

Year 11 Drama GCSE

The first unit of the course in Yr 11 involves the performance of the devised group piece that students started at the end of Year 10. In the piece 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. We find that the Summer break revitalises students and gives them time to reflect on their pieces so that they approach them with a fresh impetus through September. Lessons are given over to rehearsals and students also find time after school to rehearse culminating in their exam at the end of September.

As well as creating an original piece of theatre students will keep a log of their progress and process. 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. The log will be around 2,500 words in length and along with their devised performance will make up 40% of their overall grade.

Once the devised piece is completed students will start to study and learn how to write about a live piece of theatre. We approach the unit at this time because we feel that students have developed an understanding and knowledge of how theatre is developed and performed through their work on the devised piece. Also through their study of texts in *Blood Brothers* and *Teachers* they understand the demands and opportunities of performing a formal play.

Students will learn to discuss a variety of aspects of one production, giving a personal analysis and evaluation of the theatrical elements and will learn to evaluate how successfully meaning was communicated to the audience. Student will reflect on published reviews as they gain an understanding of how we write about theatre. They will be encouraged to see the links between their own acting and that of professional actors as well as the link between their own reviews and those of professional journalists. To facilitate this students will have the opportunity to go to a live theatre production as well as watching streamed live productions in school.

The language and writing technique taught in Yr 10 on *Blood Brothers* will serve students well in this area as students are again writing ostensibly about acting. A strong Drama vocabulary will be necessary for this unit as students will be asked to break down the elements of acting in to voice, physicality and relationships on stage. Students will develop their knowledge and understanding of performance conventions and relationships on stage.

This will then feed in to a return to the study of *Blood Brothers* as the exam text. Students, already steeped in a knowledge and understanding of the play, will be able to bring their enhanced understanding of how direction works to their answers on the play. 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. 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. To replicate and explore this idea students will be given extracts to prepare for performance in class

before answering the questions on the piece. 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 11 Mock exams in December.

After Christmas students will concentrate solely on the Unit 2 Scripted Exam where they will be asked to perform two sections from a published text. In this exam students will revisit the approaches to scripted work they learnt in Yr 10 when working on Teachers as well as using their knowledge built on the study of live theatre. By now students should have developed a very clear sense of what makes for effective theatre - communicating only what the actor intends to communicate and controlling audience reaction. This should be shown in their pieces. Students will start the term with teacher led workshop sessions on approach to character using some of the Stanislavski techniques learnt earlier in the course such as Magic If, Hot Seating, and the use of Objective and Super Objective.

Once students start rehearsing their plays in groups they will self-direct the pieces. Once again the students will approach this work in groups though there is the opportunity for solo work through the performance of monologues. Last year the texts used were DNA by Dennis Kelly and Girls Like That by Denise Egan. These are both modern texts that are very evocative for teenagers living now whilst also both calling upon the classic use of Greek Chorus.

Students will be given the opportunity to rehearse their scripted pieces outside of lessons and staff will be available to facilitate rehearsals and rehearsal space.

We deliver this exam after their devised piece as we feel students will have learnt how to craft and direct performance work and can now use these skills on the work of a published playwright.

The exam performance will be in front of a visiting examiner in March.

From March onward every lesson is dedicated to preparation and revision for the written exam. Blood Brothers is again revisited as is the live production and students are given practice questions to work on. This is a very busy time as we feel that the constant practise of essay questions trains students for the pressure of the final exam. We would expect students to be doing timed answers in 2 out of 3 lessons each week as they become attuned to the demands of the written paper. This practicing could just as easily be called training as it is the preparation for the physical demands of the exam that are explored just as the intellectual testing is. Students will write intensively for 1hr 45 mins in the exam and it is important that they are familiar in doing this.

The exam will use a variety of question styles and ask students to combine what they've learned about how drama is performed with their practical experience and imagination. By this stage in the course and through the cycle of revisiting previous study we feel students will be well prepared for this paper.