

Year 10

Unit 1

Our course begins with exploring how the drama course they have chosen will afford them more continuity of rehearsal and performance, greater feedback and more opportunity for reflection that will lead to a deeper and more substantive understanding of the role of the actor than was possible at key stage three.

With this opportunity in mind the focus of the first half term is on **Devising** - the exciting creation of theatre from a theme or start point, drawing on existing pieces of performance be it a play, poem or even art. Students will build upon the **improvisation** skill set they have developed up over the previous three years and work toward creating a piece of work lasting approximately ten minutes, in which pupils will demonstrate multiple skills in the role of actor, director and playwright often working collaboratively across all three roles to produce a highly stylized piece of theatre that is indeed high challenge and utterly engaging.

Within this unit, the instruction exposes students to in depth analysis of structure, in particular: multi-role, exaggerated physicality, immediate character recognition, direct address and the breaking of the Fourth Wall. This all introduces them to the multi-role work of John Godber as an influence for their own work. We teach the work of **Godber** because his fast paced multi character based style works very well in teaching students how to craft and pace longer pieces of improvisation. Each scene in their piece will involve a different theatrical techniques from flashbacks and slow motion to choreography and monologue as they are pushed to look for rhythm and contrast in what they devise. Students will be assessed on their initial response to and research of theme; their rehearsal and editing of the piece and finally reflecting on and analysing their performance. This structure helps them develop a depth of understanding of their topic that leads to greater expertise because they have to be the experts of what they devise to guide their audience through their work.

Having developed an understanding of the style of Godber students will move onto work on **scripted pieces**, notably his play *'Teachers'* - chosen for the relevance of its themes and the environment to school children questioning their current path and future as all teenagers do.

Students begin with improvisation to tease out the essence and natural energy of these scenes, then they read excerpts and practice the doing and communication of the role, culminating in work to tighten up the line-learning for a polished performance. Within this process students will be playing multiple roles - a recurring theme in Godber's work - in order to learn how to move quickly between characters without a change of costume or scene. They will be asked what is the level of exaggeration needed to make the change in character clear? What methods, other than use of gesture and body language, could you use to show the change between characters?

As a group, pupils will look at how we explore text in rehearsal, asking questions of themselves as actors such as: What is the character's gender? How old are they? What physical descriptions are given in the play? What is their social class? What is their status among their friends colleagues? Are they happy with their social class/ status? How do they feel about their environment (their workplace/ home life)? What can we tell about this character from the language that they use?

This questioning method teaches our students to break down the make up of a character how they are created in order to do the same with their own interpretation of the characters in 'Teachers' for a final performance.

Unit Two

Next students start the study of the play **Blood Brothers**. This is a set text and students will write about it in the final external written exam. Of course students will have a strong foundational knowledge of the play due to their work on it during Year 8. In Yr 8 students find the soap opera nature of the story exciting and become familiar with the plot. We find this accumulation of prior knowledge fantastically helpful in enthusing students to the text and empowering them in developing a deeper understanding of the text. At first we approach the text practically through workshop sessions which helps students develop knowledge and understanding of the characteristics and context of the whole play and explore ideas for how the play may be interpreted practically. This then leads into a written approach to the text as students are taught how to demonstrate a practical understanding in their answers.

In the exam students will be given an extract from Blood Brothers and will answer questions relating to that extract, referring to the whole play as appropriate to the demands of the question. To replicate and explore this idea students will be given extracts to prepare for performance in class before answering the questions on the piece. They will reflect on costume choices for characters, on specific line delivery, on the physicality and blocking of the scene and on the demonstration of a character throughout the play. Students are taught how to break down the explanation of acting and communication of role through the use of subject specific vocabulary. In this way we look to ensure students have a full practical understanding that can then be demonstrated in their written answers. This section of work will culminate in students sitting a Drama Written Exam as part of the Yr 10 suite of exams.

Unit Three

Now that students have enjoyed a full sweep of what the GCSE Drama course has to offer they will start on their first proper exam piece which will be there Unit 1 Devised piece. For this students will be given a stimulus piece of material: this year it was a true life account of a girl who accidentally killed her friend on Sports Day during a javelin event. Last year it was a simple title of 'The New Person'. The first part of the Unit will be spent on students exploring initial ideas around the theme through a series of workshops. These will be very much teacher led as students are set tasks that will make them use some of the skills learnt in the Godber unit of work as well as looking to explicitly use the techniques of Bertolt Brecht such as Epic Theatre, actioning scenes and the use of his alienation device. These are techniques that they will have touched upon throughout their three years at KS3.

Students will enter in to a 12 week rehearsal period as they work to create a 20 minute long piece of original theatre. This will be filmed at specific moments of rehearsal so that students can reflect on their pieces both as actors and directors. Pupils will demonstrate multiple skills in the role of actor, director and playwright often working collaboratively across all three roles to produce a highly stylized piece of theatre that is challenging and utterly engaging.

The performance of the piece normally takes place at the end of September in Yr 11. In support of the devised piece students will produce a written log of approximately 2,500 words in which they will explore their responses to the stimuli and consider the ideas, themes and settings they explored. They will also analyse the effectiveness of their rehearsals and reflect and evaluate their final performances. This performance and log book will make up 40% of their overall grade.