

GCSE DRAMA Theatre role and terminology task sheets.

The written examination section A, involves completing 4 multiple choice questions in which you must demonstrate your knowledge of how theatre works, parts of a theatre and who are the various theatre makers and what they do. This is the content covered at the beginning of year 10.

**Section A: Roles and responsibilities.**

**Task 1: Match up the roles from the left column with their responsibilities below and on the next page. Write the letter that matches in the box. The first is done for you. The answers are at the end of these task sheets.**

Role	Responsibility: What do they do?
<b>1.Playwright</b>	n
<b>2.Performer</b>	
<b>3.Understudy</b>	
<b>4.Set Designer</b>	
<b>5.Lighting Designer</b>	
<b>6.Sound Designer</b>	
<b>7.Costume Designer</b>	
<b>8.Stage Manager</b>	
<b>9.Puppet Designer</b>	
<b>10. Technical Director</b>	
<b>11. Theatre Manager</b>	
<b>12. Technician</b>	
<b>13.Director</b>	
<b>14. Producer</b>	

- a. Appear in a production after being cast in a part and rehearsed with the director. They create a performance, which could be more than one character in a show. They could be a dancer and/or a singer or in some genres do all three elements.
  
- b. Designs the backdrops, levels and other furniture for a production. They will also consider the set dressing and provide sketches and detailed construction plans for the carpenters and decorators.
  
- c. Design the clothing for the actors making sure that costumes are appropriate for the style and period for the piece and working with the makers and wardrobe to get accessories and ensure the clothes fit.
  
- d. Design the lighting elements and effects during a performance, in combination with the set and to create moods or indicate a location or time of day. They will produce a lighting plot for the cues needed during a performance and supervise the rigging and setting of the lights for the performance.
  
- e. Design the puppets for a production, taking into account the style of the puppets and how they will be operated.

- f. Design the sound elements and effects during a performance, in combination with possible live musicians and to create moods through underscoring or amplifying certain sounds. They will produce a sound plot for the cues needed during a performance and supervise the rigging and setting of the sound equipment for the performance.
- g. Learn a part including lines and movement so they are able to take over a role if there is a planned or unexpected absence.
- h. Manages the designers and oversees the creative elements usually with the director and producer.
- i. Organise the rehearsal spaces and rehearsal equipment, such as props or other technical needs in liaison with the director. They make a note in the 'book' a copy of the play with all cues. During performance they run the backstage elements and supervise the crew in moving set, getting actors on stage at the right time and may 'run the book,' which means giving orders of the cues for the lighting and sound technicians.
- j. They run and manage the building, including managing the Front of House (F.O.H) staff, the box office staff and any caretakers, cleaners, porters e.t.c.
- k. This is an important role as they oversee the creative aspects of the production, but mainly work with the performers in rehearsal, to perfect blocking, stage positioning and the character. They connect with the designers to create an appropriate visual concept. They give notes to the actors to help improve their performance during longer runs and dress rehearsals.
- l. This is usually the boss of the production as they hire staff, pay for everything and consider the promotion of the show, as well as having overall control.
- m. This role involves rigging, operating and de-rigging the technical equipment such as lighting and sound boards from the instructions from the designers.
- n. Write the script of the play.

**Task 2: If there are any terms in the explanations, use the internet to look them up. For example: rigging or cues.**

**Section B: Staging configurations: (the type of stage and audience arrangement) Read and review the following information about different staging configurations.**

Task 3: Before you start, make sure you check (via the internet) what the following terms mean:

- Apron stage
- Audience interaction
- Auditorium
- Backdrop
- Blocking
- Box set
- Dynamic
- Epic theatre
- Fly space

**a. Theatre in the round**

This is where the audience are sat on **four** or more sides **'around'** the stage, which could be circular in shape, but is usually rectangular.



