

GCSE DRAMA
YEAR ELEVEN
“MACBETH”
REVISION ACTIVITY BOOKLET



Plot Overview

Three witches anticipate a meeting with Macbeth. King Duncan hears a report of how his generals Macbeth and Banquo defeated the Norwegians and the Scottish rebels. The witches gather on a heath and meet the generals returning from the war. They predict Macbeth will become Thane of Cawdor, and one day king, and that Banquo will be the father of kings. Macbeth is then greatly impressed when he is greeted by Ross and Angus with the title of Cawdor.

Duncan greets Macbeth with great praise and proposes to visit him. Macbeth writes to his wife telling her of what has happened and the King's plans. Lady Macbeth, seeing the opportunity, plots with her husband how they might kill Duncan when he arrives. After initial enthusiasm, Macbeth changes his mind, but Lady Macbeth persuades him to carry out the deed. He murders Duncan, making it seem that the servants were to blame and describes the scene to his wife. She finds herself having to return the daggers he has used to Duncan's bedroom, and her hands become covered with blood too. They retire when they hear repeated knocking at the castle gates.

Macduff arrives, and has a brief exchange with the Porter. He discovers the dead king and rouses the castle. Malcolm and Donalbain, fearing blame for their father's death, flee abroad. Soon after, Ross and Macduff reflect on what has happened, and Macduff reports that Macbeth has been made king.

Macbeth is concerned about his position, very aware of the prophecies about Banquo. He arranges with a group of murderers to kill Banquo and his son Fleance; they succeed with Banquo, but Fleance escapes. At a dinner that night, where Banquo would have been the chief guest, Macbeth is terrified by the appearance of his ghost. Macbeth decides to return to the witches to find out his fate. They tell him that he should fear Macduff, that no man born of woman can hurt Macbeth, and that he will never be vanquished until Birnam Wood comes to Dunsinane. They then show a line of eight kings deriving from Banquo.

Macbeth learns that Macduff is fled to England, so he arranges the death of Macduff's wife and children. Macduff meets Malcolm, who tests Macduff's allegiance to Scotland by first painting a bleak picture of his own personality as a future king, then revealing his true character. They agree to fight together, with English support. During the meeting, Ross brings news of the murder of Macduff's family. In Scotland, a doctor and gentlewoman observe Lady Macbeth sleepwalking, imagining she cannot clean her hands of Duncan's blood.

The Scottish nobles gather, and Malcolm orders his men to camouflage themselves with tree branches as they attack, thus giving the appearance of Birnam Wood approaching Dunsinane. Macbeth learns his wife has died. Fearing no man born of woman, Macbeth fights on, killing Young Seyward, but on meeting Macduff he learns of Macduff's caesarean birth. Macbeth refuses to yield, is killed by Macduff, and Malcolm is proclaimed king.

TASK:

Take a highlighter pen to the plot summary. Highlight the different scenes and annotate with Act and Scene number.

CHARACTER MOTIVATION

For each character, identify what their motivation is, i.e. what makes them behave the way that they do. Illustrate this with a carefully chosen quotation from the text, explaining how this line shows the motivation of the character. Be aware, that for some characters, motivation changes over the course of the play. Continue on the back of this page if you need to.

| CHARACTER | MOTIVATION | KEY QUOTATION | EXPLANATION |
|-------------------|------------|---------------|-------------|
| MACBETH | | | |
| LADY MACBETH | | | |
| THE THREE WITCHES | | | |
| BANQUO | | | |
| KING DUNCAN | | | |
| MACDUFF | | | |
| MALCOLM | | | |
| LENNOX | | | |
| ANGUS | | | |
| ROSS | | | |
| HECATE | | | |
| THE DOCTOR | | | |
| THE GENTLEWOMAN | | | |
| LADY MACDUFF | | | |
| A CAPTAIN | | | |

CHARACTER REVISION ACTIVITIES

TASK:

COMPLETE THE GRIDS IN AS MUCH DETAIL AS POSSIBLE. REMEMBER TO USE THE GLOSSARY OF DRAMA TECHNIQUES:

1. VOICE

Pitch: the highness or lowness of a sound

Pace: the rate at which words are spoken

Pause: where sound stops, how often and for how long

Projection: enables audience to hear the voice

Volume: how loudly/softly the words are spoken

Articulation: clarity of voice

Tone: the feeling/emotion in the voice

Cueing: when to speak

Inflection: the rise and fall of a voice

Accent: particular to a country/society/culture

Breathing: to allow a controlled use of voice, to convey a feeling
e.g. a sigh or gasp

Repetition: repeating a sound or words for emphasis

Emphasis: choosing to stress particular words to convey meaning

2. BODY

Posture: stance, way of standing

Gesture: movement of any part of the body to express idea, feeling or mood

Body Awareness: ability to select appropriate use of body on stage, choosing to use the whole body, or isolated parts of the body expressively

Facial Expression: using the face to show mood, emotion, feeling and responses

Eye contact establishing eye contact with another actor or the audience

3. MOVEMENT

Timing: fast or slow tempo, when you move (kinaesthetic response), duration (length) of movement

Direction: where you are going: forwards, backwards, diagonal, sideways

Energy: how you move, the amount of force, the mood expressed through movement

Ensemble awareness: moving as part of a group, proximity to other actors, responding to other actors' movement

Pathways: the pattern of movement you create in the space, e.g.

curved, straight or zig-zag pathways

Repetition Repeating a movement or recycling a movement for Emphasis

4. SPACE

Levels: low, medium, high

Personal space: your own space, the bubble immediately around your body, how you use this space

General space: all other space in the room, how you use this space.

Architecture: the physical structures of the space you are in and within the space, how you use and interact with these structures

Proximity: the amount of distance or space between actors, the amount of space between actors and audience

CHARACTERISATION REVISION GRID

| CHARACTER | VOICE | BODY | MOVEMENT | SPACE |
|----------------------|--------------|-------------|-----------------|--------------|
| MACBETH | | | | |
| LADY MACBETH | | | | |
| THREE WITCHES | | | | |

| CHARACTER | VOICE | BODY | MOVEMENT | SPACE |
|------------------|--------------|-------------|-----------------|--------------|
| BANQUO | | | | |
| DUNCAN | | | | |
| MACDUFF | | | | |

| CHARACTER | VOICE | BODY | MOVEMENT | SPACE |
|------------------|--------------|-------------|-----------------|--------------|
| MALCOLM | | | | |
| LENNOX | | | | |
| ANGUS | | | | |

| CHARACTER | VOICE | BODY | MOVEMENT | SPACE |
|------------------|--------------|-------------|-----------------|--------------|
| ROSS | | | | |
| HECATE | | | | |
| DOCTOR | | | | |

| CHARACTER | VOICE | BODY | MOVEMENT | SPACE |
|------------------------|--------------|-------------|-----------------|--------------|
| THE GENTLEWOMAN | | | | |
| LADY MACDUFF | | | | |
| A CAPTAIN | | | | |

EXPLORING RELATIONSHIPS

For each of the following relationships create a mind-map where you identify key scenes/moments where these characters interact. Consider:

- What is the relationship?
- What are the key characteristics of the relationship e.g.: friend/enemy/servant/master etc.?
- How would you show this relationship on stage – physically and vocally?

1. MACBETH AND LADY MACBETH
2. MACBETH AND THE WITCHES
3. MACBETH AND THE KING
4. MACBETH AND BANQUO
5. MACBETH AND MACDUFF
6. MACBETH AND EACH OF THE NOBLEMEN: ROSS, LENNOX AND ANGUS
7. MACDUFF AND MALCOLM
8. MACDUFF AND ROSS
9. ROSS AND LADY MACDUFF
10. THE THREE WITCHES AND HECATE

- **What is the relationship?**
- **What are the key characteristics of the relationship e.g.: friend/enemy/servant/master etc.?**
- **How would you show this relationship on stage – physically and vocally?**

