Clitheroe Royal Grammar Sixth Form: Transition Pack

Welcome to the Drama & Theatre Department

I look forward to meeting you and welcoming you to the Sixth Form.

This Transition Pack contains information to support your transition from GCSE to A Level study.

Please read all the pack ready to begin Year 12:

- What Independent Learning looks like in Drama and Theatre
- An Induction Pack that includes useful resources and an outline of the scheme of work for the first few weeks of the course
- Drama & Theatre Introductory Task

✓ **Read the Subject Information Sheet** which is available here: CRGS Sixth Form Subject Sheet - Drama & Theatre

✓ **Download the exam board specification** which is available here: AQA A Level Drama and Theatre

✓ **Read the section called 'Specification at a Glance'**, focusing on the A Level content.

✓ Some of these resources will become more useful when you have moved further through the course, such as the A Level specification, so store them where you can revisit them over the next 2 years.

✓ Don't worry if some of the work sounds challenging. A Level work is more difficult than GCSE work after all. Your teachers will be supporting you through this transition. Please talk to us if you are unsure about any aspect of the course.

I look forward to seeing you soon.

Mrs C Richardson – Head of Learning, Drama & Theatre

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Induction Pack for Drama and Theatre Studies

Welcome to the Drama and Theatre studies course! I hope you will find this subject as engaging, challenging and enjoyable as I do. Our first weeks of term will be focused on an introduction to Drama as an A Level subject and on helping the class work comfortably together as an ensemble. You do not have to have studied GCSE Drama as we will begin with the basics, quickly progressing to studying the working methods of influential Directors, Actors and Designers who are collectively called Practitioners. I will be setting you some research tasks in the first lessons.

We follow the AQA Drama and Theatre studies course:
https://filestore.aqa.org.uk/resources/drama/specifications/AQA-7262-SP-2016.PDF

Please read the rest of this pack. It includes:

- Details from the specification so you know what the course is about.
- A resource list of text books and websites that you will find useful.
- Some hints for how to succeed in the written examination.
- A scheme of work for our first 4 weeks of term with some details on the director called Stanislavski who we will be studying.

There are also lots of other aspects to the course, including practical workshops, script work and visiting the theatre.

Pre-course reading and research

You should complete *at least* one of these pieces of research in the first few weeks of the course

- Investigate at least one of the websites or texts;
- Make a note of any plays you have read/seen;
- Find out about any prominent theatre companies e.g. Frantic Assembly, Kneehigh (and/or Emma Rice), Complicite, Splendid or The Paper Birds.
- Try to watch a live theatre performance or a good film version of a play;
- Read a play - any style or genre;
- Read reviews of plays in your local or national newspapers.
- Read 'An Actor Prepares' by Stanislavski – this would be fantastic groundwork for understanding this influential practitioner and is a fairly easy read too!

Specification at a Glance – AQA: A Level Drama and Theatre (7262)

Component 1 Drama & Theatre
40% of A-level
Written Exam 3 hours, open book

Component 2: Creating Original Drama (practical)
30% of A Level
Devised Performance
Working Notebook

Component 3: Making Theatre (practical)
30% of A-level
Performance of Extract
Reflective Report

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Suggested reading:

Unless you specifically want to, we do not suggest buying these books. They can be expensive! They can be reserved and borrowed from most local libraries.

- Impro: Improvisation and the Theatre by Keith Johnstone (Methuen 1981) ISBN: 978-0713687019

- An Actor Prepares by Stanislavski (Methuen 1980) ISBN: 978-0413461902

Useful Websites

- www.franticassembly.co.uk
- http://theatredatabase.com
- http://www.complicite.org
- http://www.fashionmuseum.co.uk
- http://www.rsc.org.uk
- www.itheatrestudies.com
- www.nationaltheatre.org.uk
- www.stagework.org.uk
- www.theatrevoice.com
- www.whatsonstage.com
- www.britishtheatreguide.info/
- www.theatrerecord.com
- www.splendidproductions.co.uk

