



St Benedict's
Sixth Form

THEATRE STUDIES

A LEVEL

TRANSITION PACK





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A LEVEL THEATRE STUDIES

COURSE OVERVIEW

A-level Drama is a practical and academic qualification which encourages students to develop their creative and intellectual capacity, alongside transferable skills such as team working, communication and problem solving. All of these are sought after skills by higher education and employers and will help them stand out in the workplace whatever their choice of career.

The A Level Drama course is divided into three key components:

1. **Devising:** A performance devised from scratch with a written portfolio to accompany it.
2. **Text in performance:** (performing an extract from a scripted play)
3. **Theatremakers in practise** (a written exam which tests your knowledge of how you would perform, design and direct 2 plays, as well as your analysis of a live performance).

To be successful at A Level Drama it is necessary:

- To have a passion for performance
- Undertake independent research on a wide variety of subjects: on specific practitioners, on issues related to your devising and on specific plays and their context.
- Watch video clips on You Tube and Vimeo this give you inspiration for your own practical work and help you with your knowledge of different theatre practitioners.

Set texts

- Hedda Gabler by Henrik Ibsen
- Machinal by Sophie Treadwell

Practitioners:

- Stanislavski
- Brecht
- Artaud
- Frantic Assembly
- Kneehigh
- Punchdrunk
- Berkoff



St Benedict's Sixth Form

Baseline Assessment

During the week beginning 13/9/24, an assessment will be undertaken to consider suitability for the course. The assessment will comprise of:

- A review of your summer work
- Assessment of a preliminary practical task that you will complete in the first two weeks
- Assessment of a written task that you will complete within independent study time

Summer Work to be completed

Task 1: Watch one of the following performances on BBC iplayer and respond to the following questions, you will need to use research and analytical skills to answer the questions:

- Anything Goes (West End Musical) <https://www.bbc.co.uk/iplayer/episode/m0012y8y/anything-goes-the-musical> (You will need to sign in to BBC iplayer- if you haven't got an account it is free to do.)

Or

- Girls Like That (Theatre) <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Cx2KDNusk9E>

Or

- [The Unknown Island - Gate Theatre](#)

Or

- [The Time of Your Life | Full Show | Gecko - YouTube](#)

Questions on the performances

1. Who wrote/directed the performance you chose to watch?
2. Pick out one key moment from the performance you watched. How did one actor use acting skills to create an effective performance?
3. How would you describe the design of the performances. Pick one key scene and talk about the costumes/ set. What ideas do you think the costumes/set were trying to communicate to the audience?
4. How was the performance you watched different to previous theatre you have watched. What did you like/dislike and why?



St Benedict's Sixth Form

Task 2: Theatre Practitioners

As part of your course you will need to gain knowledge on a wide range of theatre practitioners: Choose one of the following: research and create a presentation on their background, ideas and performances. .

- Konstantin Stanislavsky
- Bertolt Brecht
- Antonin Artaud
- Stephen Berkoff
- Punchdrunk Theatre
- Frantic Assembly
- Kneehigh Theatre Company
- front cover

This should include the following:

- a contents page
- Background information on the practitioner
- Their beliefs, theories and style of theatre
- Impact on modern theatre
- Techniques and strategies
- Performances

You may find these Research links useful to complete this task:

RESEARCH LINKS

WEBSITES

National Theatre Education Resources:

<https://www.youtube.com/user/ntdiscovertheatre/videos>

Search this site for Stanislavski/Brecht and Artaud and watch the "Five Truths: Theatre Practitioners"

Look at the following **Theatre Practitioners'** websites. The resources pages often have devising exercises of videos to watch.

www.kneehighcookbook.co.uk (info, devising resources etc)

www.franticassembly.co.uk

www.punchdrunk.org

www.StephenBerkoff.com



St Benedict's Sixth Form

Task 3: What does style in theatre mean? To answer this question you should research at least 3 of the following styles:

- Naturalism
- Realism
- Expressionism
- Epic theatre
- Physical theatre
- Theatre of the absurd

Additional Resources:

To become a successful student of Drama you need to watch a wide variety of drama from a range of different theatre practitioners in different styles. A number of major theatre practitioners showcase videos of their work on Youtube or their own websites (listed in Linked resources above). Use the following as well to supplement your knowledge.

Try searching any of the following terms on Vimeo/youtube to watch trailers/excerpts and full shows. This will help you get ideas for devising/performance style:

- DV8
- Paper birds Theatre
- Frantic Assembly
- Complicite
- RashDash

Design

Look at **Theatre design** Websites such as: <http://www.rfdesigns.org> and <http://anthonywardtheatredesign.com>

Watch Netflix – Abstract the art of Design, - episode on E.S. Devlin (theatre designer)