

DRAMA HANDBOOK



Elements
Role Focus
Time Tension
Space Action

Conventions

Techniques
Voice
Body
Movement
Space

Creating a Character
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The Elements & Conventions of Drama

What follows are guides for understanding and writing about the Elements and Conventions of Drama

The elements of Drama are the things good performances cannot do without. One must consider the roles, action, time, place, moods of a performance in order to bring it to life.

The Conventions of drama are the things that dramaturges use to shape or “put together” a performance. These things help to build the elements of drama.

The Elements of Drama

The elements of drama can be defined as “the key ingredients of drama”. They provide a foundation for drama and are terms that teachers and students can use to analyse and describe what they do in drama. The elements combine with contrasts in movement and stillness, sound and silence, and darkness and light to communicate meaning in drama.

THE FOUR MAIN ELEMENTS ARE:

Role

WHO? Role involves stepping into the space of another person, sustaining belief in that position, and representing that person’s relationships and point of view.

Time

WHEN? Time is when the drama is set.

Place

WHERE? Space is where the dramatic action takes place. It refers both to the imagined place of the dramatic action and the physical space that the students have to work in.

Action

WHAT? Action is what each person in role is doing and thinking alone and with others. It’s what happens in the drama.

OTHER IMPORTANT ELEMENTS ARE:

Tension

Tension is the force that drives the drama. It’s created by obstacles that those in the drama have to overcome. The element of tension heightens the dramatic intensity and creates suspense or unease.

Symbol

Where an object or action in a scene means more than it is.

Mood

The atmosphere of the piece. This is the overriding feeling of a scene or part of a scene.

Focus

Focus is the point that demands the audience’s attention. It is the central event, character, theme, issue or problem of a drama or part of a drama. The term “focus” is also used to refer to a place or moment in time that captures the essence of the dramatic action. The third way the term “focus” is used is to refer to the student’s focus or concentration on their work.

In drama, a role is placed in a setting of time and space and combines with action, tension, and focus to create dramatic meaning.

Role: I was a soldier who was very frightened. My name was Jeff, I had only come to war because I was conscripted into the army. I do not actually like the war and I do not consider myself as brave. I was only able to curl up in the hoping of staying safe.
Time: This was 1942, though we didn’t make the audience aware of this, perhaps if we were wearing old style army uniforms or had old gas masks people would understand further what time it was. We tried to convey that it was dark by having the man searching around doing so as if blind, with hands stretched out in the dark. It was winter and nearing night-time

Place: a battlefield with mud everywhere, ruts in the ground, barbed wire across our path

Action: My group of soldiers must get from one end of the battlefield to the other to retrieve a secret code machine from the enemy.

Focus: The main focus was on the man struggling for breath we showed this by having the rest of us at lower levels and to the side from him. He was in the centre at a higher level.

Tension: That we are in danger of being killed. I showed my tension by curling up as tightly as I could, I also had my face all crinkled up and only just visible to the audience so that they could see that I wanted to hold myself in away from the danger.

Symbol: The symbol we had was the gasmask. Although in improvisation we weren’t able to have an actual mask it was a symbol of safety and security. If I had one on I could have made the idea of safety more clear by holding the mask closely to my face. We could also have had the gas mask a long way from the struggling mans hands to show he had no safety.

Mood: The mood was scary. I showed this by being curled up in a ball. As a group we showed this by being separate from each other, almost isolated.

Identifying the Elements of Drama

You could be asked to identify the elements of drama in performance, in a photograph, in a script. Here are some hints as to what to look for.

Role

This Person is a...

Business person
Teacher
Homeless person
Labourer
Farm Worker
Actor
Lawyer
Artist
Doctor
Nurse
Journalist
Minister
King/Queen
Mother/Father
Son/Daughter
Girlfriend/Boyfriend
Husband/Wife
Friend
Enemy
Workmate
Brother
Sister
Nanny
They are:
Cheeky
Friendly
Grumpy
Proper
Confident
Cruel
Strong

Calculating

Cheerful

Caring

Flirtatious

Courageous

Depressed

Creative

Saintly

Excitable

Bubbly

Jovial

Organised

Bossy

I can tell this by...

Costume

-what it looks like

-colour

-texture

-how it is worn

Hair

Facial expressions

Use of Body

Use of Space

Where they are

What they are doing

What they are holding

How they are standing/sitting

Distance from other characters

Focus

Accessories

Who they are with and how they relate to them

Place

Where is this set?

Forest

Farm

City

House

Castle

Bedroom

Lounge

Kitchen

Office

Barn

Bunker

Hut

Stairway

Street

Bus Stop

Shop

Theatre

Pub/Bar

A Rich Person's House

A Poor Person's House

How can you tell?

Props

Costume

Set

Colours

Roles

Small/Large

Situation/ Action

What's Happening? What is it About?

Do the characters get along?

Is someone leaving?

Do they live together/Work Together?

What has happened?

What might happen in the future?

Is someone sick?

Has something Good/Bad happened?

Are they looking forward to something?

Are they: Happy/Sad/Guilty/Excited/

Frustrated/Angry/Scared?

Are they making something?

Are they friends?

What is Happening? How can you tell?

Setting: Time, Place

Relationships

Space Use

Body Language

Costume

Props

Roles

Tension

FOCUS

What are you, as the audience, drawn to?

What is the actor

focussed on?

How can you see this?

Levels Lighting

Separation from others Direction of Gaze

One person/object on its own with others grouped together

Larger/Smaller than other Objects/People.

Different Colour Central

The way something is held

Symbol

Some Suggestions:

Things to look for...

Objects

Images

Flowers Food

Glass Teapot

Knife Picture

Plant Jewellery

Suitcase Glove

Candles Shoe

What does it mean?

Love

Hate

Life

Death

Blood

Family

Anger Joy

Strength

Power

Separation

Growth

Entanglement

History

Connection

Control

Friendship

Pride

Wealth

Rank

What else is supporting this idea?

Body Language

Where it is

Closeness to other things

The way it looks

Colour

How it is looked upon

How it is held

Tension

Things that show tension...

Leaning forward/back

Close to someone

Far from someone

Leaning over top of someone

Body Language

Crossed arms

Clenched Fists

Gritted Teeth

Furrowed Brow

Squinting Eyes

Back Turned to Someone

A group of people against one alone

Close but not touching/Held back

People close together looking at each other

People not looking at each other

Arms raised

Hands held tightly together

Mood

The MOOD could be...

Glam

Excitable

Happy

Sad

Dull

Joyful

Angry

Strained

I can see this by...

Lighting

Body Language

Colours

Light/Darkness

Facial Expression

Costume

Setting

Space Use

The Conventions of Drama

Conventions are ways of working or strategies that we use to structure and sequence (or frame) dramatic action. Performers use conventions to explore meaning, deepen understanding, or add impact in drama work. Some of the conventions are:

Mime

A form of theatre performance in which action and character are suggested using gesture, movement, and facial expression without words or sounds. Can be a highly sophisticated silent art form in which the body is used as the instrument of communication. In drama, mime enables the students to explore and represent ideas and events through movement and gesture.

Flashbacks and flashforwards

Moving back and forward in time in order to extend understanding of themes and characters.

Freeze-frame image

A convention in which the members of a group use their bodies to make an image or tableau capturing an idea, theme, or moment in time; also called a group sculpture or tableau

Narration

A convention in which a person narrates the action that occurs within a drama.

Dance drama/Movement Piece

Expressive movement through which ideas, stories, sounds and music can be interpreted.

Soundscape

A sequence of sounds shaped to enhance action and mood in a drama.

Parallel play

A situation in which all of the students work simultaneously (at the same time), but separately, in their own space.

Repetition

Repeated ideas, images, words which help to sink in the idea or create a symbol

Ritual

Ritual is an established procedure or a sequence of movements that has a sense of ceremony, formality and custom about it. It may be accompanied by sound and may incorporate repetition or the use of symbols.

Slow Motion

The process of slowing down and exaggerating movements, facial expression, and gesture to heighten tension or to isolate a particularly important moment.

Chorus of voices

A chorus of voices is a group using their voices together to make patterns of sound, or say words or phrases together

Chorus of Movement

A chorus of movement is a group moving together with a sense of purpose.

The movement may be repetitive or stylised. A chorus of movement can heighten the moment or create a particular spatial or visual effect.

Spoken thoughts

In this convention a person in role speaks the private thoughts of their character to add tension or provide information. This can be done when the other characters in the scene freeze or whilst other characters have a quiet conversation to themselves.

Voices in the Head

In this convention a student who is not in role comes and speaks the thoughts of another person in role. This is to add to the understanding of the character so should give important information about them, and express their personality.

For example, if you had to write about a convention you used in your performance:

Convention Used	Where/Description	Why did you chose this convention?
Music	We used a low drum beat through our marching scene. There was a low flowing sound underneath the music. When the Music crashed into thunderous rock music, we hit the ground and began acting out the chaos scene.	This music was used to build up the tension towards our chaos scene. The drum beat build in pace as it got closer to the rock music, so it mimicked the heart beats of the soldiers and was designed to get our audiences heart beats racing. The rock music was loud and crazy and helped to build the atmosphere of the chaos scene showing the confusion going through the soldier's minds.

Technique Talk

What follows are words for talking about use of drama technique.

These can be linked to talking about elements: role, space, time, focus, mood, action tension

An actor uses the techniques of drama to carry out a role

They can be used for talking about characters personality or feelings/emotions

They can be used for talking about how you would do/have done moments in a play or scene

They can be used to give details about a performance you have seen and to reflect on the effectiveness of an actor's performance

SOME WORDS FOR TALKING ABOUT VOICE USE

Pitch

Pitch is how high or low the voice is. Whatever pitch the voice is at can suggest the emotion or tone of the story.

High Pitch: Violent or hysterical emotion
e.g. anger, joy, fear, excitement, surprise

Medium Pitch: Ordinary
e.g. conversation, description, reflection

Low Pitch: Intense emotions
e.g. sad, solemn, intense anger or fear

Pause

As an actor you can use pause to:

- Indicate the end of a phrase, sentence or paragraph
 - Emphasise a point
 - Show emotion
- Take time for your character to think
- Give the other character time to think
 - Convey a dramatic point
- Give the audience time to absorb
 - Take a breath

Pace

Pace is all about how fast you talk. This indicates emotion just like Pitch.

Quick Pace, Medium Pace, Slow Pace

Articulation

How clearly you speak
Diction & Clarity

Volume

How loud or quiet your voice is.

It can be used to emphasise character: A shy character would speak very quietly

It can be used to emphasise emotions: An Angry person may use a loud voice, an excited person also. Sadness is often acted in a quiet voice.

Inflection

Inflection is the upward and downward glide of the voice within a syllable or word. Do not confuse this with pitch. We may be speaking in a high pitch but within the pitch there will be inflections

Inflection can change the meaning of simple words by rising or falling inflection.

An example of how to talk about voice

When my character is excited they talk quickly, loudly and with a high pitch and very short pauses in between lines. These are quick pauses only to catch my breath because my character would be so excited their brain would be working very quickly in lots of different directions.

When my character says “But he was not alone” my character would pause before he said “But”. Then he would slowly say the sentence. He wants to emphasize his point. He especially would emphasize the word “Not” by saying it more slowly and slightly louder, with a pause at the end. This would show that it was important to my character that he prove that his son was a strong person, not vulnerable and alone.

SOME WORDS FOR TALKING ABOUT BODY

Facial expression : eyes, eyebrows, nose, mouth, jaw

Eyes

Closed
half closed
winking
wide open
Looking left or right
Looking left and right

Nose

twitching
raised on one side
scrunched up
pointed in the air
Low to the ground

Head

up
drooped
held high
Tilted, sideways
Turned
Leaning

Feet

Firmly planted
Apart
Together
Flat
Tippytoed
One flat other raised

Forehead

Crinkled up
Straight

Eyebrows

Raised
Lowered
Crinkled
Gathered together
One up one down

Jaw

Locked
loose
down
clenched

Mouth

Frown
Curved at the corners, up/down
Upper lip underneath the lower lip
Lower lip sticking out/pouting
Open at one side
Wide open
Shut firmly
Straight
Crinkled
Sideways
Slightly open
Smiling
Frowning
Lips being bitten by teeth

Posture: head, neck, back, shoulders, stomach

Shoulders

forward
down
Slouched
Unbalanced
One shoulder high, one low
hanging
Drooping

Stance: legs, knees, feet

Knees

Close together
Bent
Straight

Back

Staight
Curved
Stretched

Legs

Apart
Together
Bent
Straight
Firm
One holding all the weight, the other slack

An example of how to talk about body

To show that my character is a very proud person I would hold my head up high on my shoulders. I would keep my lips straight, not quite a frown but in no way a smile, with a tight jaw and eyes looking downwards, along their noses at people as though they are below me. I would hold my shoulders down to lengthen my neck and keep my back straight. My stance also would be strong and straight, showing that I feel I am high up in the social sphere.

SOME WORDS FOR TALKING ABOUT MOVEMENT

Types of Movement

Walking

Running

Crawling

Rolling

Hopping

Skipping *Sliding*

Jumping

Leaping

Tumbling

Walking backwards *Galloping*

Walking on hands

Dragging lower body with arms

Spinning

Dancing

Tip-toeing

Ways of Changing movement

Flow

Smooth sustained
jerky, disjointed percussive

tension

loose
relaxed
tense
constricted.