**Advantages**

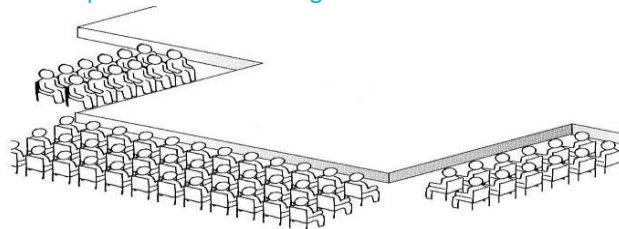
- Directors and actors find this very dynamic as nothing can be static. The audience is also close to the stage and the performers so is good for certain theatre genres such as Epic Theatre.
- The actors exit and enter through the audience which can make the audience more part of the action.
- There is no artificial 'fourth wall,' so it lends itself to Epic Theatre really well.

**Disadvantages**

- Designers cannot use backdrops or flats that would obscure the view of the audience
- Stage furniture has to be chosen carefully so that sightlines are not blocked.
- Actors have to be carefully blocked so that no section of the audience misses an important piece of the action or facial expressions for too long.

**b. Thrust Stage**

A thrust stage comes out, 'thrusts' into the auditorium, with the audience on **three** sides. This is one of the oldest types of theatre, like Shakespeare 'The Globe.'



**Advantages**

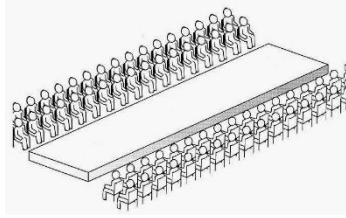
- It combines the best elements of proscenium and in the round staging
- As there is no audience on one side, backdrops, flats and large scenery can be used.
- The audience may feel closer to the stage as there are three first rows on each side.

**Disadvantages**

- Sightlines for those on the extreme sides may be limited or be obstructed and uncomfortable for the neck.
- The audience on the left and right of the auditorium have others in their view
- Box sets (where three sides of a room are constructed) cannot be used as this would block views for much of the audience.

### c. Traverse Stage

On a traverse stage the acting area is a long, central stage with the audience seated on the **two** either side. It looks like a catwalk.

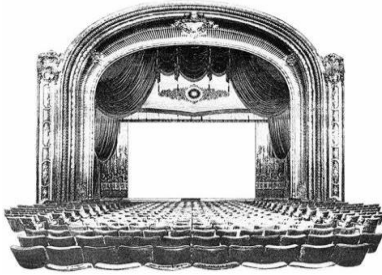


#### Advantages

- The audience feels very close to the stage.
- The audience can see the reactions of the audience facing them, which works well for audience interaction.
- Sometimes the ends of the stage can be used to create extra acting areas.

#### Disadvantages

- Big pieces of scenery, backdrops and set can block sightlines.
- The acting area is long and thin, which can restrict blocking.
- Actors must be aware of making themselves visible to both sides.
- Lighting for traverse must be arranged carefully to avoid blinding the audience, or any of the audience being lighted.



### d. Proscenium Arch

This is the most common type of classic theatres, especially larger ones and opera houses. The proscenium arch means the frame around the stage which emphasises all the audience can see the same 'picture' from the **one** side. The area in front of the arch, before the first row of seats is called the apron.

#### Advantages

- \*Set is easy to design as the audience look at the stage from roughly the same angle
- \* Backdrops and large scenery can be used without blocking sightlines
- \* There may be **fly space** and **wing space** for storing scenery
- \* The frame around the space adds to the fourth wall and distancing effect so the play is alike a self-contained world.

#### Disadvantages

- \*The audience may feel distant from the stage and from the ideas
- \* The auditorium may feel formal and too serious
- \* Audience interaction will be more difficult

### e. End on staging

End on staging is similar to proscenium arch, in that the audience is only on **one** side, but it does not have the large proscenium frame and a lot of modern theatres, amateur venues have this.