Some tips about answering examination questions in the written paper

- Adopt a practical approach to your answer – this isn't an English essay, and even though you will analyse texts, it's important to understand them from a performance point of view. Let the examiner visualise what you/the actors do on stage.
- Focus precisely on the demands of the question, don't tell the story of the play.
- Take care to answer from the perspective that the question asks for – e.g. Performer, Director or Designer.
- Don't offer narration in the place of practical performance suggestions.
- Be decisive and confident! Don't preface your ideas with 'I might' or 'possibly' or 'maybe.'
- Don't write about *preparation* for a role; the question will be about *performance.*
- Support your answer with specific reference to the words of the play, you have your text with you to help you.
- Don't adopt a bullet point approach in your answer - whether you are rushed or not.
- Use clearly labelled sketches or diagrams to support your answers on design, but remember that your answers to all questions must be in continuous prose.

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Our First Weeks

In the first four weeks, we will be studying Actor training using the system of the Russian director Stanislavski:

Creating a Character using Stanislavski

Week 1
Introduction to Konstantin Stanislavski and his System

Teacher stresses the importance of Realism in conveying Stanislavski's methods - what is believable acting? How can we make the audience suspend their disbelief?

Practical Work

Warm ups
Improvisations
Workshopping Stanislavki's 'System'
Creating your own character

Homework Week 1 = Research on Stanislavski

What are the facts about Stanislavski?
1. Who was Konstantin Stanislavski?
   - Place of birth
   - Family background
   - Acting experience
   - What he did for work
2. Stanislavski System
   - What is it?
   - How does an actor use it?
3. A Brief outline of some exercises
   Outline/explain the following Stanislavski exercise:
   - Given Circumstances
   - Objectives
   - Magic If
   - Emotional Memory
   - Inner monologue
4. Presentation of your findings (Powerpoint)

Weeks 2-4
Understanding the process of characterization

Students create a range of characters over the first weeks of the unit from simple improvisations, working with bare text and then working on short scenes (in groups, pairs and individually). They create layers to characters they devise from scripts by focusing on voice, movement, spatial relationships and status. The students can participate in hotseating activities to develop characters further.

Student's participation in class discussions and activities will reveal their understanding of the importance of effective characterisation.

Students use the internet to find excerpts of actors discussing acting, information on Stanislavskian acting methods.

The teacher introduces the concept of realism as a performance style. Some contextual information is given about its historical and theatrical context. Students engage in research focusing on Stanislavski and the style of naturalistic acting.

Homework Week 2 = Students write their monologue featuring the character they have created.

In a series of practical workshops, the teacher leads the students through basic script techniques and Stanislavskian methods:

- Relaxation
- Imagination
- Developing character profiles
- The Given Circumstances
- Motivation
- Objectives – units, objectives, super-objective
- Subtext
- Emotion memory
- Magic If
- Circles of Attention/Solitude in Public
- Considering timing and tempo-rhythm

Students will be asked to apply these techniques and experiment with characters. As students work 'on the floor', they are asked to consider how the activities help create 'realistic' and 'believable' characters. Students show an understanding of the characterisation processes through practical experimentation with characters.

First Acting Assessment: Students write, rehearse and perform a monologue based on the character they have invented. These will be performed in **the first half term**.

Written Evaluation: Students write an evaluation of their monologue, preparing them for the skills needed in the Working Notebook and Reflective Report. These will be completed **after the monologue performance**.

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A Level Drama & Theatre

Introductory Task

Please complete this task ready to begin Year 12.

Invent a character to use in our first acting assignment, use the questions below in the character profile to help you. The character can be of a different age or gender to yourself with different circumstances, background and interests. You can change and develop the character as the weeks go on but if you come prepared and able to answer the questions as your character you will be able to develop your acting skills quickly.

Remember, this is not you and you need to use your imagination!

Character Profile

Name:

Age:

Address:

Personality:

Occupation:

Education:

Ambitions:

Likes:

Dislikes:

Hobbies:

Favourite Place:

Worst day of your life:

Best day of your life: