

Learning to fly in Drama

These are the skills and habits which outstanding students of Drama develop. Do as many of these as possible to become completely independent in the subject and to develop the skills and knowledge needed to attain 8/9 at GCSE and A* at A Level. **Remember that just doing what your teacher tells you - in your lessons and beyond - is not enough to develop your full potential in the subject.**

In your lessons

- **Focus** - listen carefully to instructions- focus your body and mind on the practical tasks required.
- **Create** - be imaginative- open your mind, take risks- be energetic- lose your selves in the role/ acting- be confident about sharing ideas.
- **Share** - put forward your creative ideas- listen to others – work as a team- build ensemble skills-keep others on task.
- **Ask questions** – doubt, analyse and evaluate your work and the work of others. Ask your teacher to reaffirm or to make sure you are on the right track.
- **Use the Drama Vocabulary** - refer to the drama words in the room- reflect on your understanding of drama form and techniques- work that you have done in previous lessons, terms and even years- use skills and techniques that you have built up over the key stages.
- **Read texts aloud** - listen to the rhythm and tone of your voice- and to that of others. Analyse the texts- ask questions - what is the plot? Who are the characters? What is the form and genre? What is the context? What kind of language is used? What do the stage directions say? Imagine a text in performance as you read- / visualise- physical/ staging/ design- auralize- words spoken – sounds- live / recorded.
- **Analyse and discuss** your work during process and after presentation- what was being communicated- themes/ form / emotions- what do you want an audience to feel and think.
- Evaluate and discuss your work during process and after presentation- what worked well and why - what can be improved and how.
- Make reflective, analytical and evaluative notes during and at the end of a practical session.
- **Experiment** - try out alternative ideas and methods of staging.
- **Work quickly** - use the time given to add depth.
- **Be spontaneous** - sometimes too much discussion can be a block to creativity.

Between your lessons

- Read through practical notes - reflect, analyse, evaluate.
- Read ahead on texts studied- make notes on staging- use of voice/ movement/ design/ form / structure/ characterisation/ plot/ language/ themes and issues.
- Learn lines early for set tasks – performance work- putting the text down early gives you more time to explore and experiment with practical ideas.
- Make notes on any questions you need to ask your teacher or your group.
- Rehearse with groups at lunch or after school- particularly for assessed performance work.
- Keep group note books.
- Research around practitioners, playwrights and genres studied.
- Ask to speak to your teacher about any concerns or questions you have.
- Look up any words you do not understand- sometimes they will be in the glossary at the back of a text.

Beyond your lessons

- Research playwrights and practitioners studied - read around other plays by writers studied or

in a similar genre.

- Read plays by some of the following playwrights: **Sophocles / Shakespeare / Chekhov / Miller / Wertebaker / Churchill / Pinter / Beckett / McDonagh / Stephenson / Ibsen / Brecht / Teale / Butterworth / Mullarkey / Ionesco / Hare / Stoppard / Jonson / Marlowe**
- Find out about directors and practitioners in the past, for insight into how theatre continues to change and evolve. Look at **Stanislavski / Brecht / Boal / Artaud / Brook / Alfreds / Grotowski / Fo / Johnstone**
- Research designers like **Bunny Christie** who employ cutting edge technology to create innovative and exciting stage experiences.
- Read theatre reviews in papers like “The Stage” or “The Guardian”/ “The Times”- cut them out and collect- underline terms and phrases- analyse the structure and vocabulary used.
- Read the culture sections of newspapers to see in advance what’s on, and read reviews of plays that might be worth going to see.
- Use “You Tube” to find clips of plays staged and analyses and evaluate.
- Watch film versions of plays studied – how do they differ? Sometimes these can be found on line/ can be ordered or are streamed in cinemas.
- Go to the Theatre - watch stage versions of plays studied or in similar genres/ other plays by playwrights studied - any theatre watching is better than none- go and see plays we have seen as part of the course again- try to look up cheap deals or queue for £10 tickets/ returns.
- Get involved with extracurricular drama – in school- plays/ drama clubs/performing arts drama lab/ spotlight- out of school – youth theatres/ amateur groups/ summer courses/ groups – ask your teachers for information.- the more practical experience will help you with your practical skills.
- Read as many plays as you can - ask to borrow from the drama stock cupboard- particularly when thinking about what plays to perform or explore- use the school library.
- Make connections with other subjects to link and develop your learning – e.g Greek theatre and classics/ Set plays and English/ context and history/ form and Music and Art/ Design and D.T. Movement and dance.
- Read critical readings on plays playwrights/ Practitioners and genres.
- Read books and articles on **Theatre History / Stage craft / Acting / Directing / Devising / Improvising / Design.**
- Discuss plays seen with friends and family/ Write reviews.
- Listen to Radio 4 and Radio 3 Drama: the plays here can be excellent.
- Book NT Live and see fabulous productions beamed to your local cinema.
- Keep track of some of the following theatre companies and go to see their work whenever you can: **Complicite / Kneehigh / Shared Experience / Frantic Assembly / Cheek by Jowl / Punchdrunk / Push / Headlong**
- Go to the Globe Theatre in London for a flavour of the origins of modern theatre.
- Access the National Theatre’s interactive website <https://www.nationaltheatre.org.uk/immersive> - they also run playwriting competitions.

Of course we recognise that our students have busy lives and that this level of engagement is not always possible all the time - but this is what you should aim for if you want to reach the highest level in the subject. You don’t need to do ALL of these things to improve - just doing one or two of them will have an impact. Decide on two or three to focus on to improve your skills.