

Drama General Terms

1. **Rehearsal:** The process of creating and developing drama for performance.
2. **Peer-Evaluation:** To judge the strengths and weaknesses of another group's drama
3. **Plot:** is the outline of the plot of a drama, including changes in time or place.
4. **Purpose:** Why a character takes the action they do within a scene.
5. **Stimulus:** Something which engages your imagination in order to be developed into a drama.
6. **Self-Evaluation:** Talking and writing about what you have done yourself, highlighting your strengths and development areas.
7. **Target Audience:** A group of people who you think would enjoy or get the most from a production (often age groups / people with specific interests).
8. **Time Period:** When the play is set.
9. **Characterisation:** The process of creating a character by including details about their background, their nationality and their personality, etc.

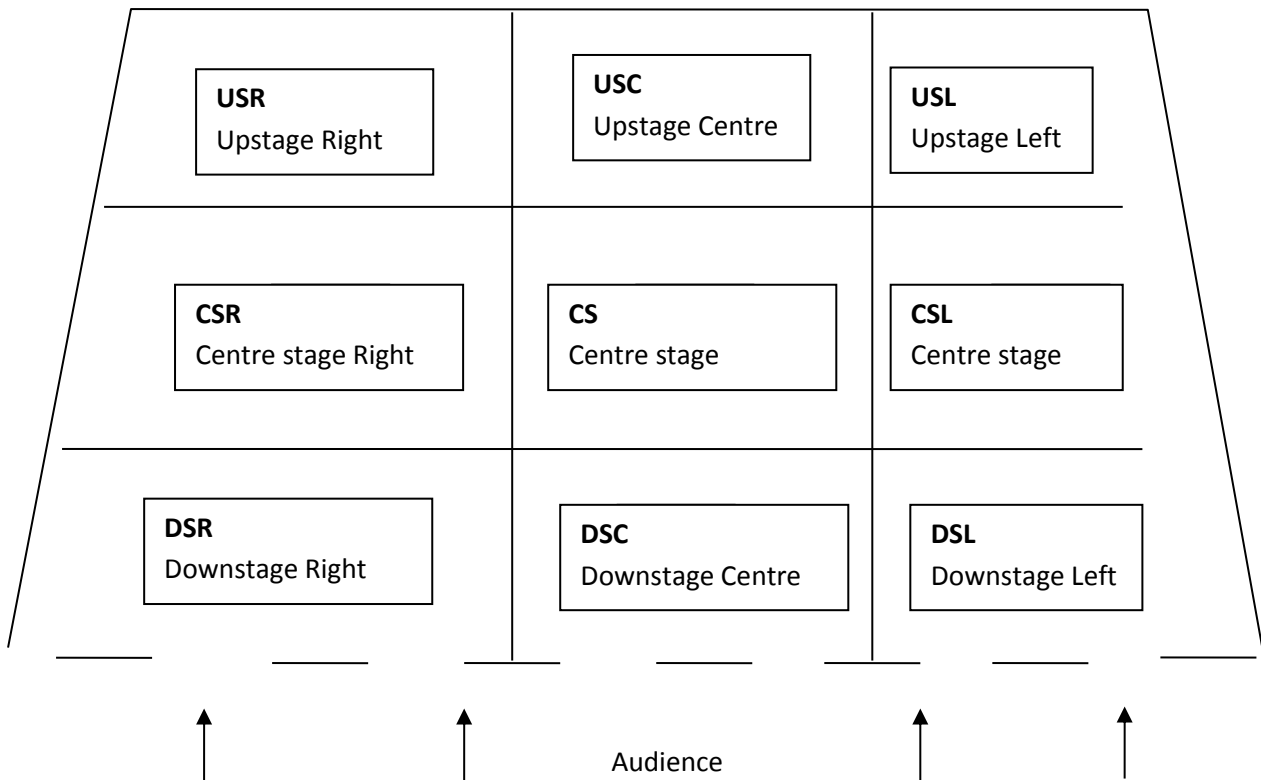
Voice Terminology

1. **Accent** tells us the country and region a character is from.
2. **Volume** is how loud or quiet the voice is.
3. **Pitch** is how high or low the voice is.
4. **Clarity** is how clear the voice is.
5. **Emphasis** is where you put stress on a word to convey meaning.
6. **Tone** conveys the emotion in the voice, e.g.: an angry tone.
7. **Pace** tells us how fast or slow speech is.
8. **Intonation** is the rising and falling of the voice.
9. **Pause** is a break in speech which allows the character to breathe and show the thought process of the character.
10. **Fluency** is how easily the speech flows.
11. **Register** is the range of tones in the human voice and the sounds you can make as an actor.