Direction

direct--moving to a specific point without veering off the path
indirect--wandering aimlessly.
Change of direction: suddenly or slowly

Weight

Light
Heavy

Time

Slow
Fast

Size

Wide Narrow
High Low
Deep shallow

An example of how to talk about movement:

When my character is angry with someone and the other character walked onto stage my character would walk fast and directly up to the other character. They would move percussively to show they are losing control of their body because they are so enraged. I would walk with large, wide steps to get as close to the person as quickly as possible.

SOME WORDS FOR TALKING ABOUT SPACE



Personal Space

The 'bubble' around a person on stage, their area for use.
Is it big, small, high, low?

General Space

All of the space other than personal space
How are you using it?
Are you using a small/big amount of space?
Are your characters close, or distant?
Is the space cluttered/ open?

Focus

How is the space being used to focus the audience on a character? An object?

Groupings

Are characters grouped in particular ways to suggest their relationships or tension?

Levels

High: the area above shoulder level and your own body height. Actions at this level could include leaping, reaching the top shelf and changing a light bulb.

Medium: the area from shoulder level to your kneecaps, generally within your own body height. Actions on this level could include walking, setting the table, sweeping the floor.

Low: The area below your hips, kneecaps and around floor level, below your own height. Actions on this level could include creeping, rolling, crawling , digging.

Proximity

How close or far a character is from other characters or objects

Position on Stage

Forward, upstage, downstage, left, right, facing audience or away

An example of how to talk about space

Because my character is a shy person they keep to their own personal space. They do not move out to other people's space. He tends to be on a lower level than other characters to show the way that the character feels about being uncertain about others and where he fits in with others. At no point does he try to get the focus onto him. He generally stays towards the back of the stage, hidden from others.

Creating a Character

The following pages are aids to developing characters with depth.

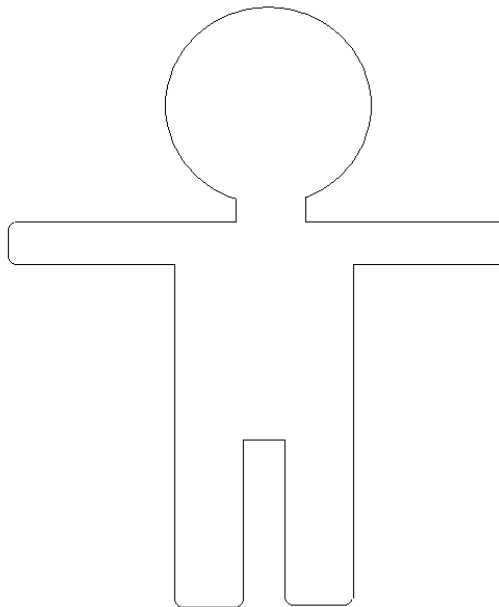
ROLE ON THE WALL

Your teacher is likely to ask you at some stage to do a “role on the wall” about a character you are performing. In order to create a rounded character you must consider all aspects of the role to best understand your person. Like real human beings good dramatic characters need to have a detailed background and well developed personality.

A role on the wall is created by drawing a gingerbread man and writing information about the character in and around the gingerbread man. Information about the character’s personality, background, who they are as a human goes on the inside. Information about the character’s appearance, the things they show the world, go around the outside of the gingerbread man.

INSIDE:

Name
Age
gender
status: rich or poor
family
background
where they’re from
what they do
where they were born / job
have their been any major developments in their life?
What is happening for them of interest at the moment
Likes/dislikes
Beliefs/values



Outside:

Voice
Movement
Use of Body
Appearance

Hot-Seating

If you get an opportunity to do hot-seating answer these questions:
How well did I stay in role during the hot seating?
What was I asked during this exercise?
How well was I able to answer these questions?
What did I find out about my character?
How did this exercise help me to be able to play this character?
How did it help me to understand or to develop my character?

Taking on an acting role: Questions

- How does the title of your play relate to your character?
- What is your character's main sense of urgency? What strong impulse motivates your character to act?
- If your character has a secret what is it?
- What rhythm might you associate with your character?
- What sound might you associate with your character? (e.g. sighing, wheezing, or grunting)
- What colour might you associate with your character?
- What object might you associate with your character?
- What animal might you associate with your character?
- What are your character's two primary senses?
- Does your character 'mask' or cover up feelings and behaviours? If so what does your character mask, and how?
- Does your character have a sense of humour? Is this sense of humour used in a positive or negative way?
- In real life, would your character be your friend? Why or why not?



