



Lenzie Academy



Higher Drama Revision Guide

1. Course Outline



Aims of Course

- To investigate relationships, issues and topics
- To gain knowledge and understanding of aspects of theatre
- To develop acting and directing skills and contribute to a presentation
- To experience and analyse theatrical performance

Course Content

The course is divided into two component units: Drama Skills and Production Skills. Pupils will also have to prepare for Section 1: Study of a text in its theatrical context and Section 2: Structured Response Question and Section 3: Performance Analysis of the written exam.

August - January

Exam Preparation - Written Exam

Section 1: Theatre Production: Text in Context involves the in depth exploration of a text (*'The Crucible'* by Arthur Miller), both theoretically and practically. The students will not only look at the storyline and relationships in this chosen play but also examine how the play would have been performed when it was originally written and how it might be performed to an audience of today. Students will also study and perform an acting role from this text and a contrasting piece from another text.

Section 2: Theatre Production: Application involves candidates answering a design question based on their set text. They are required to demonstrate how they would use a number of directing and design techniques to stage *'The Crucible'*.

Section 3: Performance Analysis involves the evaluation and analysis of a contemporary piece of theatre through workshops, discussion and research. Pupils will analyse how meaning is created onstage.

This element will be externally assessed in May and is worth 40% of total course award.

December - March

Exam Preparation - Practical Exam

Pupils must prepare two 8 minute acting pieces which show a contrast. They must sustain their character and convey relationships through credible interaction with other characters and must use appropriate voice and movement when performing the role.

In addition to this, candidates must write an essay about the process they undertook to develop their character. This element is also externally assessed and is worth 60% of total course award.

This will take place in March.



2. Theatre Production: Text in Context

What you need to know

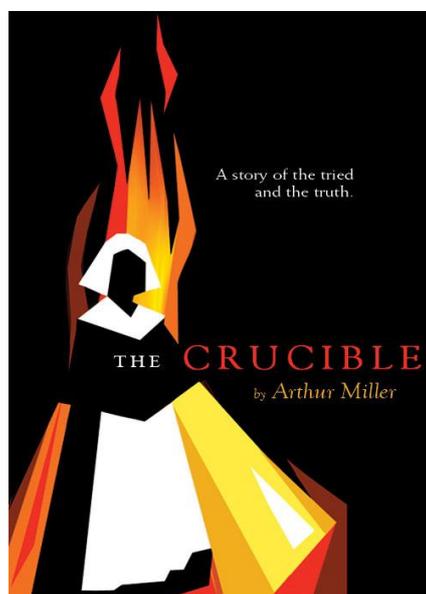
For this essay you must:

- Be able to demonstrate knowledge of the play (describe/explain)
- Be able to demonstrate how you would use either acting, directing or production concepts to achieve dramatic impact

Question Types

There are three types of questions in the exam: Acting, Directing and Design.

- ➔ For Acting you must explain how you would physically bring the character to life onstage
- ➔ For Design you must explain how you would apply two Production Areas to 'The Crucible'
- ➔ For Directing you must explain a holistic vision of the play and explain Acting, Production Areas, Staging Ideas and Production Concepts



General Essay Hints and Tips

- *You must include an introduction and a conclusion*
- *You should aim to write at least 4 sides of A4 to access the full range of marks*
- *'The Crucible' - use speech marks*
- *Indent or highlight your quotes*
- *"I have seen you nights" - use quotation marks*
- *Put all quotes in chronological order*
- *Include at least 5 quotes in your essay; no quotes - no marks for section A*
- *Identify where the quotes are from e.g. Act 1*
- *Refer to the whole play*
- *Use the words of the question throughout - this will help to structure your essay*

Introduction

The Crucible' by Arthur Miller is a play set in the theocratic society of Salem in which witch trials are ongoing based on false evidence created by a group of girls; we see the impact this has on them and the townspeople as the play progresses. Then use words of the question to explain what you are going to do in the essay.

Conclusion

In conclusion, five different...use words of the question to refer to what you have covered in the essay.

Concept Bank

For each question you will explain how you would bring 'The Crucible' to life to create a theatrical presentation. This is an imagined performance. You may choose to refer to any of the concepts listed below.