Movement Terminology

1. **Body Language** gives an indication of the whole body's attitude (*E.G. defensive or open*).
2. **Facial Expression** is the position of the face to communicate the emotion the character is feeling. (*E.G. confused, concerned, excited*)
3. **Gestures** are made by the hand and arm, and can be a visual signal of communication.
4. **Eye Contact** allows a character to make a connection with the audience or another character.
5. **Posture** is how the actor holds their upper body, and can indicate a character's status, age, health or emotion etc. It can be either straight or slouched.
6. **Speed** is how fast or slow the character's movement is.
7. **Use of Space / Levels** enables the actor to use positioning for status or to create distance or proximity to other characters.
8. **Gait** is how a character walks, e.g.: has a purposeful gait.

The Areas of the Stage



The above diagram shows the areas of the stage, drawn on a plan of an end-on (or proscenium arch) theatre.

Remember that the areas of the stage are given from the **PERFORMER'S** point of view, if the performer was on stage, looking at the audience.

Ground Plans

Ground Plans are a visual representation of the stage, used in the design and direction process.

A ground plan is a set designer's plan of the stage and all items on it seen from a **bird's eye view**. It should have the following features:

Ground Plan Success Criteria

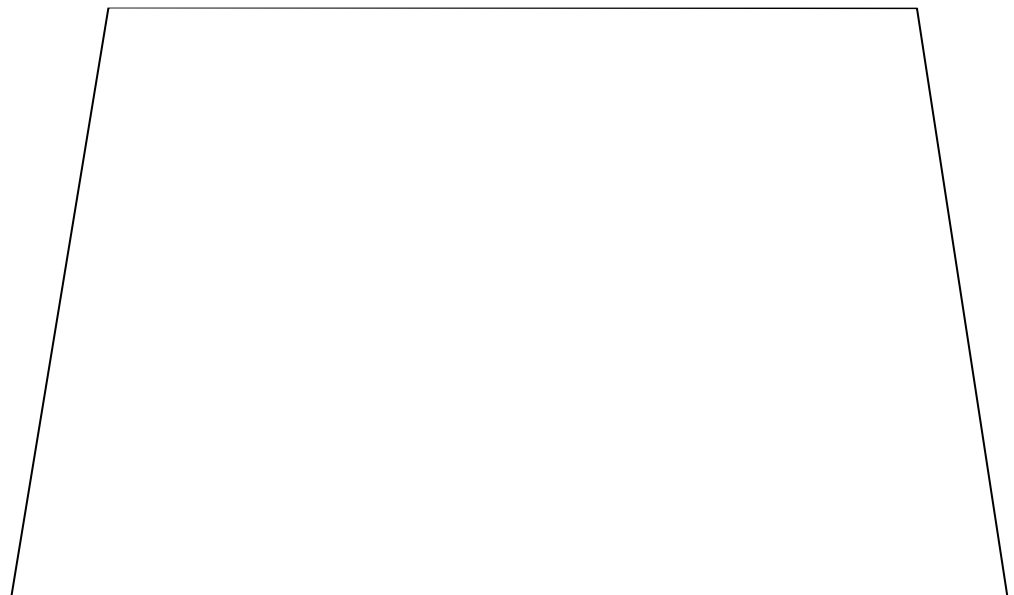
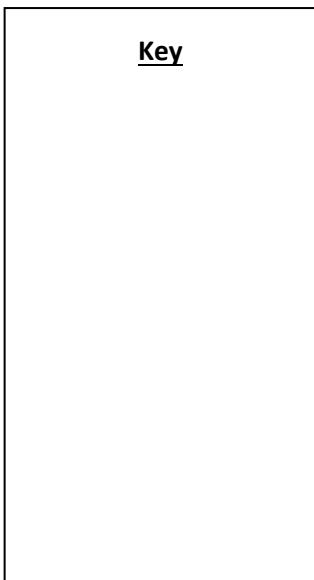
- ➔ **A** udience
- ➔ **L** ogical
- ➔ **E** ntrance and Exits
- ➔ **O** pening Position of Actors
- ➔ **K** ey

