movement.

OTHER ELEMENTS:

4

- Listening and responding
- Tension/climax/subtext
- Status
- Audience/performer relationship
- Physical appearance
- Character
- Motivation/objective
- Interaction with technical elements
- Use of props/costume/set
- Character relationship/interaction



Component 1: Section B: Blood Brothers

5

4-MARK: (5minutes)

- Describe one design element for a given scene: Set, Lighting, Costume, Sound
- Ideas must reflect the period of the play (late 1960s – early 1980s)
- **Overview:**
 - Context sentences: at this point in the play...
 - Around 6 high quality sentences describing the design element with precise detail and design specific vocab – link to context throughout.

6

8-MARK: (10minutes) first person: 'I'

- How you would deliver a particular line of dialogue in a given extract from the play.
- Describe specific acting skills (physical and vocal) that you would use to perform the line
- Explain the effects you want to create for the audience
- **Overview**
 - Context sentence: At this point in the play...
 - Intention behind the line with your aims/intended effect highlighted
 - One Magic 8 paragraph including 2 skills per slice of line (if split into 4)
 - For each skill outline: what aiming to show

7

12-MARK: (15minutes) first person 'I'

- How you and another actor would use space and interaction to create a specified effect. Focusing on THE SHADED PART OF THE EXTRACT ONLY
- Explain how you and the other actors use of space and interaction will create the given effect
- **Overview:**
 - Context sentence: at the point in the play... link to the given effect immediately
 - Three Magic 8 paragraphs focusing on different lines from the shaded extract (start, middle, end)
 - How you and the other actor would perform
 - METAL: movement, eye contact, touch, area of stage, levels.
 - Every comment made must be linked to the given effect

8

20-MARK: (25minutes) first person 'I'

- How would you use your acting skills in order to perform one role in the play. Must refer to the given extract and two other moments in the play (similar / contrasting)
- How your acting skills will support you interpreting the character, explain why your decisions are appropriate.
- **Overview:**
 - **Introduction: overview of the character + how should be portrayed in the play, how do they change and adapt over time? What key traits need to be highlighted? What stage is the character in their journey in the given extract? What is the characters motivation? What are you trying to show the audience?**
 - 1 Magic 8 paragraph explain how play the character in the given extract, covering 2 separate moments of dialogue – link back to the question throughout
 - 2 magic 8 paragraphs on different sections of the play (similar / different)
 - Why you have chosen this moment, context, how links to character journey, effect you want to create?
 - Conclusion: how these moments will support your interpretation of the character for the given extract and the play as a whole.