Acting Concepts

- characterisation
- acting techniques
- acting style (naturalistic or abstract)
- voice and movement
- proxemics
- interaction between characters
- the different ways that the actor uses his/her voice
- the different ways that the actor uses his/her movement
- the relationship between spoken text and physical movement or gesture
- performing of the subtext



Directing Concepts

- setting (e.g. keeping playwright's intended setting or reimagining it in another time period - 1937? 1952? Present day)
- stage imagery
- plot; themes and issues
- character motivation
- character development
- character interaction
- relationships between characters
- any pre-show
- use of Theatre Production Areas
- proxemics
- acting style



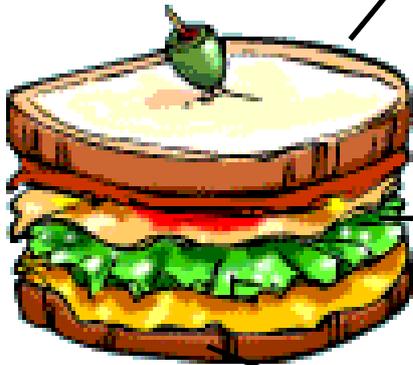
- character interaction
- voice and movement techniques
- actor/audience relationship
- special effects (strobe light, smoke machine, pyrotechnics)
- drama media (projections, video footage, soundscapes etc)

Design Concepts

- setting/period
- plot; themes/issues
- message
- character motivation
- character development/personality
- character interaction
- relationship between characters
- mood/atmosphere
- venue
- stage configuration
- set design
- actor/audience relationship
- lighting
- sound
- costume
- props
- drama media
- Costume/Make up concepts (period, age, personality, status, change in status, immediate circumstances, costume fabrics and cut, colour, style, make-up materials and tools)



Think of it like a sandwich.



A Point - Using the wording from the question you answer the question.

Quotation - You use exemplification from the text that backs up your point.

B Point - You fully explain how your directorial interpretation will highlight your point.

Sandwich Example

A point - Abigail is a manipulative character that will do anything to save her own skin.

Quote - "I saw Indians smash my dear parents' heads on the pillow next to mine...and I can make you wish you had never seen the sun go down!"

Justification - This quote highlights Abigail's life experience and demonstrates that she is not as innocent as the other girls. (A1 - 1 Mark) This makes her a complex character because she uses her violent experiences to intimidate others. (A2 - 1 Mark)

B point - 2 Marks

1. To portray Abigail's complex and manipulative nature I would use proxemics. I would move closer to the other girls throughout this quote to intimidate them.
2. I would use direct eye contact, stern facial expression and a calm tone to again highlight her callous nature.
3. I would speak with a slow pace, low pitch and volume and good clarity to ensure the girls understood everything I said and the consequences which face them if they do not heed Abigail's warning.

3. Theatre Production: Text in Context Exemplar Questions

1. **As a director**, describe in detail **five** different changes in mood and atmosphere in your selected text. (You must use textual references from the play to help you to justify your answer.)

Explain in detail the way in which you would use **five** directing concepts to highlight these changes in your final production. (These need to be related to the first part of this question.)

2. **As a director**, describe in detail **five** different dramatic features that help to create the climax of your selected text. (You must use textual references from the play to help you to justify your answer.)

Explain in detail, **five** directing concepts that would help you to achieve your desired dramatic impact in your final production. (These need to be related to the first part of this question.)

3. **As an actor**, choose **one** of the characters from your selected text and describe in detail **five** different feelings that this

character has towards any other characters. (You must use textual references from the play to help you to justify your answer.)

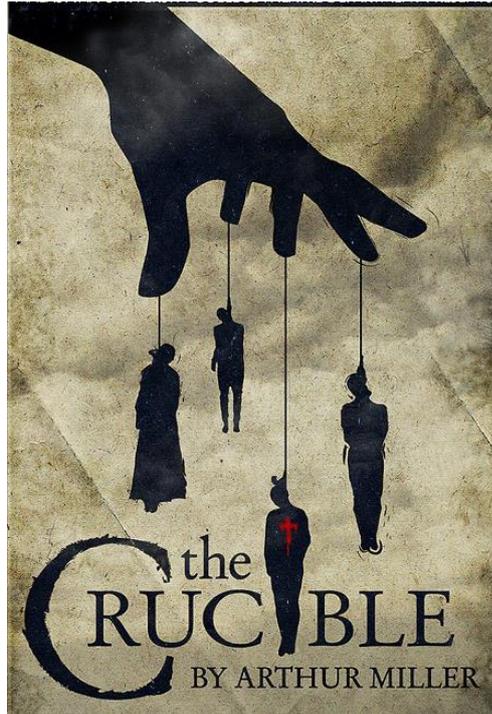
Explain in detail, the way in which you would use **five** acting concepts to portray this character's feelings in your final production. (These need to be related to the first part of this question.)