- What is your character's most positive trait?
- What is your character's status in the world? Do they have money? Power? If they are poor are they brow beaten or otherwise?
- What are your character's major wants and desires?
- What is your character's major objectives for each scene in which they appear? How does your character go about achieving those objectives?
- What is your character's life objective? How does your character go about achieving their life objective?
- Has your character changed by the end of the play?





Character Feelings

You can describe your character's feelings in more exact terms than just "happy" or "sad." Check these lists for the exact nuance to describe your character's intensity of feelings.

Intensity of Feelings	HAPPY	SAD	ANGRY	CONFUSED
High	Elated Excited Overjoyed Thrilled Exuberant Ecstatic Fired up Delighted	Depressed Disappointed Alone Hurt Left out Dejected Hopeless Sorrowful Crushed	Furious Enraged Outraged Aggravated Irate Seething	Bewildered Trapped Troubled Desperate Lost
Medium	Cheerful Up Good Relieved Satisfied Contented	Heartbroken Down Upset Distressed Regret	Upset Mad Annoyed Frustrated Agitated Hot Disgusted	Disorganized Foggy Misplaced Disoriented Mixed up
Mild	Glad Content Satisfied Pleasant Fine Mellow Pleased	Unhappy Moody Blue Sorry Lost Bad Dissatisfied	Perturbed Uptight Dismayed Put out Irritated Touchy	Unsure Puzzled Bothered Uncomfortable Undecided Baffled Perplexed

Intensity of Feelings	AFRAID	WEAK	STRONG	GUILTY
High	Terrified Horrorified Scared stiff Petrified Fearful Panicky	Helpless Hopeless Beat Overwhelmed Impotent Small Exhausted Drained	Powerful Aggressive Gung ho Potent Super Forceful Proud Determined	Sorrowful Remorseful Ashamed Unworthy Worthless
Medium	Scared Frightened Threatened Insecure Uneasy Shocked	Dependent Incapable Lifeless Tired Rundown Lazy Insecure Shy	Energetic Capable Confident Persuasive Sure	Sorry Lowdown Sneaky
Mild	Apprehensive Nervous Worried Timid Unsure Anxious	Unsatisfied Under par Shaky Unsure Soft Lethargic Inadequate	Secure Durable Adequate Able Capable	Embarrassed



Personality Words

dependant

aggressive

clueless, innocent

adaptable, flexible

decent, moral

arrogant

attractive

caustic, harsh, annoying

open-minded

upright, sincere, proper

crazy, flipped-out

talented, gifted

excited, enthusiastic, psyched

popular

comfortable, relaxed

modest, humble

demented, crazy

ignorant, stupid

well-behaved, good

charming

cool

self-centered

ambitious

honest

jealous

conceited, arrogant

very mean, detestable

gross, disgusting

elegant, classy

touchy, sensitive

committed, dedicated

narrow-minded

successful

serious

fair

lazy

cowardly

fine, refined

solid, strong, unchanging

hard-working, industrious

advanced

saucy,

smart-alecky

kind, friendly

happy

caring

hospitable, generous

patient

dangerous

sensitive,

witty, brilliant

rude,

pleasant

brilliant, genius

clever, skillful

closed, reserved

talkative

social, friendly

greedy

credible, believable

generous

stubborn

hard-headed, stubborn

cheerful

uninhibited, unworried

wonderful, magnificent

heartless

deceitful, tricky

haughty, proud

snooty, stuck up

polite

idealistic

smart

intolerant

cold, unfriendly

childish

petty, nit-picky

clever, smart

complicated

outgoing

strong

creative

critical

boring

lazy, sluggish
moody, changing
loud
airheaded, shallow
passionate, serious
mistrustful
courageous
careless, negligent
nervous
curious
depressed
superficial, shallow
optimistic
orderly
embarrassing
pessimistic
practical

radical, revolutionary
refined, elegant
rough
rebellious
always must be right
honest, has integrity
rich
mature
religious
correct, proper
romantic
inconsiderate
considerate
calm
angry, sour
messy, dirty
clever, tricky

shy
weak, poor
awkward
depressed, melancholic
self-confident
sensitive
carefree, untroubled
careful
spontaneous
athletic
sweet, nice
likable, friendly
sad
independent
untroubled, worry-free
unpredictable
inflexible

inexperienced
disobedient
clumsy, unskillful
impolite, rude
responsible
uptight, mean, spiteful
dependable
embarrassed
trustworthy
confused
spoiled (brat)
absent-minded, confused
together
reliable

REFLECTION AND EVALUATION

Reflection takes place throughout the dramatic process. Drama students should constantly be looking closely at their work and considering the positives and negatives of their performance creations. Evaluation at the end of a piece of work is valuable to help towards future performances and also shows the ability to understand what good drama is.