MACBETH AND LADY MACBETH

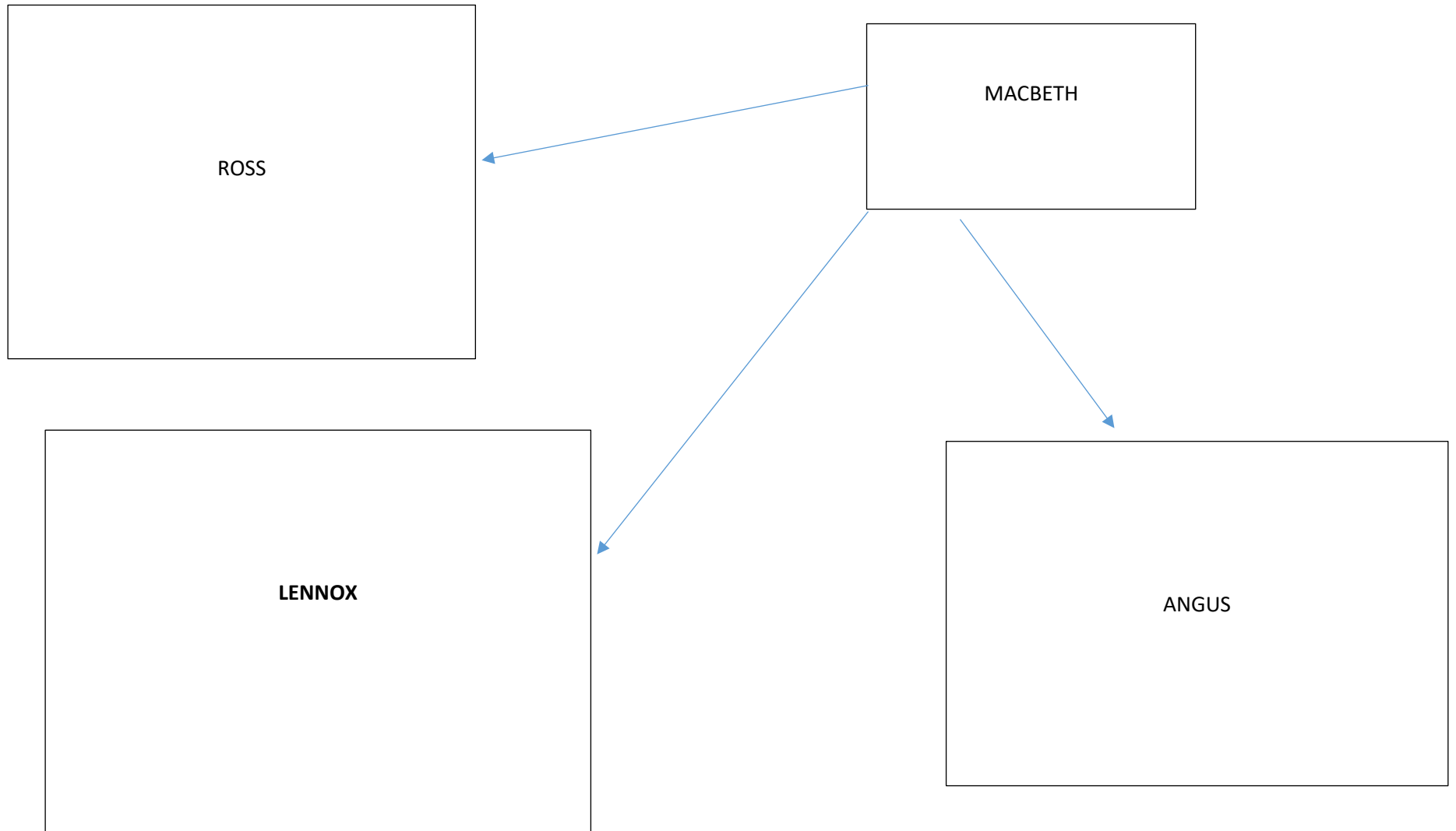
MACBETH AND THE WITCHES

- **What is the relationship?**
- **What are the key characteristics of the relationship e.g.: friend/enemy/servant/master etc.?**
- **How would you show this relationship on stage – physically and vocally?**

MACBETH AND THE KING

MACBETH AND BANQUO

- **What is the relationship?**
- **What are the key characteristics of the relationship e.g.: friend/enemy/servant/master etc.?**
- **How would you show this relationship on stage – physically and vocally?**



- **What is the relationship?**
- **What are the key characteristics of the relationship e.g.: friend/enemy/servant/master etc.?**
- **How would you show this relationship on stage – physically and vocally?**

MACBETH AND MACDUFF

MACDUFF AND MALCOLM

- **What is the relationship?**
- **What are the key characteristics of the relationship e.g.: friend/enemy/servant/master etc.?**
- **How would you show this relationship on stage – physically and vocally?**

MACDUFF AND ROSS

ROSS AND LADY MACDUFF

- **What is the relationship?**
- **What are the key characteristics of the relationship e.g.: friend/enemy/servant/master etc.?**
- **How would you show this relationship on stage – physically and vocally?**

THE THREE WITCHES AND HECATE

COSTUME, HAIR AND MAKE-UP

For each character suggest ideas for costume, hair and make-up. Ensure that you link these to role, character, class and status. You must consider colour, materials and style. Should there be costume changes as characters develop?

| CHARACTER | COSTUME | HAIR | MAKEUP |
|--------------|---------|------|--------|
| MACBETH | | | |
| LADY MACBETH | | | |
| THE WITCHES | | | |

| CHARACTER | COSTUME | HAIR | MAKE-UP |
|-----------|---------|------|---------|
| BANQUO | | | |
| DUNCAN | | | |
| MACDUFF | | | |

| CHARACTER | COSTUME | HAIR | MAKE-UP |
|-----------|---------|------|---------|
| MALCOLM | | | |
| LENNOX | | | |
| ANGUS | | | |

| CHARACTER | COSTUME | HAIR | MAKE-UP |
|-----------|---------|------|---------|
| ROSS | | | |
| HECATE | | | |
| DOCTOR | | | |

| CHARACTER | COSTUME | HAIR | MAKE-UP |
|-----------------|---------|------|---------|
| THE GENTLEWOMAN | | | |
| LADY MACDUFF | | | |
| A CAPTAIN | | | |

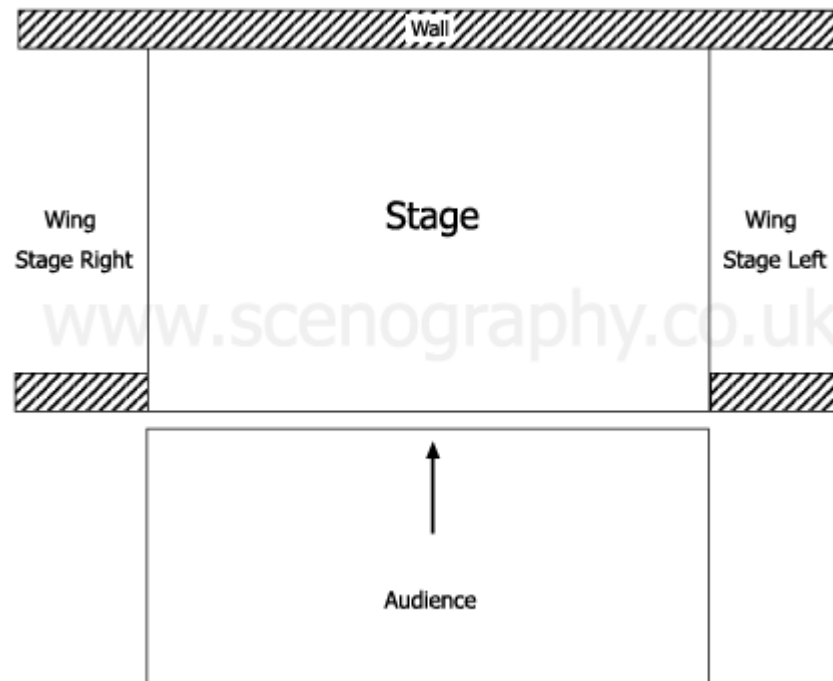
STAGING

Label each staging type with advantages and disadvantages.

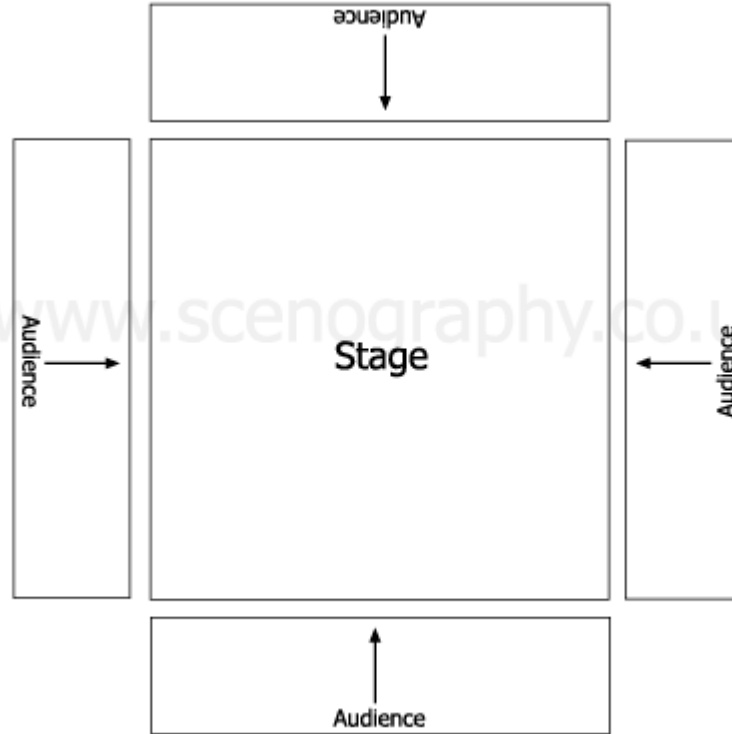
Consider links to original staging – how are they similar/different

For each stage type, consider key scenes from the play – how would this particular stage type help with your staging of each scene?

