GCSE DRAMA – ESSENTIAL KNOWLEDGE FOR WRITTEN EXAMINATION

TERMINOLOGY

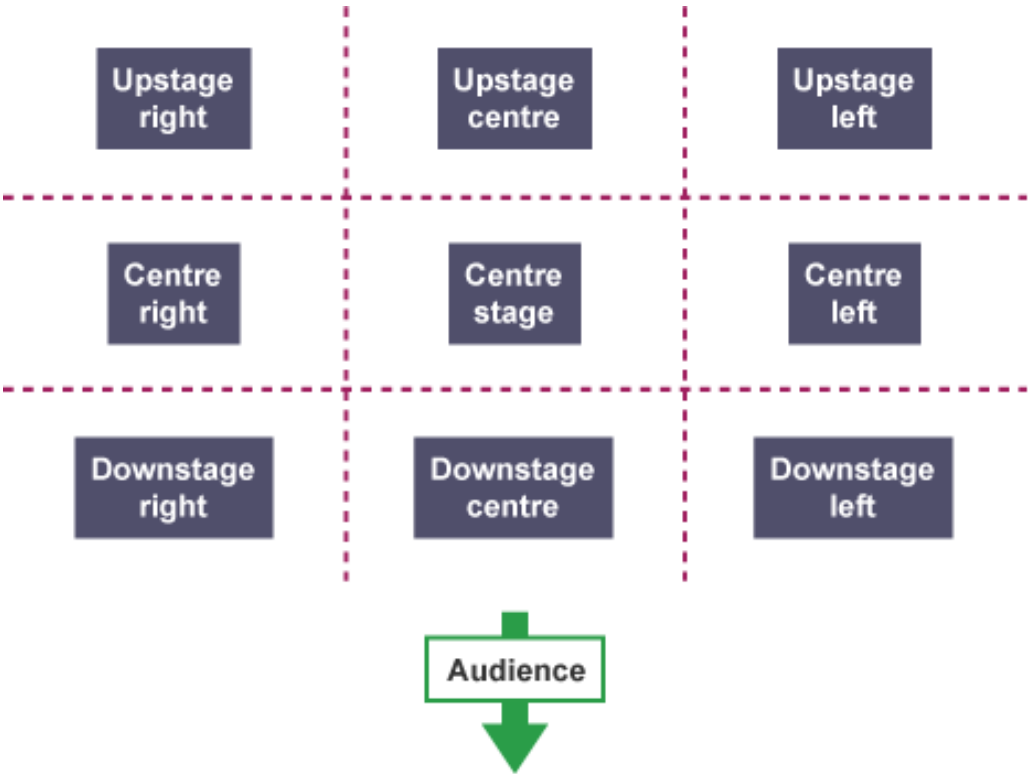
ACCENT	The way the voice is affected by where you come from.
BODY LANGUAGE	The way that you use your body to communicate with others.
COMIC RELIEF	A short comic break from serious events.
DIALOGUE	Words that are spoken on stage.
DIRECT ADDRESS	The actor speaks to the audience
DRAMATIC IRONY	When the audience knows something that the characters don't
EMPHASIS	Putting stress on a word or phrase when speaking.
ENSEMBLE	A group of actors performing together.
FACIAL EXPRESSION	The way that you use your face to communicate with others.
GAIT	The way an actor walks
GESTURE	Communicating using your hands or arms.
LEVELS	Using your body or staging to create different heights.
NATURALISTIC	A performance that looks like real life.
NON-NATURALISTIC	A performance using theatrical techniques - does not look like real life.
ORIENTATION	The direction that an actor is facing.
PHYSICALITY	The way that you use your body to communicate with the audience.
PACE	The speed of your speech.
PAUSE	Putting a small break or beat between words.
PITCH	How high or low (musically) your voice is.
POSTURE	The way that you sit or stand.
PROLOGUE	A section at the start of the play that introduces it.
PROXEMICS	The distance between actors.
STATUS	How important a character is
SUB-TEXT	A meaning which is not directly stated but hinted at
TONE	How the voice is affected by emotion.
TRANSITION	The way the actors move between one scene and another
VOLUME	How loud or quiet your voice is.

