

# drama.

A Level Preparation Pack



## Overview

The Performing Arts department at the College consists of the following courses: Drama and Theatre Studies, Dance and Digital Music Production. Each course is taught by a subject specialist. Every year the department collaborate on a joint performance project as well as each having smaller subject specific projects throughout the year. I'm sure you will all be missing interaction and performing and while the end of Year 11 wasn't as planned, all your preparation, hard work and drive wasn't for nothing. These are the skills that you will

utilise in every subject at College. Therefore, we have put together a range of tasks and resources that will enable you to develop these skills and enjoy what Performing Arts has to offer you at home.



**Sian Murray**  
Head of Performing Arts

## Watch

- At College we have a subscription to DigitalTheatre+. Unfortunately, we are unable to share the log-in details with anyone who is not officially part of the College community. However, if your previous school has a subscription or your drama teacher can arrange a free, temporary pass for a month or so during this period, you can watch various productions directed by Steven Berkoff (I would recommend *The Trial*), Complicite's *A Disappearing Number*, and Frantic Assembly's *Things I know to Be True*.
- Note that the BBCiPlayer are airing Emma Rice's production of *Wise Children*. Rice was artistic director of Kneehigh for some time and you can see Kneehigh's playful approach to theatre throughout the production!
- Look out for any National Theatre Screenings on National Theatre YouTube. There is a different show every Thursday evening.

## Keeping it Practical

- <https://www.vamostheatre.co.uk/films-and-trailers#filter=.mask-techniques> Developing physical skills: Vamos Theatre Company specialises in mask work. With the face covered and the voice silenced, the emphasis is on the body. The physical performance of the actor is important no matter what play you are doing and what style you are working in so why not work through Vamos' tutorials on mask work and refine your physical expression. Create a mask of your own (a paper plate would do!) and practice to the camera on your phone or in front of the mirror.
- <https://www.shakespeare-monologues.org/home> Give Shakespeare a go. This site has a number of monologues by Shakespeare you could try.

### TED Talks

- [https://www.ted.com/talks/oskar\\_eustis\\_why\\_theater\\_is\\_essential\\_to\\_democracy](https://www.ted.com/talks/oskar_eustis_why_theater_is_essential_to_democracy)
- [https://www.ted.com/talks/handspring\\_puppet\\_co\\_the\\_genius\\_puppetry\\_behind\\_war\\_horse/up-next](https://www.ted.com/talks/handspring_puppet_co_the_genius_puppetry_behind_war_horse/up-next)
- [https://www.ted.com/talks/patsy\\_rodenburg\\_why\\_i\\_do\\_theater/discussion](https://www.ted.com/talks/patsy_rodenburg_why_i_do_theater/discussion)

## Suggested Reading

### Swot up on your theatre history and theatre movements

<https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PL8dPuudLjXtONXALkeh5uisZqrAcPKCee>

YouTube channel CrashCourse offers bite-size videos on theatre history and important movements in theatre, for example expressionism, epic theatre and absurdism (to name just three). Watch these informative videos and make notes on them. Search for online productions of any plays mentioned. Then, go down the rabbit hole of YouTube to explore these movements, plays and playwrights in more depth. Some of the work you see may be bad. Very bad. But you need to see bad theatre as well as good theatre!

### Reading

College specific reading – AQA revision guide – AQA Drama & Theatre Studies by Su Fielder and Pat Friday.

College specific reading – our set texts: Antigone by Sophocles and Our Country's Good by Timberlake Wertenbaker.

If you are planning to join us in September, why not source these plays and read them?

Then, research each play's historical context, genre, style and themes. Search for reviews of recent productions to find out more about the plays' themes and to find out how the plays have been staged.

### Possible Plays to Read

Jerusalem – Jez Butterworth

Look Back in Anger – John Osborne

A View From the Bridge – Arthur Miller

Punk Rock – Simon Stephens

### Theatre Practitioners

Learn about different theatre practitioners

What is theatre? Different practitioners have different ideas. Spend some time watching and researching their work. Discover the work and practices of some new theatre practitioners you may not have studied at GCSE:

- Kneehigh and Emma Rice
- Theatre de Complicite <https://www.bl.uk/20th-century-literature/articles/theatre-de-complicite-and-storytelling>
- Headlong Theatre
- Steven Berkoff
- Frantic Assembly
- Max Stafford-Clark
- Marianne Elliott
- Punchdrunk <https://www.bl.uk/20th-century-literature/articles/a-punchdrunk-approach-to-making-theatre>
- Katie Mitchell <https://www.bl.uk/20th-century-literature/articles/an-introduction-to-katie-mitchells-theatre>

Each company/practitioner has a website you can explore. What makes each company/practitioner different and special? What ideas do they have about theatre and theatrical experiences? What key features define their work?

## Course Specifications

[A Level - Download AQA Drama and Theatre Specification](#)