4. As an actor, choose **one** complex character from your selected text and describe in detail **five** different aspects of their personality. (You must use textual references from the play to help you to justify your answer.)

Explain in detail, the way in which you would use **five** acting concepts to portray this character's personality. (These need to be related to the first part of this question.)

5. As a designer, describe in detail **five** different moments in your selected text that convey aspects of the play's overall themes and/or issues. (You must use textual references from the play to help you to justify your answer.)

Explain in detail the way in which you would use **five** staging and/or design concepts to help you to highlight the play's themes/s and/or issues. (These need to be related to the first part of this question.)



4. Theatre Production: Application

What you need to know

For this essay you must

- Be able to demonstrate knowledge of the play (describe/explain)
- Be able to demonstrate your understanding of production roles for the play



Question Types

There are three types of questions which ask you to respond on the way the following roles could be applied to the play

- For **Acting** you must explain how you would physically bring the character to life onstage
- For **Design** you must explain how you would apply Production Areas to 'The Crucible'

→ For **Directing** you must explain how you would instruct actors to bring the characters to life

5. Theatre Production: Application Exemplar Questions

Question Types

Candidates demonstrate their ability to interpret questions and respond in an informed way through the following skills, knowledge and understanding:

- *Acting concepts*
- *Design concepts*
- *Directing concepts*
- *Performance concepts*
- *Use of performance space*
- *A range of staging, styles and settings of a production*
- *Historical, social and cultural and theatrical context*
- *Target audience*
- *Impact and audience appreciation*
- *Form, structure, genre and style*
- *Plot development*
- *Key moments or scenes*
- *A range of production roles*
- *Characterisation techniques*
- *Character status, motivation, personality, attitude and relationships*
- *Themes and issues*
- *Message/purpose*
- *Mood and atmosphere*
- *Creation of tension*
- *Dramatic features*



- *Rehearsal techniques*

Questions take the form of short, structured response questions usually worth 1 - 4 marks. These will be very similar to those completed at National 5 level.

Your answers will be marked based on your understanding of the question, the text and your use of **terminology!** Please ensure you are revising this continually throughout the year and ask your teacher if you are unsure of the correct word to use/meaning of a word.



6. Performance Analysis Essays

What is a Performance Analysis Essay?

- In this Section you will be asked to give a performance analysis of a theatrical presentation that you have seen live
- The theatrical presentation must have been presented in the past two years
- You will be asked to think about individual aspects of a production
- A Performance Analysis is similar to a theatre review in the sense that you will comment on different areas of a production and explain the impact each area had on the audience
- You will also comment on what you liked/disliked about the production and why
- In the exam, there is only one question; within that question you must choose two production areas to write about
- Think about the productions you have seen and decide which is most appropriate to the question

You may be asked to write about two of the following areas:

- *Lights*
- *Sound*
- *Set*
- *Props*
- *Costume*
- *Make up*
- *Director's Intentions*
- *Performance Space*
- *Actor/Audience relationship*



Hints and Tips

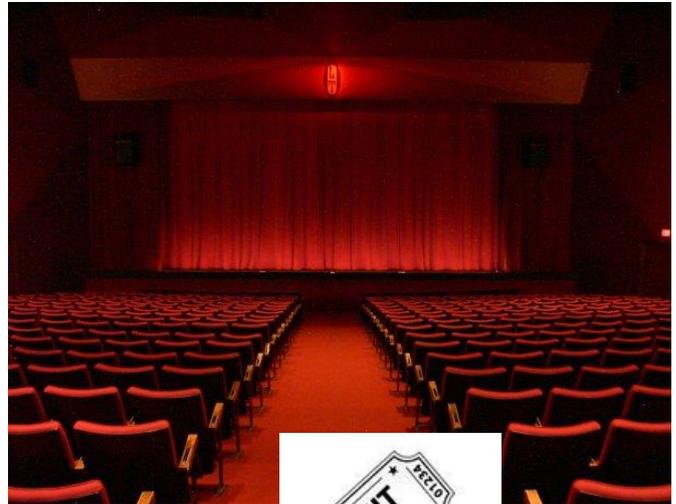
- You must use appropriate Drama terminology (look at terminology booklet)
- Always think...what impact did this element have on the audience?
- Always describe the performance...not the plot. Explain what you saw and heard and describe how you felt about it.