PROSCENIUM ARCH / END STAGE (OPEN STAGE) – SAME AS PROSCENIUM BUT WITHOUT AN ARCH



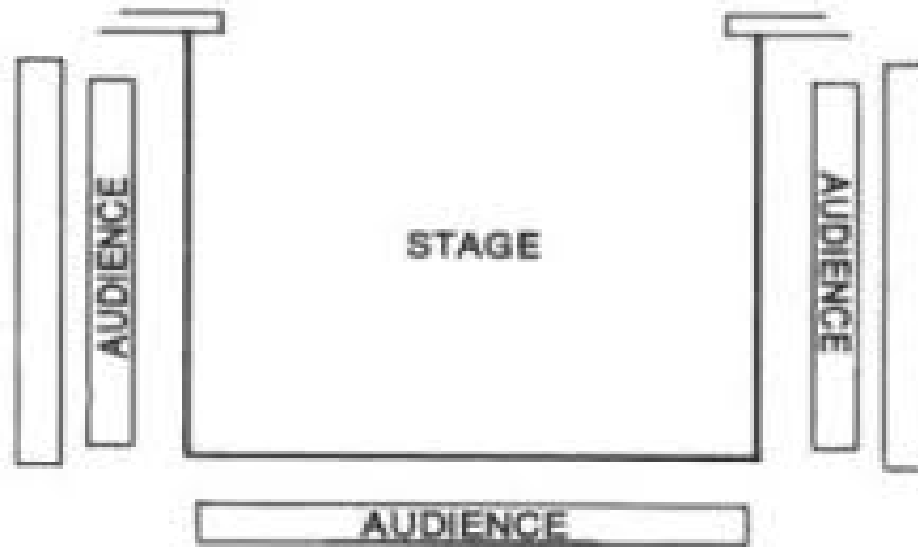
THEATRE IN THE ROUND/ARENA STAGE



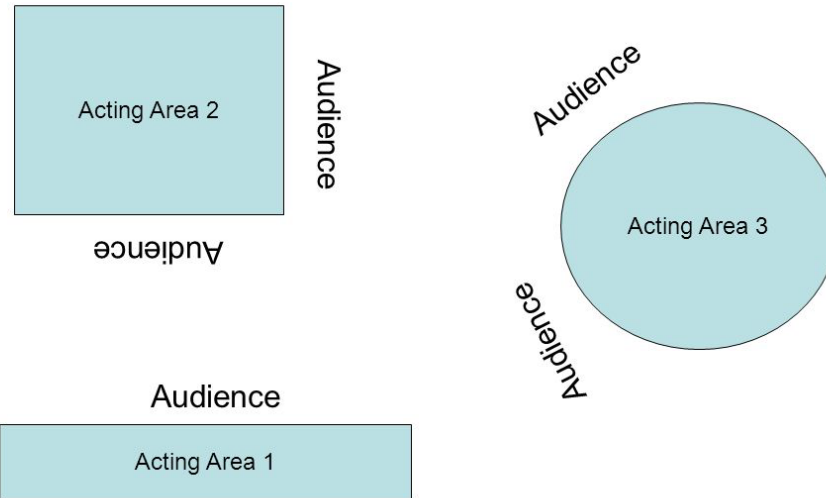
TRAVERSE STAGING



PROSCENIUM STAGE WITH THRUST



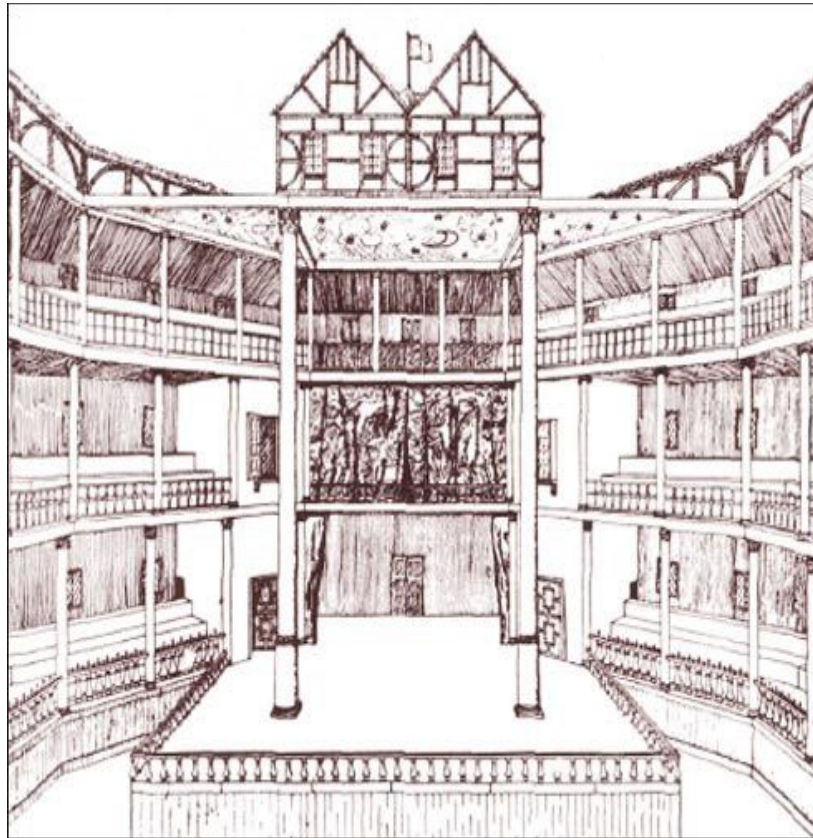
Promenade



SHAKESPEARE'S ORIGINAL STAGE TYPE (THRUST)

Label the parts of the stage/audience.

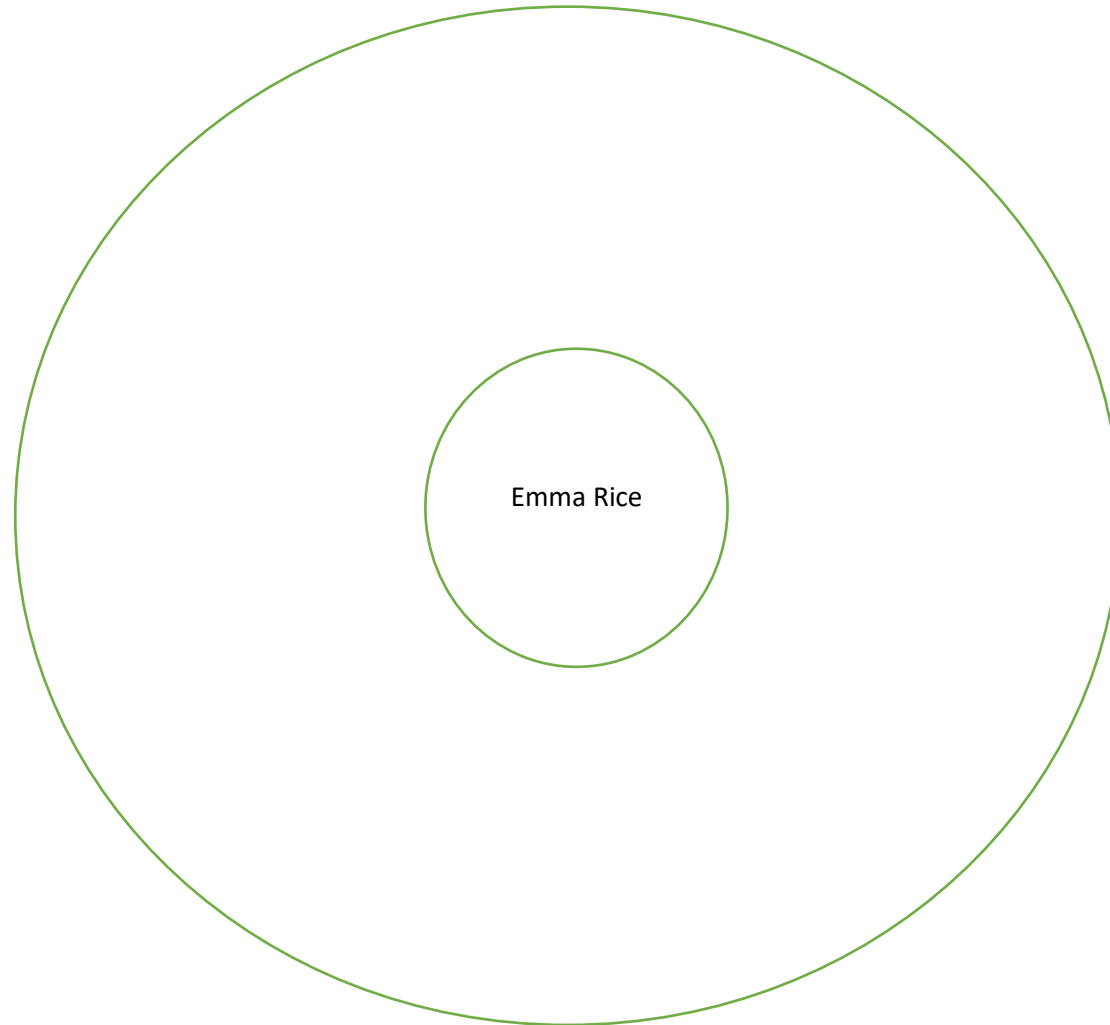
Consider links with other staging types.



PRODUCTION STYLES

For each of the following produce a circle map – what do you remember about the different styles of these practitioners/genres?