It can be useful to include **Production Name**, **Scene Number** and the **Location of Scene**.

Production Name:

Scene Number:


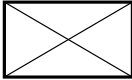

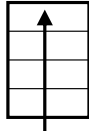
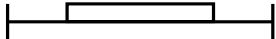
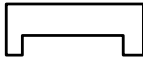
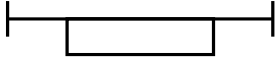



Location:



Ground Plans - The Key

Your ground plan will use symbols to indicate the set, the entrances and exits etc.

The commonly used symbols are below:

	Flat, divider		Rostrum
	Door		Treads/stairs plus up direction
	Window		Couch
	Chair		Tables
	Armchair		Standard Lamp

Remember that if you have an item of set or furniture in your design, and there is no appropriate symbol, simply **draw your own** (using appropriate scale) and make sure you **include** it in your key!

Characterisation Techniques (Rehearsal Activities)

In rehearsal the following activities can help develop characters (e.g. Background, attitudes, movement, voice, mannerisms etc.)

- **Role Play** is when actors take on a role / character.
- **Thought Tunnel** is when actors are surrounded by their peers who give advice or pass comment on their character. This helps actors understand how their character is viewed by others.
- **Character Cards** is where actors record key information about their character such as (personality, background, interests, objective, motivation, purpose and status)
- **Spontaneous Improvisation** is exploring your character on the spot with no time to prepare.
- **Rehearsed Improvisation** is when actors put their character in different situations with a range of other characters to see how they might react.
- **Hot-Seating** is questioning a character when they are in role. The actor must then respond as their character would. This helps the actor to get into the mind-set of the character and develop their understanding of their character.
- **Voices in the head** is a way of exploring a character's thoughts. You can explore a good voice and a bad voice to show how characters can have conflicting desires. Two actors can improvise these voices around the character.
- **Writing in Role** is when you create a piece of writing in character, for example a letter, diary entry or blog. This encourages actors to get into the mind of their character.
- **Thought Tracking** is an aid to characterisation: the character speaks their inner thoughts out loud at specific moments in the drama so as to develop a more reflective attitude towards the action. Normally, they will be tapped by the director before speaking their thoughts.

Genres

Genre is the overall type of drama you perform. Genre brings together all aspects of the play and considers the drama as a whole rather than individual parts.

For example: a drama that takes the **form of a scripted presentation**, explores the experience of someone who has been wrongly convicted of a crime and sent to death row (content) and is **naturalistic** in style may be categorised as a **tragedy**.

Genres may include:

1. **Comedy** is a light amusing play with a happy ending.
2. **Docudrama** is when the action is presented as a report on an issue or subject, a person or an event. The techniques used are similar to television- interviews, location reports, re-constructions and statistics presented. It can be exciting to create and interesting to watch.
3. **Tragedy** is a play that is serious in tone and explores human suffering. It often has a central character with a fatal flaw and a high status which leads to making a mistake and their downfall. In a modern sense it is a play that evokes sorrow through the audience's empathy with the characters.
4. **Melodrama** is a comic play that is over exaggerated. It is characterised by physical humour, the use of deliberate absurdity or nonsense and broadly stylised performances.
5. **Satire** is a comedy with the use of irony or sarcasm to poke fun at those in authority. It uses "Wit as a Weapon" to criticise society and draw attention to issues in society that need to be changed.
6. **Tragicomedy** is either a tragic play that contains enough comic elements to lighten the overall mood or often a serious play with a happy ending.
7. **Historical** play's involve the exploration of a historical event or figure.
8. **Crime Drama** often has a central character who fights crime. We often understand the crime unravel through their investigative eyes.