SECTION 1 – ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES IN THE THEATRE

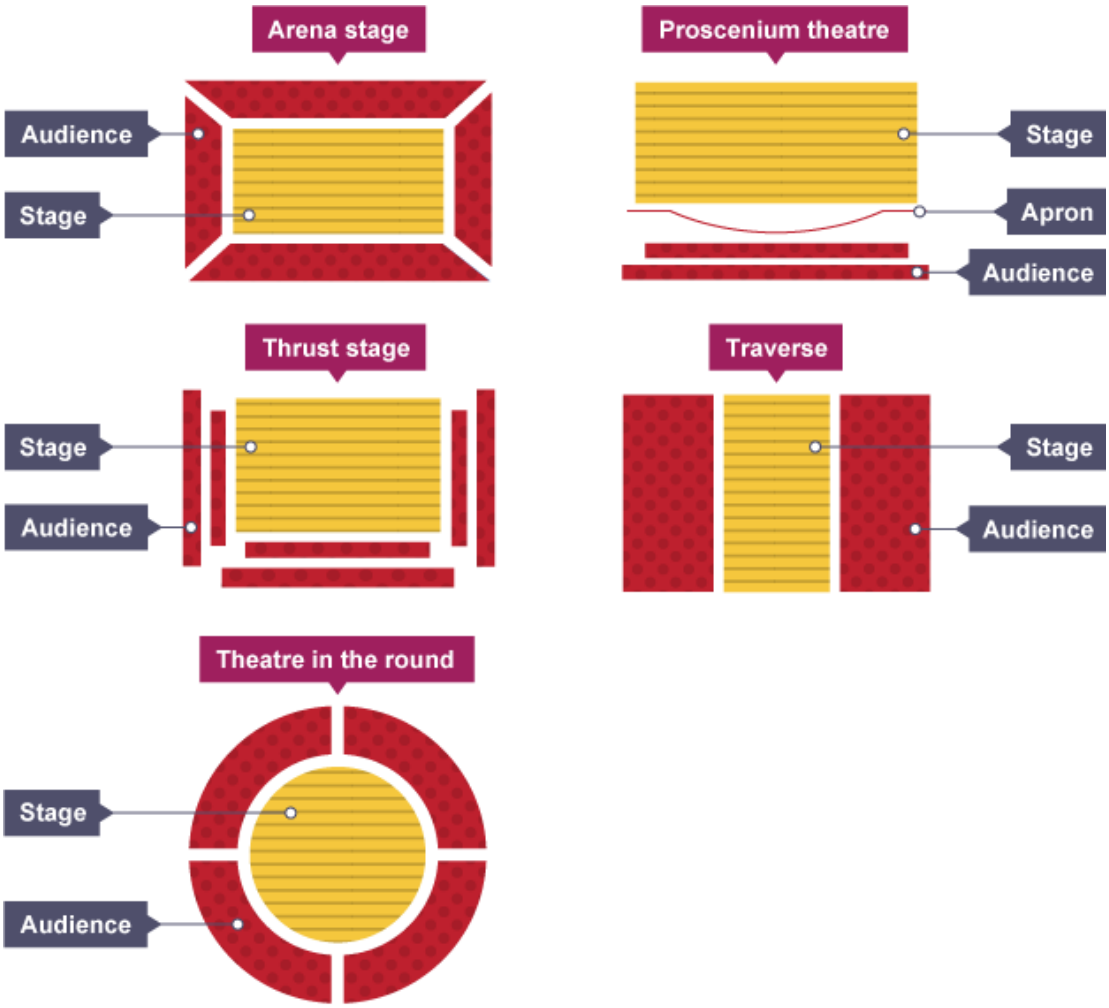
Theatre Makers Roles and Responsibilities