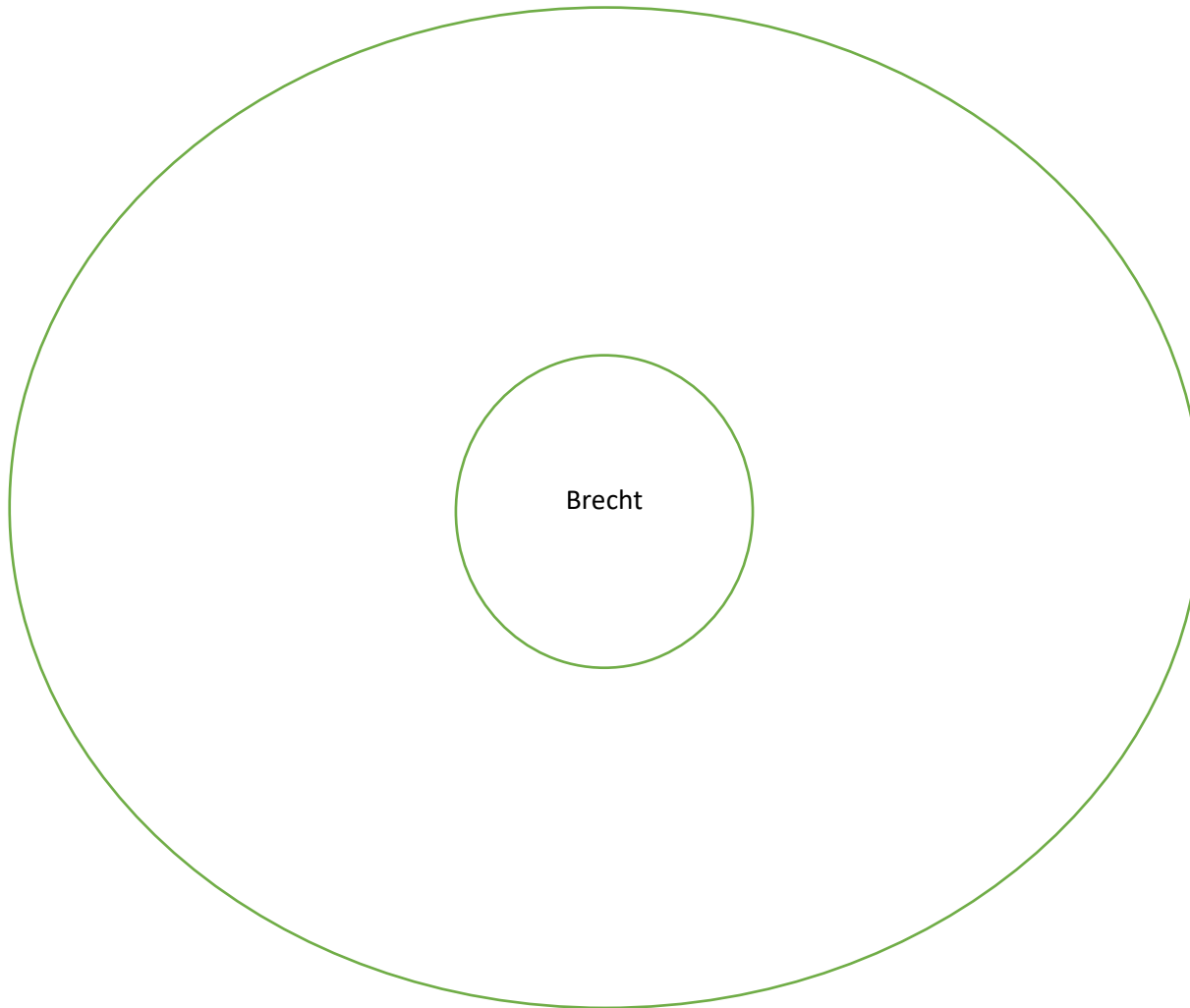
For each annotate with advantages/disadvantage and link with key scenes in “Macbeth”



PRODUCTION STYLES

For each of the following produce a circle map – what do you remember about the different styles of these practitioners/genres?

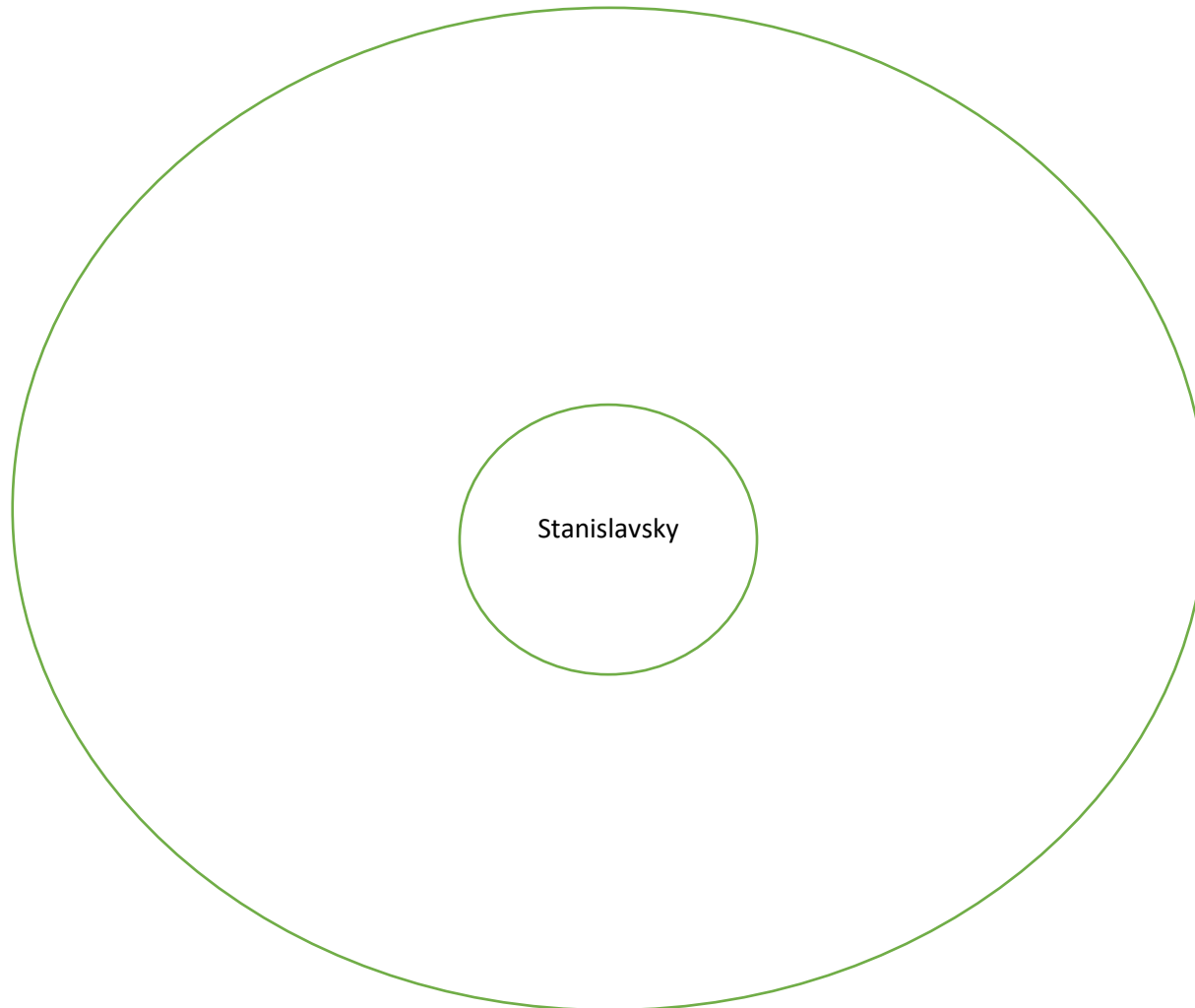
For each annotate with advantages/disadvantage and link with key scenes in “Macbeth”