Forms

The form of a drama is the way that the story is told. It is the way the drama is created during the rehearsal process and the overall shape the presentation takes.

Theatre-makers need to choose the best way to communicate their drama.

Forms may include:

1. **Rehearsed Improvisation** is when the actors have no written script but respond to a stimulus and make up their lines and moves as the drama progresses. They must use improvisational skills to create the characters, storyline and setting.
2. **Dance Drama** is when the story and message are communicated only through dance and the plot is shown through a sequence of movements and dance steps.
3. A **Mime** piece is a stylised form of movement which creates an illusion of reality. There is usually no speech involved.
4. A **Movement** drama is when the entire presentation uses only movement to communicate to the audience this is usually non- naturalistic in style and may have a musical accompaniment. (*E.G. Cirque de Soleil*)
5. **Monologue** involves one actor delivering an extended speech. This can involve a series of monologues from different characters, and intertwine stories or perspectives on an issue or theme.
6. A **Musical** combines songs and dialogue with acting and dance. The story and emotional content of the piece are communicated through the words, music, movement and special effects of the production.
7. **Puppet Theatre** is a form of drama where the action is presented using puppets.
8. **Forum Theatre** is when one group acts out a scene and the group watching is encouraged to stop the action and suggest a different outcome. At times the actors can stop the action themselves and ask for help- sometimes the audience step in and take on the role to demonstrate an alternative approach.
9. In a **Scripted Play** the lines the characters speak, their moves and any relevant information are written down for actors to use in rehearsal. The playwright writes a play using dialogue and stage directions.

Drama Conventions

Drama conventions are used to tell parts of your play in an interesting way. They are like ingredients to make your play taste nicer or be more interesting to your audience.

1. **Flashback** is acting out an event in the past.
2. **Flashforward** is acting out a future or imagined event.
3. **Freeze Frame** is when the action is momentarily frozen in time.
4. **Soliloquy** is the act of speaking the character's thoughts aloud when alone on stage or away from any other characters.
5. **Mime** is a part of the Drama told without words only through **naturalistic** movement.
6. A **Movement Sequence** is a part of the Drama told without words only through **stylised** movement.
7. **Slow Motion** is when actors use slow their movement to emphasise a key moment.
8. **Narration** is when part(s) of the drama are told as a story by a character outside of the action.
9. **Voice Over** is when recorded speech is played during a drama.
10. **Aside** is a remark made to the audience only.
11. **Monologue** is a long speech made by a character which may be directly to a character or to the audience.
12. **Tableau** is a key stage picture, held without movement that emphasises an important moment in the drama.

Styles

Styles are the established features of any part of the process of making and performing works of drama and theatre (including styles of writing, directing, design and performance).

The style of a drama can be **naturalistic** or **non-naturalistic**.

Naturalistic = An imitation of real life.

Non-Naturalistic = Presenting a scene in a way which is different from the norm.



Structure

The structure of the drama can be **linear** or **non-linear**.

Linear = Events unfold in the order they happen.

Non-linear = Events are not told in the order they happen. This often features flashback or flash-forward.

Character Personality

The following words are good descriptive words to describe to your character. You should always try and describe your character in the most interesting way possible to bring them to life!



