

GCSE (9–1)
Learner Booklet

DRAMA

J316
For first teaching in 2016

Performance and response

**Component 04 – examined
assessment : Key definitions
and points for learners**

Version 1



Component 04 Examined Assessment: Key definitions and points for learners

This resource is designed to explain in outline the content required for Component 04 Drama: Performance and response. Use it to remind yourself of key points.

It is split into:

- Section A content which must be studied in relation to a chosen set text.
- Section A content on the development of drama and performance.

What is the context of my set text?

What are the theatrical conventions of the period in which the text was created?

Social context

The relationships and interactions between the characters and the events in the text.



Historical context

The time/period the text was written in and the playwright was writing AND the context within the text of when and where the narrative is set.



Cultural context

The values and attitudes explored thematically in the text.

What are the characteristics of my set text?

Genre(s)

A way of categorising different types of drama. A play may be categorised using multiple types of genre.

Structure

The way a piece of drama is put together; the connections between episodes, scenes or acts; the framework.

Characters

A named individual within the play (e.g. "There are ten characters in scene one, all of whom have speaking parts.").

Form

In theatre, form is determined by the content of the drama (e.g. the way the playwright has constructed the narrative elements) and by the way it is presented (the choices made by actors, designers and directors in interpreting the material for performance).

Style

Style refers to the way the actors perform, the visual characteristics of the setting and costumes, and the choice of conventions used.

Theatrical setting

The place the action in the scene or play is set.

Plot

The basic story thread running through a performance/play which gives the reason for the characters' actions.

Subplot

In narratives, this term refers to a secondary plot or storyline

Dialogue

The spoken text of a play – conversations between characters – is dialogue.

Stage directions

Instructions given by the author about how a play should be staged, when actors should make their entrances and exits and how lines should be delivered.



How is meaning in my set text communicated to the audience?

Through the use of **performance space** and **spatial relationships** on stage.

Through the relationship between **performers** and **audience**.

Through the design of: **set, props, costume, lighting** and **sound**.

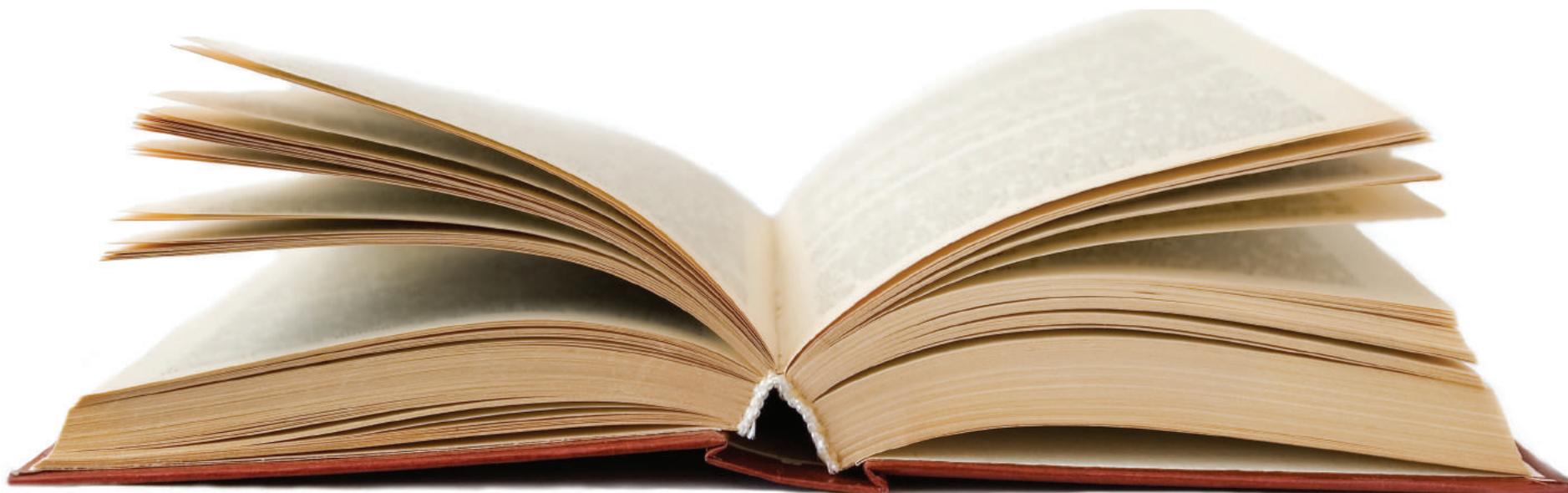
Through an actor's **vocal** and **physical** interpretation of **character**.

Through the use of **performance conventions**.



Am I able to...

- Define how the social, historical and cultural contexts have an effect on my set text?
- Explore and identify the characteristics of a text through practical preparation work?
- Explain the impact that characteristics of a text have on my set text?
- Select examples from my own practical study which demonstrate knowledge and understanding of the full range of characteristics of my set text?
- Identify how a range of genres may have been used to inform the characteristics of my set text?
- Identify how meaning is communicated within my set text?
- Evaluate the roles that theatre makers have on developing, performing and responding to my set text?