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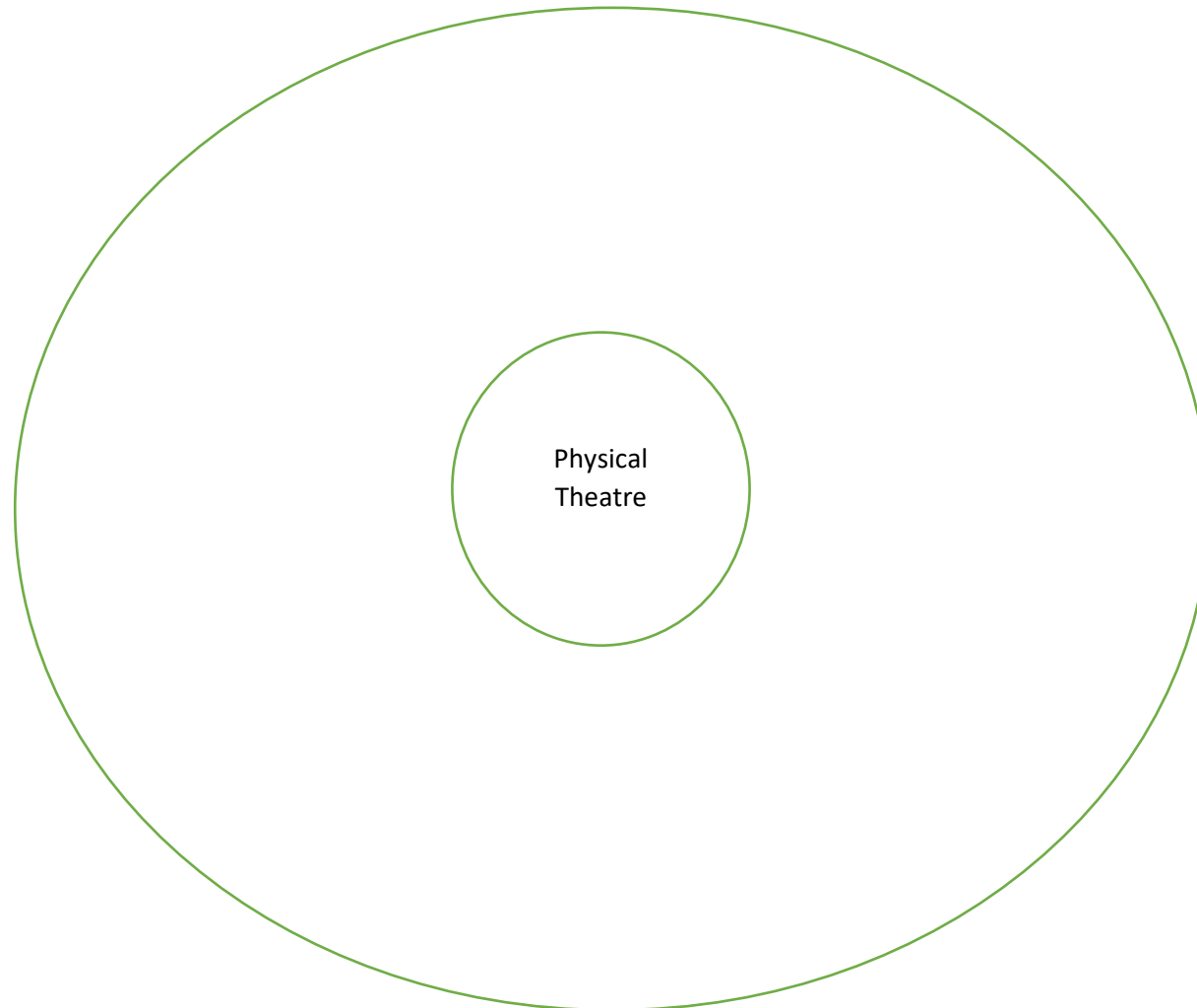
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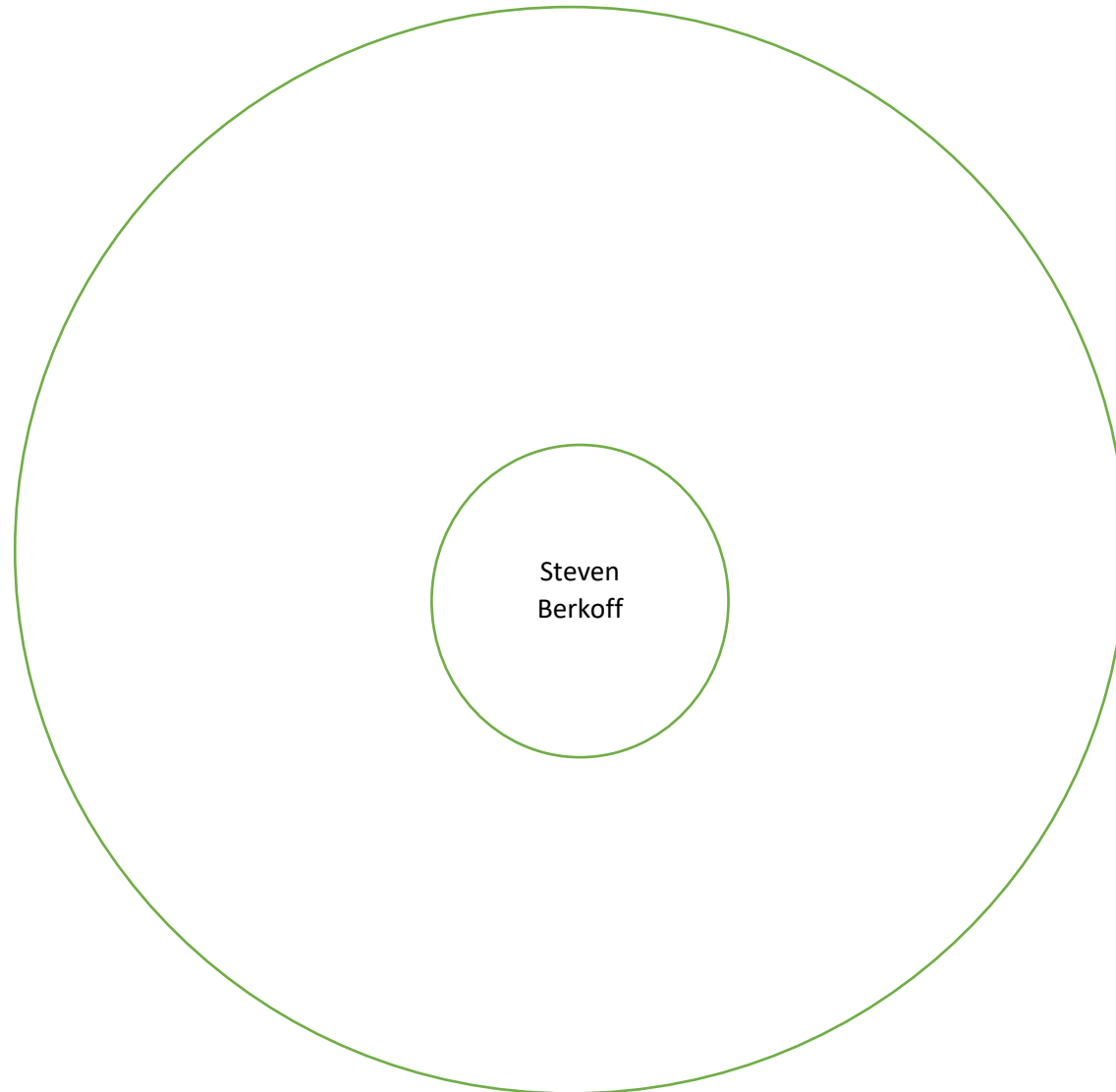
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PRODUCTION STYLES

For each of the following produce a circle map – what do you remember about the different styles of these practitioners/genres?

For each annotate with advantages/disadvantage and link with key scenes in “Macbeth”



APPENDICES

**USE THESE NOTES TO HELP YOU WITH THE TECHNICAL ACTIVITIES.
THESE WILL ALSO BE HELPFUL FOR YOUR PERFORMANCE FROM A TEXT UNIT.**

PART ONE SECTION 7:

WHAT WILL I LEARN?

- Key elements of lighting design, sound design, set design, costume design.

DESIGN

Some of you may choose to be assessed on design rather than acting. If this is your choice then you must pick one option from the following list:

- Lighting design
- Sound design
- Set design (including props)
- Costume design (including hair and make-up)

This next section will give you a brief introduction to each of these options.

LIGHTING DESIGN

Let's start with a basic question. What are the main functions of stage lighting?

There are four traditional functions to stage lighting.

VISIBILITY

This is considered the most basic and fundamental function of stage lighting. Stage lighting helps the audience to see the actors clearly. If the audience can't see what's happening on stage, they won't understand.

There is also what is referred to as '**selective visibility**'. This is where the lighting designer will show the audience only what the director wants them to see on stage. It will focus their attention only on certain areas, performers, props and/or set piece.

MOTIVATION

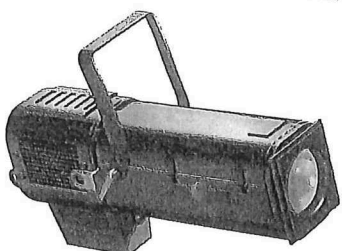
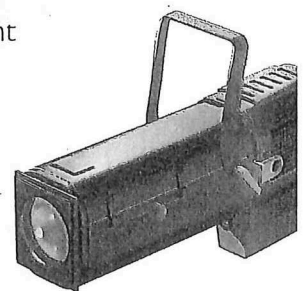
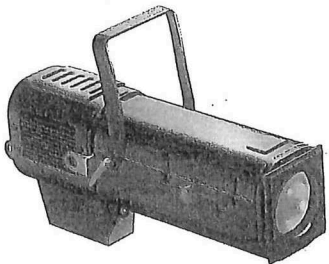
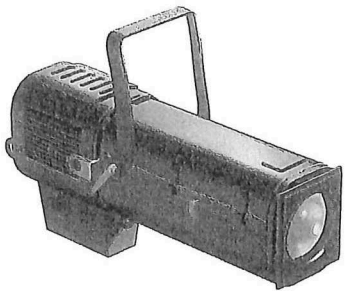
Part of the lighting designer's job is to make the light look natural for the setting. For example, in a realistic night interior scene the light should appear to come from chandeliers or lamps or **practicals** in the set.

MOOD

Lighting helps to create moods, atmosphere and emotions in a scene, which may include the actor, actress, and special objects as its assisting reinforcements. The mood helps to direct the audience's emotions so that they may feel what the director's motivation of the performer intended to portray or convey, through words, actions, etc.

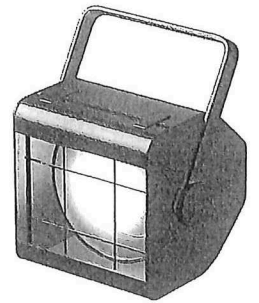
COMPOSITION

This function of lighting is also a part of **scenic design**. Composition is the lighting designer's attempt to enhance the possibilities the scenic designer has provided and that the director has provided in **blocking**. In other words, lighting the actors and set in proportion and where and when necessary.



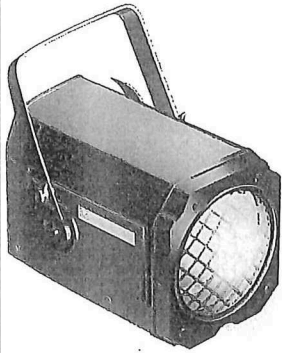
When we speak about the equipment that a lighting designer can use we must take into account what resources schools have at their disposal. There are some schools with very good modern lighting systems; other schools with more limited resources. You will need to work with the lighting system available to you.