Example point

- ⊙ **Identify**- *I believe the use of avenue staging was very successful.*
- ⊙ **Describe**- *When the writer entered the pub, he was stood at one end of the stage and the soldiers were at the other.*
- ⊙ **Explain** - *This suggested that there was a sense of distance and hostility between the soldiers and the writer.*

© *Analyse Audience Impact* - This helped to establish the difference between the soldiers and the writer immediately.

→ This will gain two marks



7. Performance Analysis Exemplar Questions

1. Consider the **contrasts** in a performance you have seen recently.

- Now select two production areas from the list below
- acting
- setting
- costume
- sound

In your analysis, identify and explain in detail the ways in which your two selected production areas helped to **communicate the contrasts** in the play and enhanced your appreciation of the performance. (20 Marks)

2. Consider the **themes and ideas** in a performance you have seen recently.

- Now select two production areas from the list below
- acting
- set
- costume
- choice and use of performance space.

In your analysis, identify and explain in detail the ways in which your two selected production areas helped to **communicate the themes and ideas** in the play and enhanced your appreciation of the performance. (20 Marks)

3. Consider the **message and/or purpose** in a performance you have seen recently.

- Now select two production areas from the list below
- acting
- directing
- set
- sound

In your analysis, identify and explain in detail the ways in which your two selected production areas helped to **communicate the message and/or purpose** in the play and enhanced your appreciation of the performance. (20 Marks)

4. Consider the **mood and/or atmosphere** in a performance you have seen recently.

- Now select two production areas from the list below
- lighting
- setting
- costume
- sound

In your analysis, identify and explain in detail the ways in which your two selected production areas helped to **communicate the mood and/or atmosphere** in the play and enhanced your appreciation of the performance. (20 Marks)

5. Consider the **director's intentions** in a performance you have seen recently.

- Now select two production areas from the list below
- acting

- performance space
- costume
- sound

In your analysis, identify and explain in detail the ways in which your two selected production areas helped to **communicate the director's intentions** in the play and enhanced your appreciation of the performance. (20 Marks)

6. Consider the **tension** in a performance you have seen recently.

- Now select two production areas from the list below
- Make up
- lighting
- costume
- sound

In your analysis, identify and explain in detail the ways in which your two selected production areas helped to **communicate the tension** in the play and enhanced your appreciation of the performance. (20 Marks)

7. Consider the **dramatic impact** in a performance you have seen recently.

- Now select two production areas from the list below
- acting
- setting
- costume
- sound

In your analysis, identify and explain in detail the ways in which your two selected production areas helped to **communicate the dramatic**

impact in the play and enhanced your appreciation of the performance. (20 Marks)



8. Performance Examination

For the performance, you will be given two extracts which you will perform in front of an external examiner and an S3 audience. There will be at least one other candidate in your acting piece and although you perform together, you will be assessed as an individual.

Preparing a dramatic piece for examination.

A drama examiner will look for the following:

- Spatial awareness, movement and gesture
- Vocal quality, clarity, fluency, projection
- Awareness of audience, awareness of performance elements, integration, communication
- Control, appropriateness, conviction, credibility, support
- Pace and timing
- Interpretation, sustaining roles, responding
- These points come under four headings:
- Characterisation
- Vocal Skills
- Movement Skills
- Impact on Audience



You should consider the following questions when preparing your performance extracts for the external examination.

Characterisation

- Why is the role an important part of the drama?
- Are the responses to the action and dialogue believable?
- Does the actor concentrate and stay in role?

Vocal Skills

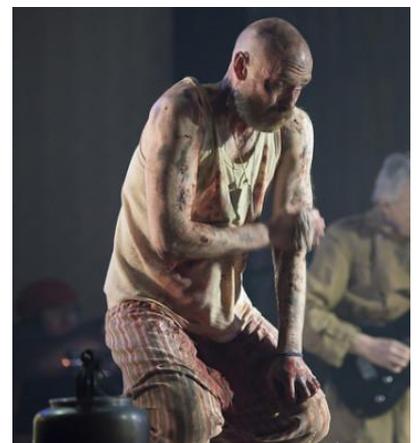
- Is the language used by the character appropriate?
- Does the language help make the role credible?
- Can the vocals be heard?
- Are the vocals clear?
- Does the speaker show a clear understanding of what is being said?
- Is there rhythm, fluency and variation in the way the actors speak?