Therefore in drama reflection is shown in logging and in final evaluations.

The following pages will give guides for going about reflection in your DW. They are guides only. Reflection is a personal journey and it is important that you find the best way for you to reflect.

What is reflection?

The following is taken from a handout on reflection in general. Reflection is useful in all walks of life so it is good to develop these skills in drama.

Key elements

Reflection is a type of thinking associated with deep thought, aimed at achieving better understanding. It contains a mixture of elements, such as:

1. Making sense of experience

We don't always learn from experiences. Reflection is where we analyse experience, actively attempting to 'make sense' or find the meaning in it.

2. 'Standing back'

It can be hard to reflect when we are caught up in an activity. 'Standing back' gives a better view or perspective on an experience, issue or action.

3. Repetition

Reflection involves 'going over' something, often several times, in order to get a broad view and check nothing is missed

4. Deeper honesty

Reflection is associated with 'striving after truth'. Through reflection, we can acknowledge things that we find difficult to admit in the normal course of events.

5. 'Weighing up'

Reflection involves being even-handed, or balanced in judgement. This means taking everything into account, not just the most obvious.

6. Clarity

Reflection can bring greater clarity, like seeing events reflected in a mirror. This can help at any stage of planning, carrying out and reviewing activities.

7. Understanding

Reflection is about learning and understanding on a deeper level. This includes gaining valuable insights that cannot be just 'taught'.

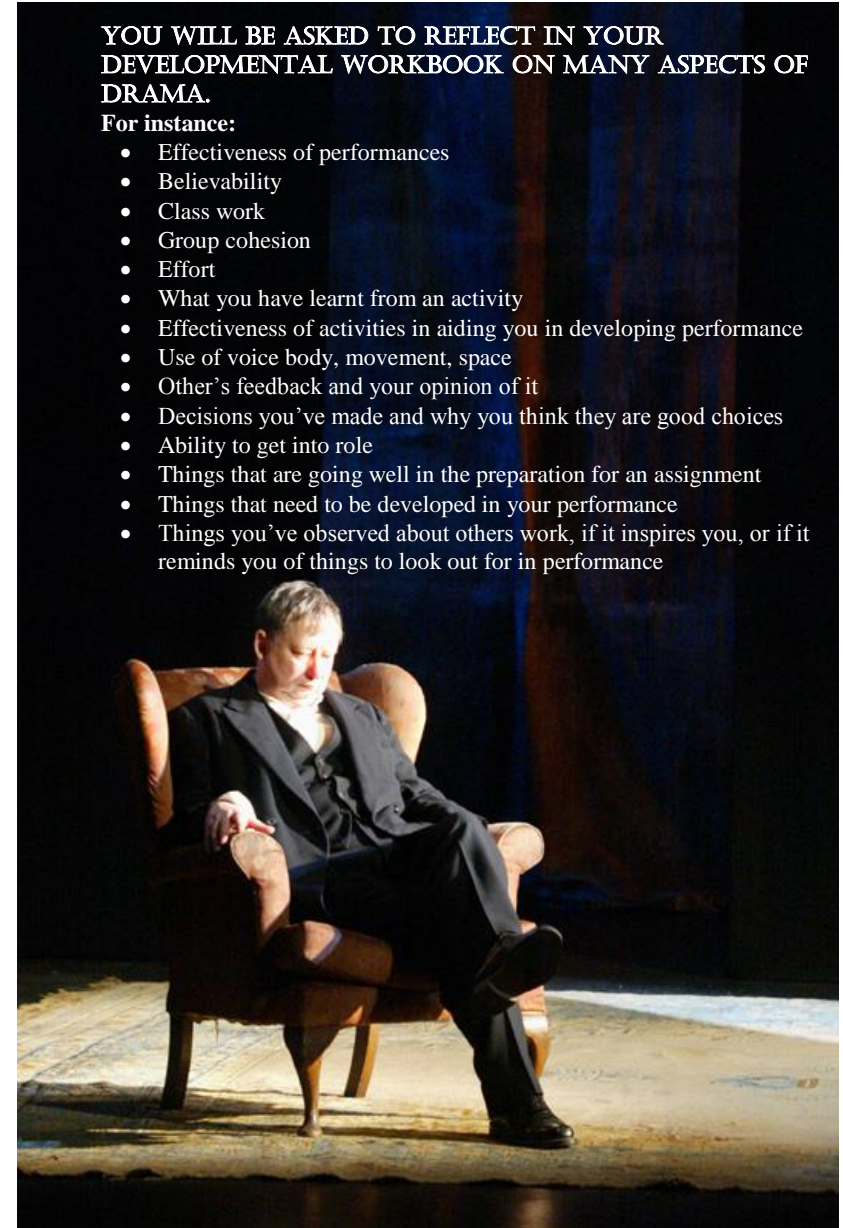
8. Making judgements

Reflection involves an element of drawing conclusions in order to move on, change or develop an approach, strategy or activity.