These are some of the different lanterns you could *ideally* have at your disposal.



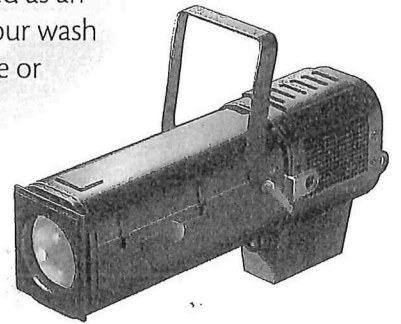
FLOOD

This is the simplest type of lantern, consisting of a lamp and a reflector in a box, with no lens. The light is suitable for lighting skies and cloths.



FRESNEL

The fresnel (pronounced "frenel") is a soft-edged spotlight with more control over beam angle than a flood. Fresnels are used as an efficient means of providing acting area or colour wash lighting. Useful when you want a soft edge or the ability to vary the **field width**.



PROFILE

A profile spot produces clearly defined spots of light and are the most focusable and versatile of the lanterns.



FOLLOWSPOT

The followspot is simply a narrow spotlight, used to 'follow' or to spotlight a performer on a stage. The followspot usually consists of a movable, high-power fixture mounted on a stand. It has an operator to move it into the agreed positions for the performer.

HEALTH AND SAFETY

Lanterns can be very dangerous. Always work on them with the power off. You should always use chains and clamps to attach lanterns to the lighting bars. The clamp should be tightened first, and then the safety chain attached.

Focusing

It's no good simply hanging a few lanterns and turning them on. Lighting design means more than that. If you did only that then the result would look patchy and would more than likely fail to light some of the desired areas. Each lantern you use needs to be focused to point to the correct place, with the desired beam angle and focus. This can often be the most time-consuming aspect of your work as a lighting designer. Often you will have to redo some of the lanterns several times until you are happy. When done correctly, the lighting will be seamless and will have a very significant impact.

What is a gobo?

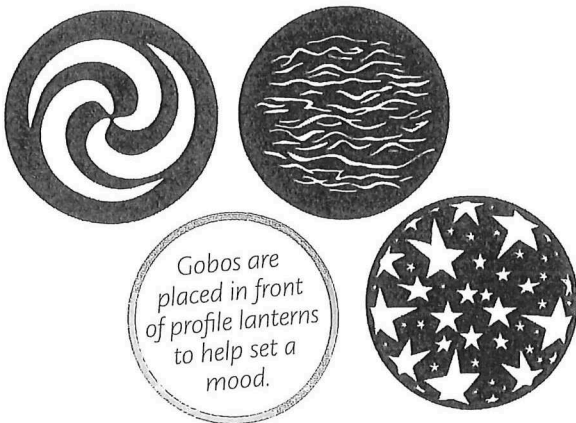
Gobos are metal cut-outs or metal etched onto glass, which are used in a gobo holder in front of a profile lantern to project a defined shape. They are useful when trying to set a mood or give an idea of time and place to an audience.

Gels

Gels are coloured thin sheets of heat-resistant plastic placed in a gel frame at the front of a light such as flood, profile or fresnel. Gels are available in hundreds of different colours.

Blackouts

Blackouts – when the stage goes completely dark – should be kept to a minimum. Changes of scene can be a part of the performance, with suitable lighting, and look far better than attempts to achieve complete darkness.



The effects you can achieve with gobos are limited only by your budget, technical restrictions, and the limits of your own creativity. Common uses include:

- abstract breakups
- clouds
- doors and windows
- foliage
- skyscrapers
- flags.

How should I start my lighting design?

Before thinking about using your lighting equipment for a performance, your starting point should be the script or devised work. This should be in your mind at all times – you're designing lighting for the scene and what you do should support the piece. You cannot design lighting for a scene without knowing the script!

You must also discuss the lighting design with other members of your group (in the theatre you would discuss it with the director). Find out what the actors plan to do during the scene. They might need areas of the stage lit separately, or sidelights for a particular scene or moment, or single spots to highlight particular characters.

The importance of colour

As a lighting designer you will recognise how important colour is when lighting a production. Different colours symbolise different ideas. Experiment with different colours.

In western cultures, red often means danger, for example, and white can symbolise innocence. If you're using coloured gels, remember that costume colours are affected by lighting. For example, under red lights red fabric looks washed out, while under blue lights it looks almost black! Be sure to work with the group's choice of colours.

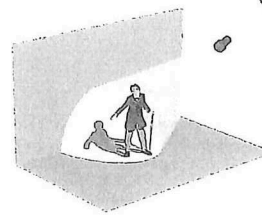
Research

Remember that research is also important for a lighting designer. Research the era the drama is set in. Make full use of libraries and the internet to find examples of what life was like at the time. Your drama may be set in a time when people used oil lamps, for example, and you should work out how to create this type of light.

Different lighting angles

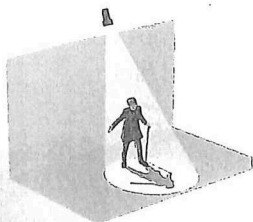
From the front

This is the most natural and obvious angle of the lantern – above and in front of the subject at about a 45° angle. Too close above the head and you will get a lot of shadows under noses and chins. Too far in front and you will cast a large shadow behind the performers or objects and possibly onto unwanted areas of the stage or set.



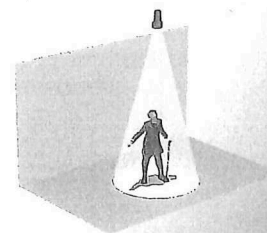
From the back

This is used to shape the performer and or object so it is individualized. Back lighting creates a depth which makes the performer become more three dimensional. This will also help pull the performer out from the scenery or backdrop.



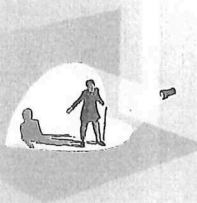
From above

Down light is used to sculpt the top of the head and shoulders and adds light to a form if it is extended or wide. Down light is mainly used to wash or flood an area on stage with light in a soft or harsh manner. It is very effective for eerie-looking lighting.



From the side

Side lighting is used to accent the side of the face, arms, mid-torso and legs (down to the shin). The movements of the performer are highlighted by a direct side light source. Full side lighting is composed of shin light (bottom), mid torso (middle) and neck to head lighting (top).



On the lighting designer's **cue sheet** the lighting effects are depicted by the letters LX.

Special effects

As a lighting designer you will be able to create a variety of believable special effects just through the simple and creative use of light. For example, strong yellow gels create the illusion of sunlight, while blue or pale silver colours can simulate moonlight.

Activity

Select a script excerpt, read through it as a class and then, in pairs, design the lighting for the scene. You should consider the parts of the stage to be lit, the colours to be used, the angles and the intended atmosphere and mood. You should also consider how your choices reflect the intention of the scene.

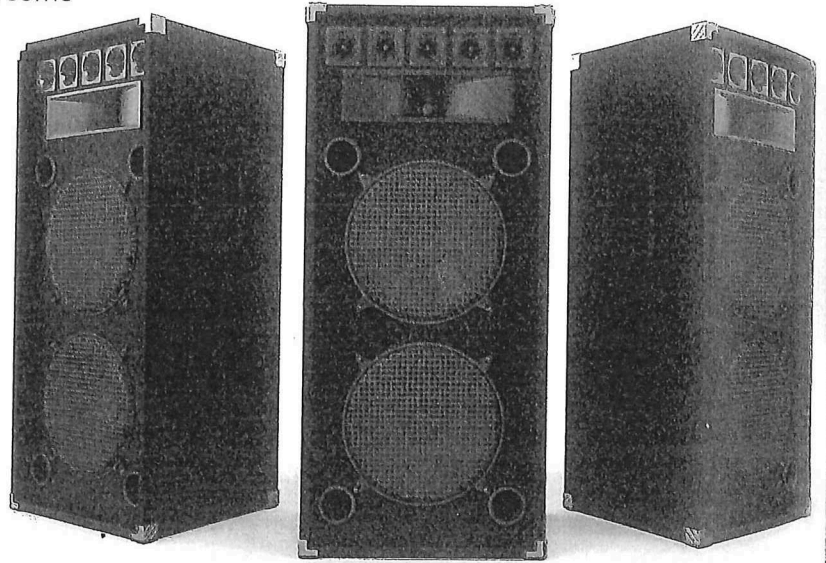
| Cue Number | Act/Scene | Cue Point | Page | Cue Description |
|------------|------------|------------------------------|------|---|
| LX 34 | Act 1 Sc 4 | The stage right door is shut | 18 | Hall Light is dimmed to 30% |
| LX 35 | Act 1 Sc 4 | Mike says "Shall we leave?" | 19 | Lights in lounge dim slowly and lights in bedroom go on |
| LX 36 | Act 1 Sc 4 | Music stops | 19 | All stage lights dim to black and audience lights come up |

An example of a lighting cue sheet

SOUND DESIGN

Your starting point as a sound designer should always be the devised piece of work or text: never forget this! It is a mistake to think you can sit back and do the sound effects at the very end of the rehearsal period without knowing anything about the play. The play should be in your mind at all times. After all, what you decide to do must always support the performance.