Movement Skills

- Is the movement appropriate for the role?
- Is the blocking in for sightlines correct?
- Is there any symbolic use of space, movement and gesture?
- Is space used to create interesting visual images?
- Do the gestures and movements make the roles better?
- Is space and movement used with purpose and to help communicate the role to the audience?

Impact on Audience

- Does the piece flow easily?
- Is the piece disjointed in any places?
- Is there any unnecessary stage traffic?
- Does the piece have purpose?
- Does the piece communicate to an audience?



You should now spend some time making notes about how you wish to perform your acting pieces. You should begin by having a read through of your performance pieces. Your teacher will then go on to block the extracts. You should make careful notes on entrances, exits, positioning and movement on the stage. When that has been completed, your group should begin to make performance notes.

Think carefully about:

- How will each line be delivered?
- What posture or stance will each character use?
- How will you move around the stage which will add to meaning?
- What elements of characterisation do you want to convey to an audience?
- What type of relationship(s) do you want to convey to an audience?
- How do you want your character to be perceived by the audience?
- What mood or atmosphere do you wish to create?

What happens on the day?

On the following pages you will see a list of comments that will appear on the examiners checklist. The examiner is required to complete one of these checklists for each of your acting pieces. Each acting role is awarded out of 25 marks so there is a possible 50 marks available for this section of the examination. Each role is divided into five sections:

- ➔ Understanding
- ➔ Portrayal
- ➔ Voice
- ➔ Movement
- ➔ Impact (on Audience)



The examiner must tick one comment from each of the five sections. The marks are then combined to give your final acting mark. In addition to this, the examiner reads and marks your Preparation For Performance essay which is worth a possible 10 marks.



9. Higher Drama Lexicon

Below is the Higher Drama Lexicon from the SQA website. It includes all essential Higher Drama vocabulary which you may be asked to demonstrate your understanding of in the written exam and written unit assessments.

General terms

Acting style

Actor-audience relationship

Atmosphere

Blocking

Central character/complex character/important character/

Minor character/main character/pivotal character

Characterisation

Character behaviour/character motivation/character development/character interaction/relationships between characters

Climax

Context/dramatic context/social context/political

Context/cultural context

Design concepts

Dialogue
Drama media (projections, video footage, sound-scapes)
Drama process
Dramatic features
Dramatic tension/points of tension/moments of tension
Dramatic irony
Duologues
Episodic structure
Focus
Given circumstances
Ground plans
Key scene
Key moment
Language
Message
Mood
Original production/original staging/stage configurations
Performance analysis
Performance concepts
Pre-show
Plot
Plot twists
Protagonist and antagonist
Purpose
Proxemics
Rehearsal activities
Set
Setting
Site specific theatre
Special effects
Textual evidence
Traditional theatre
Special effects
Stage imagery
Status



Stimulus
 Subtext
 Symbols and imagery
 Target audience
 Tension
 Textual analysis
 Theatrical background
 Themes and issues
 Time period/passage of time/shifts in time
 Positioning
 Use of levels
 Venue

Conventions	Movement	Voice
Aside Dialogue Flash-back Flash-forward Freeze frame Frozen picture Mime Monologue Movement Narration Slow motion Soliloquy Split stage Tableau Voice over 	Balance Body language Eye contact Facial expression Gesture Mannerisms Mime Naturalistic Posture Positioning Proxemics Rhythm Speed Stance Stylised Timing Use of levels Use of space	Accent Articulation Clarity Emphasis Fluency Intonation Pace Pause Projection Pitch Register Rhythm Tone Volume 

	Use of direction	
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Form	Genre	Structure
Dance drama Forum theatre Mime Monologue Movement Musical Pantomime A play, scripted or improvised Physical theatre	Black comedy Comedy Comedy of manners Commedia dell'arte Docudrama Epic theatre Farce Historical drama Melodrama Satire Tragedy Tragicomedy	Linear Non-linear 

Style	Characterisation and rehearsal techniques	Production areas
Naturalistic Non-naturalistic	Character cards Hot seating Improvisation Key moments Mantle of the expert Role play Role on the wall Role-reversal Still image/speaking through the image Use of prop Thought tracking Thought tunnel Voices in the head Visualisation exercises Writing in role	Acting Costume Directing Lighting Make up Props Set Sound 

The above list is simply a guide. It is designed to inform teaching and learning and to support learners as they move through the Coursework at Higher. It should be noted that it is neither prescriptive nor exhaustive but the terms used reflect what can be asked about during aspects of Unit assessment and Course assessment at this level.