YOU WILL BE ASKED TO REFLECT IN YOUR DEVELOPMENTAL WORKBOOK ON MANY ASPECTS OF DRAMA.

For instance:

- Effectiveness of performances
- Believability
- Class work
- Group cohesion
- Effort
- What you have learnt from an activity
- Effectiveness of activities in aiding you in developing performance
- Use of voice body, movement, space
- Other's feedback and your opinion of it
- Decisions you've made and why you think they are good choices
- Ability to get into role
- Things that are going well in the preparation for an assignment
- Things that need to be developed in your performance
- Things you've observed about others work, if it inspires you, or if it reminds you of things to look out for in performance



Logging or Journal Writing .

The things you could write about

Logging is an important record of the reflection process. It is where you are asked to write entries about each days activities in drama. You should log, if not each lesson/day at least each week. Check down this list of things to include in your logging.

What did you do today?

Give a brief outline of the days activities and then go into further detail using the prompts below.

Warm ups

The activity and what it was intended for/what it helps you out with/ (e.g. focus, team work, spontaneity, energy, voice, body, movement, emotion)

Any Other Activities

(e.g. role on the wall, hot seating) Record what your teacher asks you to record.

Reflect on how this has helped you to get into role/understand something about the role.

Your Rehearsal Time

It is not intended that you write about each of the following points every day. This is just for you to reflect on when you are logging. Have a look through and see if anything has come to you during your rehearsal.

- Anything you have realised about your character or the storyline/action of the play, the theatre form you are studying
- Any questions/difficulties you still have about playing the character/creating the drama/theatre form
- Decisions you have made and reasons for the decisions
- Significant development of the performance
- Things you are happy about/ not so happy about.

These things can be dependant on the type of process you are involved in (creating character, scripted drama, devising, using a theatre form)

For example:

- Any “Oh, I get it” moments.
- If you have realised how they feel at a particular point.
- Any conventions you added to the work and why
- Any conventions you re-evaluated, changed in some way and why
- If you work out how someone else is reacting to you, that may have helped you know how you act towards them.
- Any deepening of understanding of how it would have been to be them at the time.
- If you’ve worked out how to say a specific line, that had you puzzled before.
- Any moments where you think tension is required
- A moment where you feel you’ve made a good choice for use of techniques
- Decisions on where you will move, stand, sit, to show the characters’ feelings/personality.
- Difficulties you faced and how you overcame them
- If you worked something out about how a scene could run smoother
- Change of dialogue and why
- A convention you added that you thought was a good idea
- Something your group has decided that you aren’t sure is effective.
- If there was a moment in the rehearsal where you feel you really stepped into role. Note how it felt or how you got there.
- If you realise what it was like at the time of the play, which may be different to today’s world and may affect your character.

Give reasons: a decision means little if it isn’t justified.

Always ask yourself: WHY?

- Give yourself a mark out of ten, and then give a reason for your grade.
- Give your group a mark out of ten, and then a reason for your grade.

You should think about how well you got through what you had set on your rehearsal schedule for the day.

Do not neglect the power of pictures to help you log, when pictures are used and captioned well they can tell a lot about what you have done.

Some Things to Look for in Yours and Other's Performances:

Performance in general:

Do you believe the actors?

Can you feel the tension in the scene?

Does it make an impact/have an effect on the audience?

Is the action/acting appropriate to the topic/character?

Is the use of voice, body, movement, space expressive and/or varied? Or if you are in older grades is the subtlety of human emotion/personality evident?

Do the actors interact well with each other?

Do the scenes flow nicely?

Are the characters fully developed?

Do the actors consider the character's relationships?

Do the characters grow and change throughout?

Do you connect with the characters?

Do the audience laugh in moments that are not necessarily intended to be funny? Eg. Is the audience reaction different from the intended effect?

For reflection of devised performances:

Is the story clear?