You will be working as a part of a group and your responsibility as a sound designer is to find out what the actors are doing in the devised piece of work or script. Discuss with members of your group what sound effects are needed for the piece. Sometimes you'll need to create them yourself, at other times you can find CDs, tapes or sound files to use. Also you might need some music or sound for the start or finish of the play.



Establish the time of day,
season and weather

Build transitions
between scenes

**The functions of
sound design**

Create mood and
atmosphere

Locate the action
in a specific place

Provide information
about the characters

Research

Remember that research is important for a sound designer. Research the era in which the drama is to be set, if the work is not fantasy. Use the library and the internet to obtain examples of what life was like at the time. For example, if the piece is set during the First World War, you'll need sound effects that link to that era. If you're working on a fantasy drama, you'll need sound that does not make people think of a particular historical era.

You should always give consideration to the following:

VOLUME



The level of sound you provide is important in creating the right effect. The sound has to be heard, but shouldn't drown out the actors' speech. It's **very important** to rehearse the drama fully with your sounds, to make sure you get them exactly right.

LENGTH OF SOUND



The length of the sound may be just seconds or as long as a minute or more in length. Make sure that you know the necessary running time for each sound that you will be using.

SCENE CHANGES



During scene changes you can use sound/music to good effect, helping the performance flow smoothly. Discuss ideas with the rest of your group.

Music

Choose previously recorded music for scene changes, underscoring, or featured moments during the production. If you are using recorded music you must consider copyright issues if it is a public performance.

Reverb

This is a sound effect which may be added during recording or to a voice during performance. Reverb sustains the sound longer than normal, as if the sound was *reverberating* (echoing) around a large building (e.g. a cathedral).

On a sound **cue sheet** the sound effects are depicted by the letters FX

Sound effects

Sound effects for your production can either be **recorded** or they can be **live**.

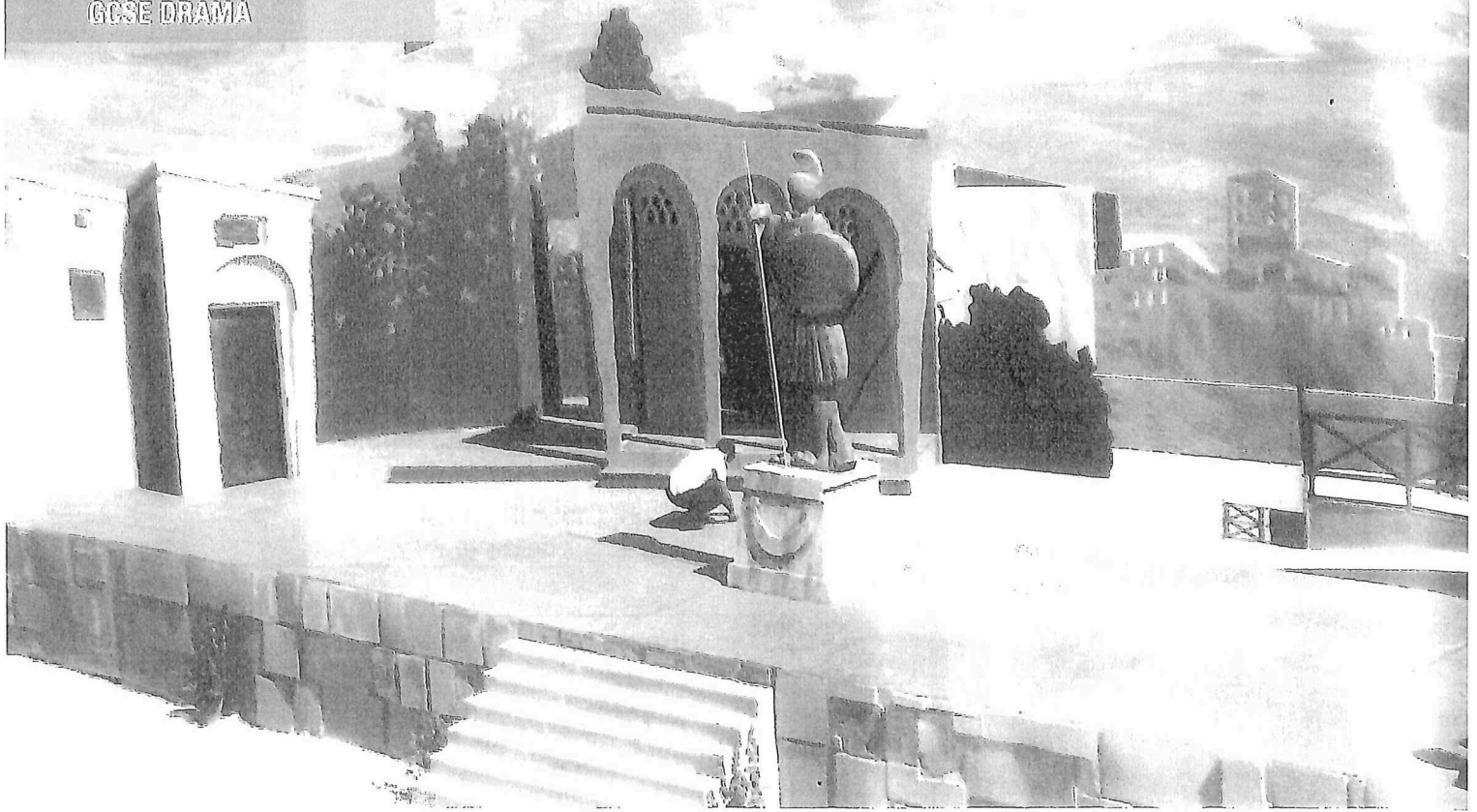
There are many websites for recorded sound effects, and they can also be sourced from CDs. There is an enormous range of sound effects, including background sounds like birds chirping, and specific effects such as the sound of a train arriving at a station.

There are some sound effects there are better done live, such as gunshots, door slams, offstage voices.

A good example of a live sound effect is thunder. For this you use a thunder sheet – a large suspended steel sheet with handles which produces a thunder-like rumble when shaken or beaten.

An example of a sound cue sheet

| Cue Number | Act/Scene | Cue Point | Page | Cue Description |
|------------|------------|---|------|--|
| FX 15 | Act I Sc 2 | At start of scene when lights go up. | 21 | Sound of birds and gentle wind which carries on for 5m35s. |
| FX 16 | Act I Sc2 | 5 seconds after lightning is seen on stage. | 22 | Crack of thunder. |
| FX 17 | Act I Sc 2 | Jayne says, "How are we going to get home now?" | 28 | Sound of car pulling up and stopping. |



SET DESIGN

Let's start with a simple and basic question: what is the purpose of set design?

The primary function of a set, of course, is to provide the audience with some context for the play, but it can also be a chance to create something stunning to draw in the audience.

Set design is an important part of almost any theatre production. Almost every play will use some sort of set, however minimal. Set can vary – from the abstract to the highly realistic, or anything in between.

If you choose to be a set designer for your GCSE exam your starting point should be the script or devised work. You must keep this in mind at all times. It will be impossible for you to create an effective set design if you don't know the play. You should discuss the script or devised scene with other members of your group (in a theatre you would discuss it with the director). You must find out what their ideas are. In the end what you do should support the piece.

Remember that set designers usually take responsibility for **props**, too.

How should I start researching a set design?

As a set designer there are some questions you should consider at the beginning.

What are the intentions of the play?

What type of stage is most suitable for the performance?

What restrictions does the stage have?

Where is the play set?

When is the play set?

What type of set – naturalistic or minimalistic?

What type of stage is most suitable for the performance?

This is an important question for a set designer. She or he has a choice of various types of stage, for example: proscenium (or end-on), thrust, in the round or traverse (see How do I perform my devised scene? page 109 for diagrams of these different types of stages).

Scenery choices

Depending on the type of stage that the director and the group of actors decide upon, the set designer has some other types of scenery at his or her disposal. You should be aware of your options here.

Flats

Flats, short for scenery flats, are flat pieces of theatrical scenery which are painted and positioned on stage so as to give the appearance of buildings or other background. Some flats are hard-covered while others are covered by muslin.