Compassionate
Aggressive **Honest**
Stoic **Kind**
Outgoing/Gregarious
Introverted **Rude**

Industrious **Generous** **Mercurial** **Pious**
Gentle **Cunning** **Selfish** **Dominant**
Repressed **Energetic** **Lively**
Cold Frustrated **Warm** **Loving**

Trustworthy **Admirable**
Enigmatic **Affectionate**
Loyal

Sympathetic **Anxious**
Dependable

Bossy
Fun-loving **Artistic**
Bad-tempered **Sociable**
Joyful

Character Relationships

Top Tip-It is always a good idea to be able to clearly describe the nature of the relationship between two characters in a relationship question and justify it with evidence from the text:

Some words which can be used to describe character relationships are:

- Close
- Affectionate
- Destructive
- Respectful
- Antagonistic
- Based on Trust
- Honest
- Caring
- Playful
- Poor
- Strained
- Forgiving
- Supportive

Here is an example:

Sam and his mother Shelia “the Feeler” have a very **close and loving** relationship. Sam knows that his mum understands how his mind works and how much he loves words. She encourages him to write down any words that hurt him so he can distance himself from the pain he may feel as a boy who expresses himself differently to others. She acknowledges her son’s difference and loves him for it :

“He was always different. In a good way.”

Mood and Atmosphere



Mood and atmosphere are the feelings that an audience get from a play. This is created as the **moods** of the on stage character change the **atmosphere** which is felt by an audience.

Character Moods

- Suspicious
- Defensive
- Confident
- Calm
- Aggressive
- Understanding
- Reassuring
- Hopeful
- Desperate
- Despondent
- Relaxed
- Determined
- Anxious
- Optimistic

Atmosphere

- Tense
- Hostile
- Friendly
- Uncertain
- Celebratory
- Positive
- Sinister
- Solemn
- Suspenseful
- Mysterious

Types of Staging/Venue

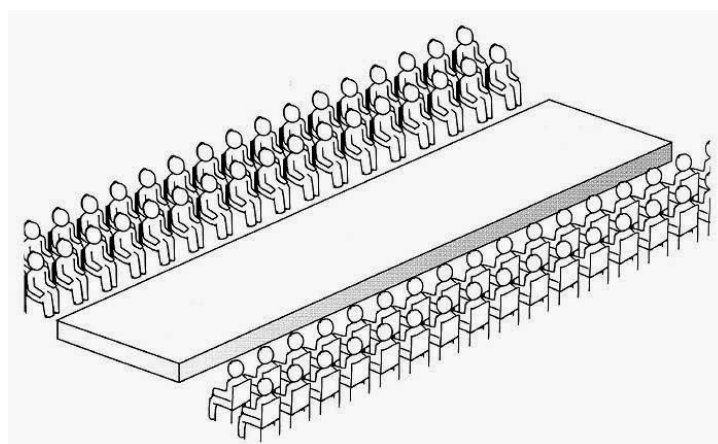
In theatre, there are four main types of performance space. Each has their own pros and cons and they all affect the audience in different ways too. It is important when creating theatre to decide which type of staging is the most important. The five types are:

Proscenium Arch / End On



This type of staging involves the audience on **one side**. This helps actors perform while facing the audience and allows set / costume to be hidden in the 'wings' (the backstage area at the sides of the stage).

Traverse / Avenue



This staging has the audience on **two sides**. This can be restricting for traditional plays, but can be used for other types of performance such as a fashion show.

Thrust



This staging places the audience on **three sides**. It helps provide the audience with different views of the stage. Also, by placing the actors in the middle, it allows the audience to feel closer to the show whilst retaining the back screen found in end on stages.




Theatre in the Round









This staging places the audience on **all four sides**. This helps create a very close relationship between the actor and the audience and helps audiences connect to the story. However it reduces the options for set design, as you cannot place any high items on the space in case it blocks someone's view!

Two Stars and a Wish

In the following pages, you can use two stars and a wish to make note of what terms you understand and which you still have to learn. You should date any entry so that you can monitor your progress throughout the year!

General Terms	
	
	
	

General Terms	
	
	
	

General Terms	
	
	
	

Voice Terms



Voice Terms



Voice Terms



Movement Terms



Movement Terms



Movement Terms



Areas of a Stage / Ground Plan



Areas of a Stage / Ground Plan



Areas of a Stage / Ground Plan



Characterisation Techniques



Characterisation Techniques



Characterisation Techniques



Genre Terms



Genre Terms



Genre Terms



Form Terms



Form Terms



Form Terms



Conventions



Conventions



Conventions



Notes

Notes

Notes

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