ASM	Assistant Stage Manager – helps the Stage Manager
Choreographer	Member of the production team responsible for setting dances and movement sequences.
Costume designer	The person who designs the costumes for a performance. The costume department of a theatre is often called the wardrobe.
Director	In charge of the artistic elements of a production. A director will often have the initial creative idea (‘concept’) for a production, will work with the actors in rehearsal, and will collaborate with designers and the technical team to realise this idea in performance.
Dramatist	Someone who takes existing material and turns it into a play or musical.
Lighting designer	Responsible for designing the lighting states and, if required, special lighting effects for a performance. The final design will result in a lighting plot which is a list of the lighting states and their cues.
Lyricist	Author of the text of a musical / words of a song
Playwright	This is the name given to the person who writes the play.
Performer	An actor or entertainer who realises a role or performance in front of an audience.
Puppet designer	The person who designs the puppets for a performance.
Set designer	Responsible for the design of the set for a performance. They will work closely with the director and other designers so that there is unity between all the designs and the needs of the performance.
Sound designer	Responsible for designing the sound required for a performance. This may include underscoring, intro and outro music as well as specific effects. The final design will result in a sound plot which is a list of the sounds required and their cues.
Stage Crew	Responsible for moving props and scenery during the show and ensuring items under their responsibility are working and well maintained.
Stage manager	In charge of all aspects of backstage, including the backstage crew. They will oversee everything that happens backstage before, during and after a performance. During the rehearsal period, the Stage Manager and their team will make sure that all props are found or made, scene changes are rehearsed and smooth, and all other aspects of backstage are prepared. They are also in charge of the rehearsal schedule.
Technician	A person who works backstage either setting up technical equipment such as microphones or rigging lights before a production or operating technical equipment during a performance.
Theatre manager	Responsible for and manages the front-of- house team who deal with the audience during the production (for example, the box office manager, ushers and similar staff).
Understudy	An actor who studies another’s role so that they can take over when needed.

Staging positions



Staging configurations



Proscenium/End-on Staging
A stage where the audience sits on one side only is called a **proscenium** stage (you might know this as **end-on staging**). The audience faces one side of the stage directly, and normally sits at a lower height.

Pros: Sight lines are excellent and work is easy to stage.
Cons: The audience can feel quite removed from the action.

Thrust Stage
A stage that extends into the auditorium so that the audience is seated around three sides.

Pros: The audience feel included and an intimate atmosphere is created. Having one end which is visible to all provides a 'back' to the stage.
Cons: Sight lines can still be an issue.

Theatre in the round
An **in-the-round** stage is positioned at the centre of the audience - ie there is audience around the whole stage in a circular formation. This type of stage creates quite an intimate atmosphere, and is good for drama that needs audience involvement.

Pros: An intimate and exciting atmosphere. Audience feel included.
Cons: Sight lines can be very tricky.

Traverse Stage
A stage where the audience sits on two sides is called a **traverse** stage. Again, this type of stage is good for creating an intimate atmosphere.

Pros: The audience on either side can clearly see work that happens at two sides. The audience can see each other, creating intimacy.
Cons: The opposing sides of the audience might see two entirely different shows and sight lines are still an issue.

Promenade Theatre
In **Promenade** the **staging** or performance area may be set in various locations in a venue. The audience inhabit, not just watch, a space. They follow the action around.

Pros: Can work brilliantly when locations suit the work presented. Interesting experience for the audience.
Cons: Moving between locations can break the tension of the piece and take some time.

Arena stage
The audience are positioned all around the stage in a rectangular or square formation.

Pros: The audience feel included. Creates an intimate atmosphere.
Cons: Sight lines might be an issue so there needs to be lots of movement around the space.

SECTION 2 – BLOOD BROTHERS

GENERAL INFORMATION

PLAYWRIGHT – Willy Russell

BACKGROUD – Working class Liverpudlian – ex-teacher.

CONTEXT – Set in Liverpool 1950's – early 1980's

AIM – To show the disadvantages of growing up in a working class/lower class family.

THEMES/ISSUES – Class, fate and superstition, nature/nurture, friendship.

COSTUMES

MRS JOHNSTONE

MRS LYONS

MR LYONS

MICKEY – 7, 14, 18, 21

EDWARD – 7, 14, 18, 21

LINDA – 7, 14, 18, 21

SETTINGS

OUTSIDE THE JOHNSTONE'S

INSIDE THE LYONS'

MICKEY'S SCHOOL

EDWARD'S SCHOOL

THE BUS

'OUTSIDE'

SECTION C – REVIEW OF LIVE THEATRE

TITLE - Lovesong

PLAYWRIGHT – Abi Morgan

COMPANY - Frantic Assembly

THEATRE – Lyric Theatre - London

CHARACTERS + ACTORS – BILLY – SAM COX, MAGGIE – SIAN PHILLIPS

5 QUOTATIONS