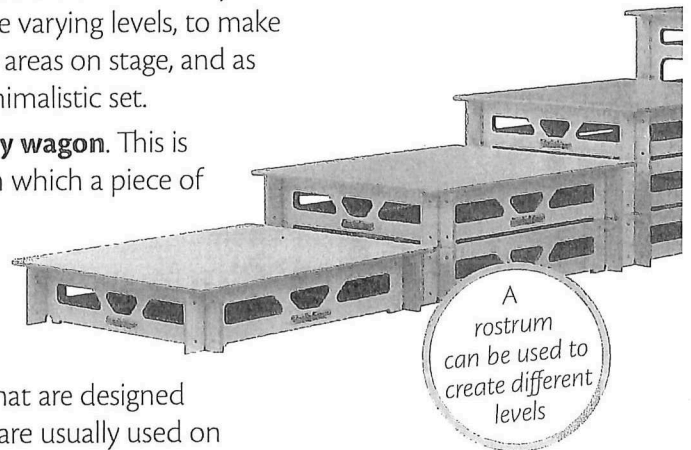
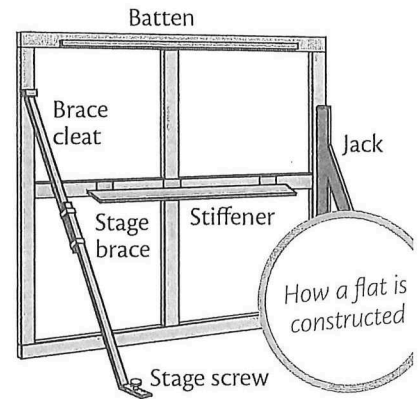
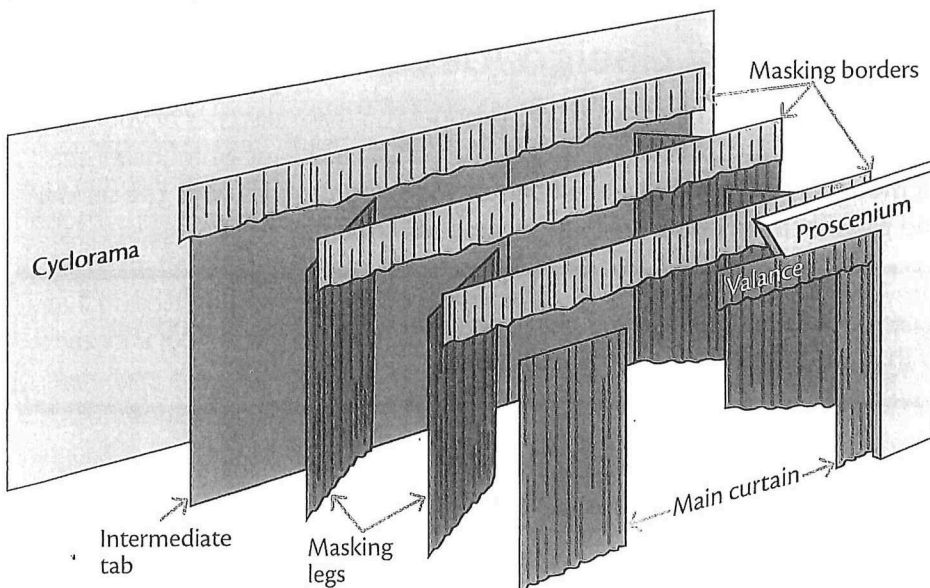
Platforms

In theatre, a **platform** (also referred to as a rostrum) is a stationary, flat walking surface for actors to perform on. Typically, they are built to be assembled in modules. They come in different shapes and materials. They are often used to provide varying levels, to make a show more visually interesting. They are also used to separate areas on stage, and as seating. Platforms are useful if the set designer decides on a minimalistic set.

If you have a big enough stage you could make use of a **scenery wagon**. This is a mobile platform with heavy-duty casters on the underside on which a piece of scenery is constructed. This can all then be moved onstage or offstage, and can be used to facilitate quick scenery changes during a live performance.

Drapes and curtains

Theatre drapes and **stage curtains** are large pieces of cloth that are designed to mask backstage areas of the stage from the audience. These are usually used on a proscenium (or end-on) type of stage. This diagram shows a typical layout on a proscenium stage.



Naturalistic or minimalist?

The set designer, after the discussion with the group of actors, will have to decide on either a naturalistic or realistic set, or a minimalistic set.

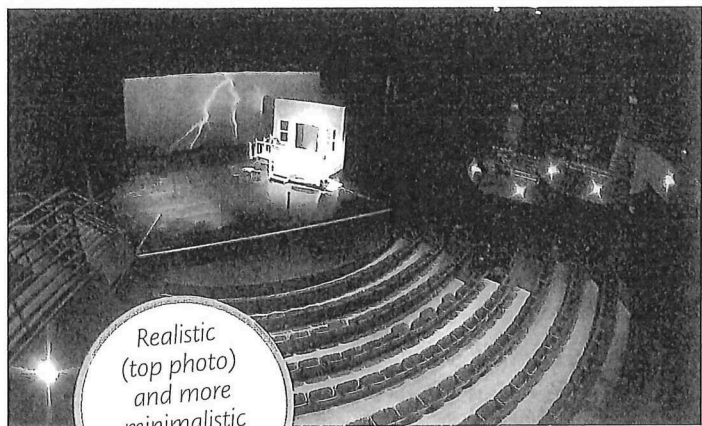


What is a naturalistic set?

A naturalistic set is a set, with props, that is representative of the situation, place or period. These sets look realistic or natural to the audience. The set designer supports the recreation on stage of life as it is lived.

What is a minimalistic set?

Set designers for the GCSE exam often decide on a minimalistic set. A minimalistic set is a set with few props and little scenery and that still has to support the intentions of the play and enhance the performance. The choice of the few props and the little scenery is therefore important.



Realistic
(top photo)
and more
minimalistic
(bottom photo)
sets

To design a minimalistic set, analyse what the play is about and aim to use symbolism in your set to convey that intention. For example, a set designer who is working on a play that dealt with the breakdown of family relationships decided that, instead of having a room full of chairs and tables etc, he would have a crack on the floor to separate two actors.

It's quite possible for you to decide to use just one chair for your set – but choose that one chair *carefully*. Do not just take one from a nearby classroom. What type of chair does it need to be? What does it symbolise? Does it convey a particular period in time?

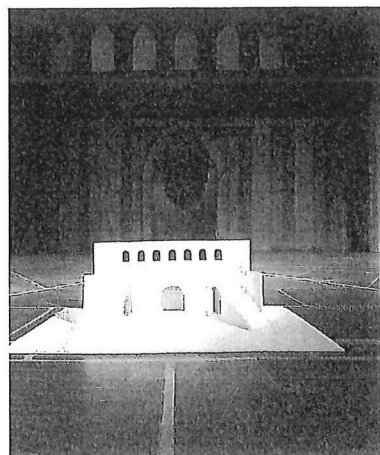
Colour

As a set designer you must think about colour and how different colours symbolise different ideas. For example, in western cultures, red symbolises danger while white symbolises innocence. In this respect you must discuss colour with the lighting designer – if there is one in your group; if not then discuss it with the other members of your group, and your teacher. If coloured gels are used in the lighting design, you must work out how this affects the colours of your set. You have to choose colour carefully!

Communicating design ideas

It will help communicate your ideas with your group if you make sketches of your ideas and discuss them with members of your group, then finally build a scale model of the set, called a **model box**. This will give members of your group an idea what the set will look like and gives them an opportunity to suggest adjustments.

Always consider your actors – never clutter your set with too many props or scenery that makes it difficult for them to move about the stage.



You must also think carefully about **scene changes**. If, for example, the devised scene or script requires changes of scene, then your set design must allow for this to happen easily and quickly. Keep it simple.

COSTUME DESIGN

If you choose to be a costume and make-up designer for your GCSE exam, your starting point should be the script or devised work. You must keep this in mind at all times. You should discuss the script or devised scene with other members of your group (in a theatre you would discuss it with the director). You must find out what their ideas are. In the end what you do regarding costume and make-up should support the piece.

As a costume designer, you are always concerned with character and characterisation. In the same way, a make-up designer focuses on the performers and the characters they portray. Through costume and make-up, the designer ensures the overall visual effect is complete and convincing.

Research

Research is very important if you are a costume and make-up designer. You must get a full understanding of the script or play. Is it a period play, a modern play or a fantasy? Use the internet to look for examples of costumes from different eras and ideas for make-up to correspond to different styles of play.

Time and place

It's important to have knowledge of costume history – if you are designing costume for a **period** performance of *Hamlet*, you wouldn't want a character in a T-shirt with modern sports branding.

Costumes tell us a great deal about the time and place in which a play is set. Dresses with an empire waist made of light fabrics in light colours place us in the early 18th century, such as in Jane Austin's novels. Blue jeans with bell bottoms and painted or embroidered with many bright colours tells us a character belongs in the late 1960s.

Colours

As a costume and make up designer, the colours you choose are important. Remember that colours symbolise different ideas. In western cultures the colour red can suggest anger or danger so you would probably not dress an innocent character in red. White, however, traditionally suggests purity and innocence in western cultures.

Be aware that costumes give us information about individual characters on stage. Consider your own wardrobe for example: you (probably) wouldn't wear the same clothes for a job interview, for washing the family car, or for a big night out. This applies to characters in a play, too. The audience will make associations with the type and colour of costume they wear. The same is true about make up. If, for example, an adult male character is in a depressive state, the costuming and make-up may reflect this in the form of unkempt, dirty and wrinkled clothing, stubble and untidy hair. This enhances the story telling and realism of the play.



Costume for Lady Bracknell in Oscar Wilde's *The Importance of Being Earnest*: Edwardian era.



Elizabethan costume for a male character.



Some functions of stage make-up

- To accentuate the actor's features as well as define the eyes and mouth
- To give a face the appearance an audience expects it to have according to the character portrayed
- To 'age' an actor (older or younger)
- To indicate a fantasy

A reminder

Costume design helps set the scene for the audience
Costume should support the actor in conveying the character and its personality to the audience.

When your scene is performed in small venues, you should use less make-up.

TIP

Points to remember

- A costume designer takes her or his cues from the characters and their surroundings as written in the play – as well as the chosen style of the production.
- The costume must provide comfort and flexibility to the actor.
- The costume and make-up designer should research different hairstyles and the use of wigs. Sometimes the style chosen asks for the use of masks.
- Make-up and hairstyles should also be coordinated to match the setting of the play.
- The costume designer must research the kind of fabrics he or she can use.