#### Advantages

- \*Set is easy to design as the audience look at the stage from roughly the same angle
- \* Backdrops, large scenery and projections can be used without blocking sightlines
- \* There may be **fly space** and **wing space** for storing scenery

#### Disadvantages

- \*The audience may feel distant from the stage, when seated at the back.
- \* It does not have the 'frame' of a proscenium arch which can enhance the set and performances.
- \* Audience interaction will be more difficult

### f. Promenade Theatre

To promenade means 'to walk' so this staging is usually outside and the audience stand or follow the actors through the performance. This may occur in a conventional theatre space or it may be designed for a site specific show where an unconventional space is



#### Advantages

- \*It is an interactive and exciting theatre where the audience are a much bigger part of the action.

#### Disadvantages

- The audience may find moving around the space too difficult or get tired of standing
- Actors and crew need to be skilled at moving the audience around and controlling their focus.
- There can be health and safety risks.

**Task 4: Read the following scene, where the two characters follow a bird through a wood and see a house made of bread. This is from a play version of Hansel and Gretel which will be our set text.**

**a. Plan the items that need to be seen as part of the set from the clues in the scene**

**b. Sketch different designs for the following stage configurations:**

**Theatre in the round**

**Thrust stage**

**Traverse stage**

**End on stage**

**c. Using the information about the advantages and disadvantages of each, which would work best?**

### **From Act Two**

(The sound of a thousand birds flying off. HANSEL & GRETEL wake up. )

GRETEL I had a dream...

HANSEL Of freshly baked bread...

GRETEL And we ate and ate and ate!

HANSEL Until our empty bellies were fed!

GRETEL But there isn't any.

HANSEL No. It's gone. Every crumb.

(Suddenly, a BIRD appears and calls to them.) BIRD Follow! Follow! Follow me!

GRETEL What a strange bird.

HANSEL I've never seen a bird like that before. I wonder what species it is.

BIRD Follow! Follow meeee!

HANSEL If only we could understand its strange song...

BIRD This way! This way!

HANSEL It's almost as if it's trying to say something.

BIRD Yooou twoooo – follow me! (Spelling it out.) Follow me!

GRETEL I think she wants us to follow her.

BIRD Bingo! (The BIRD takes flight and leads them to... The house made of bread.)

GRETEL The smell of fresh baked bread! It's coming from that house!

HANSEL It's not coming from the house. It IS the house.

BIRD Stuff yourselves! Go on! Gobble! Gobble! Gobble! Gobble! Tweet – eat – eat eat!

GRETEL Hungry... HANSEL So hungry...

GRETEL Should we?

HANSEL We should. Famished, they pull handfuls of bread from the roof and eat.

HANSEL An incredible, edible house! What luck!

GRETEL It's the house of our dreams!

**Task 5: Practice Multiple Choice Questions for Section A (Answers at the end of the sheets)**

**1. In a professional theatre, who is responsible for operating the technical equipment such as sound and lighting?**

- a. The theatre manager
- b. The stage manager
- c. The technician

[1 mark]

**2. When performing on a thrust stage which of the following is true?**

- a. You can only perform on centre stage
- b. The audience is positioned on three sides of the stage
- c. The audience is encouraged to walk around during the performance

[1 mark]

**3. In the professional theatre, if a performer is unable to perform, which should go in their place and take over?**

- a. The stage manager
- b. The theatre manager
- c. The understudy

[1 mark]

**4. Which of the following stage configurations is the best suited for using large, high pieces of set and backdrop?**

- a. Proscenium
- b. Theatre in the round
- c. Traverse

[1 mark]

**5. What kind of stage is pictured below?**



- a. Traverse
- b. Promenade
- c. Theatre in the round

[1 mark]

## Task answers

### Task 1

2a

3g

4b

5d

6f

7c

8i

9e

10h

11j

12m

13k

14l

### Task 5 answers

1c

2b

3c

4a

5c

### Task