Is the storyline interesting? Are there any unnecessary pieces? Are there any questions that are not answered for you? Is the performance creative in its presentation of the story, considering ways of structuring the story to build the elements of the performance effectively?

Is the dialogue useful? Does it make sense?

Are the conventions chosen useful? What do they add to the performance?

Does/do the scene/scenes develop a concept/idea?

Is the set useful and effective?

Are the characters sustained throughout the performance?



Drama Evaluation Writing Frame

You could use the following to reflect on a performance you have seen.
Use this only as a guide, never as the be all and end all of reflection.

Structure	Useful Starters	Useful Vocabulary
A. Introduction	I thoughtwas effective because of the way they.....	
B. Tension	The scene had a strong impact because of the use of If he/she/I had used it would have been more effective because The tension was built by	build tension increase tension develop a scene enhance a scene the scene is enhanced by creates an impact
C. Components	The staging was effective because They/we/I could have improved the staging by..... The space could have been used more effectively, for example..... The use of lighting enhanced the scene because it The costumes were effective in for example The props aided the performance by	use space set colour set up levels furniture mood is made effective by show character imagination stereotype

D. Characters and Acting	The dramatist created a credible character because of his/her use of for example, when he/she..... She/he could have created a more believable character if she/he had/hadn't	create a character physicality facial expressions focus concentration vocal skills movement space use
E. Dialogue	The dialogue was very effective because..... The dialogue would have been more if the use of language.....	believable credible realistic
F. Convention use	The use of the convention was effective because	Validity Information Emotive Stylistic Relate Give an impact Thought provoking
G. Impact upon the Audience	The performance was trying to It was effective/not effective in conveying this because	Make a comment on society Teach a lesson Suggest something Make the audience feel a certain way
H. Conclusion	Overall,was/wasn't effective because..... It would have been more effective if.....	

Reflection: Watching a Performance

- Look out for particular use of techniques (voice body, movement, space) used to create character, or emotion (Several moments). Be able to describe in detail the use of the technique.
eg. Voice: pitch, pace pause inflection, body: posture, tension, stance, movement: speed, weight, legs, arms, direction, percussive, sustained, space: distance, closeness, levels, personal, general

Why you chose this moment as a good/bad example of technique. What it highlights about the character or the intensity of emotion.

- Think about what the performance might be saying to its audience. It could be a reflection of society or a reaction against it
- What was the play trying to say to you? What was it trying to make you think? How did they make this obvious?
- Note the set. Is it obvious where they are? How does it do this? Are there any special features that tell us about the story, the people, the style of performance?
- Look out for specific moments when the lights, set, costume highlight a mood, or focus on a person. Be able to describe how this is done. Think about why this is.
- Were you entertained by the play? Being entertaining does not necessarily mean it was funny
- Was the tension in the performance evident?
- How did the conventions or components of drama help to create a strong performance?
- What did not impress you?
- Did the performance flow smoothly?
- Were the actors in role? Did they work well together? Could they be heard? Seen?
- Was there some variety in the performance?



So for instance:

- In the performance of *The Crucible* the actor playing Elizabeth used the process of voice effectively. She deepened her voice and took on a lower tone, speaking slowly when she was shocked/horrified at being accused of the crime of witchcraft. She then had a shrill voice at a high pitch and very loud as she became hysterical about Abigail accusing her. She also had moments where her lines broke off and she was very breathy as if about to cry, but holding it in
- The lighting was effective in *The Crucible*. At the beginning the children were portrayed dancing late at night in the forest. The lighting was very dark, with a touch of blue on the girls, enough to light them up, this added to the wickedness that was dancing in the forest for the people of these times, it also hints at the evil to take over their town. At times of tension the scenes would take on a red light, so for instance when Elizabeth and John become extremely angry with each other. This heightens their mood by showering them in light the colour of blood and hatred. In a later scene the red light is used to highlight the devilish side of the stage with the horrid Abigail and the leaders of the court who are in the wrong standing on one side of the stage bathed in red, whilst on the other side the truthful side have a slight blue light on them. This shows their despair as they are being put down by the others. At the end of Act 2 John Proctor is left almost alone in his house as his wife is taken off to jail. As he vows to help her the lights begin to turn an amber colour to show his pain and anguish, they fade showing him falling almost into despair as he realises what he must do. This is reflected at the end of the play when Elizabeth, Proctor's wife, is left standing on stage as the lights dim, we see the stage darken as she sinks into despair at the loss of her husband, though it is almost triumphant, with the slight amber glow to the ending light. (you won't have to write quite this much, it's covering quite a bit



