

Drama and Theatre

What's A Level Drama and Theatre about?

A level Drama and Theatre assesses your engagement with play texts and your practical skills as an actor. You are expected to become committed to the experience of live theatre. This will hopefully lead to a life-long interest in theatre-going as well as making the two year course a memorable one. The theoretical and practical elements of A level Drama and Theatre make it both a challenging and a very rewarding subject. It is by no means a soft option.

In the first year you undertake a practical exploration and a theatrical interpretation of passages taken from play texts you and your class chose with your teacher's help and suiting the tastes and make-up of the group. You learn how to write about the performance, as preparation for the second-year portfolio.

You study two play texts which you will revisit in the second year thus creating a continuity between the two years of A level study. In the second year of the course, you deepen your engagement with the two play texts, re-thinking the plays in line with the emphasis of the A level paper.

The practical element of the A level Drama and Theatre requires you and your class collaboratively to create a devised theatrical piece and to undertake a practical exploration and interpretation of three extracts taken from different plays. You will be assessed by a visiting examiner on the performance. You will produce a 3000 word portfolio to accompany the practical work, providing evidence of how you analysed, interpreted and evaluated the performance. For more information visit the [Drama and Theatre pages of the AQA website](#).

What sort of work is involved?

A level Drama and Theatre requires skills in two different areas: practical and theoretical. Not only do you need to enjoy reading, and be able to write essays, but you also need a commitment to live theatre and a capacity to work collaboratively, with your class-mates, on the practical elements of the course.

Practical work accounts for 60% of A level Drama and Theatre, so this might not be the right A level subject for you if you are mostly interested in reading plays rather than performing in them. If your main interest is practical, do be aware of the importance of producing a portfolio in which you write, in an evaluative and self-reflecting way, about the practical work.

This is the only A level in which teamwork is such a feature and you really do need to enjoy working with others. For many students this is the most rewarding aspect of the course and after all, working with others is a life skill better acquired sooner than later.



What background do I need?

A Drama GCSE grade 6 is desirable, however it is not essential. If you do not have a drama qualification, you will be required to attend an audition where you will perform a monologue of your choosing, two minutes in length. An interest in live theatre is however a vital requirement: you need to feel happy about the prospect of spending evenings during the course of year 12 and 13 on regular theatre trips.

A grade 6 or better in English GCSEs is a good foundation for A level Drama and Theatre: you will have studied drama texts from a literary perspective and have developed essay writing skills.

Where can it lead?

If you are aiming at drama school A level Drama and Theatre is incredibly useful, and it is good preparation for Drama at university, and for Creative Writing courses. Learners considering joint courses in English and Drama should certainly consider studying both these subjects at A level.

Assessment

A level Drama and Theatre (on AQA syllabus 7262) is assessed through a theory component and two practical ones. The theory paper is three hours long and accounts for 40% of the total award. It covers your knowledge and understanding of drama and theatre, the two set plays, and your analysis and evaluation of the work of live theatre makers.

In Component 2 ('Creating Original Drama') you are assessed on the process of creating devised drama and its performance and in Component 3 you undertake a practical exploration and interpretation of three extracts, each taken from a different play. The third extract will be assessed by a visiting examiner. Components two and three account for 30% each of the total award.