What are different types of contemporary staging?

Apron

The Apron is a section of the stage floor which projects towards or into the auditorium.

Black box

A flexible studio theatre where the audience and actors are in the same room, surrounded by black tabs (curtains).

In the round

Theatre in the Round is a form of audience seating layout where the acting area is surrounded on all sides by seating. There are often a number of entrances through the seating.

Promenade

Form of staging where the audience moves around the performance space and sees the play at a variety of different locations.

Proscenium arch

The opening in the wall which stands between stage and auditorium in some theatres; the picture frame through which the audience sees the play.

Site specific

A piece of performance which has been designed to work only in a particular non-theatre space.

Thrust

Form of stage which projects into the auditorium so that the audience is seated on at least two sides of the extended piece.

Traverse

Form of staging where the audience is on either side of the acting area.

Who are theatre makers in contemporary professional practice?

Actors

Person (male or female) whose role is to play a character. Although the term 'actress' is still used for a female actor, many women prefer to have the same title as the men.

Choreographer

Member of the production team responsible for setting dances and movement sequences during the production.

Costume designer

Member of the creative team for a show responsible for the clothes worn by the actors throughout the performance.

Director

Broadly, the person who is responsible for the overall artistic vision of a production.

Lighting designer

Member of the production team who has the responsibility for planning and executing the layout of all lighting set ups and lighting effects. This role may also include the sourcing and rigging of lighting and effects for the production.

Lyricist

Author of the text of a musical/ the words of a song.

Playwright

The author of a play. Also known as a dramatist.

Set designer

Member of the creative team for show responsible for the set throughout the performance.

Sound designer

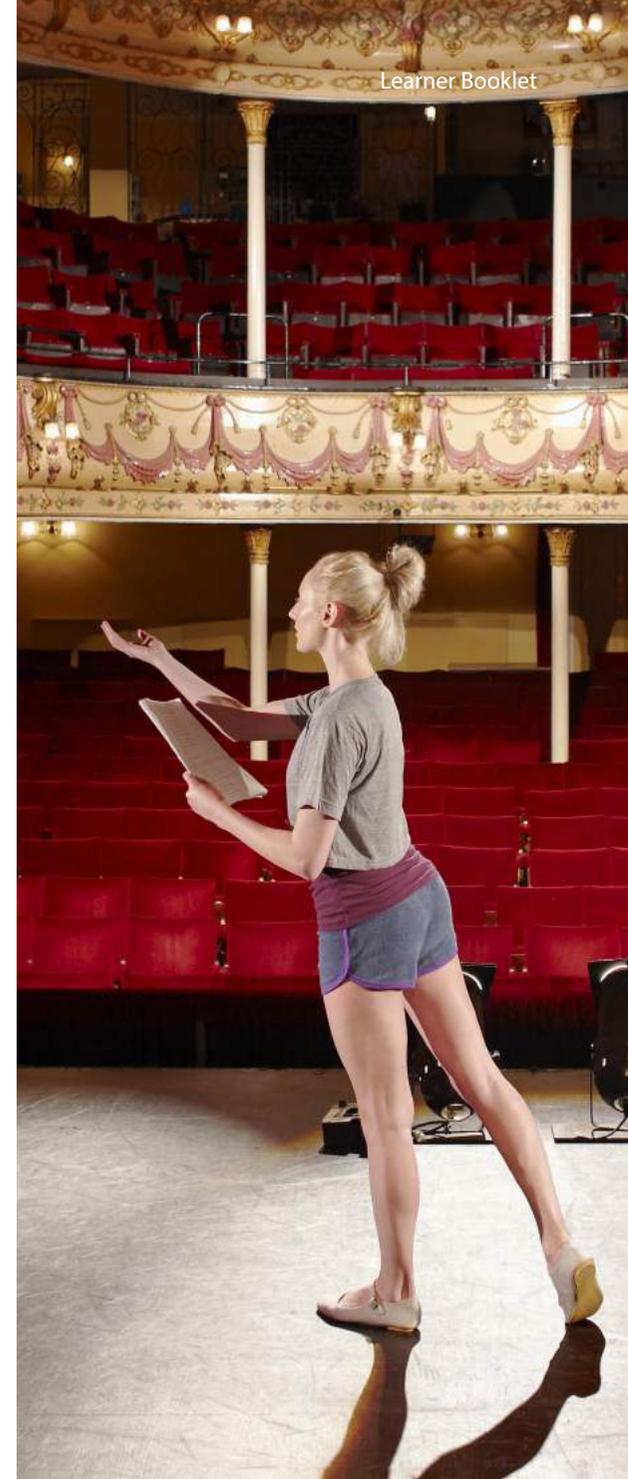
Member of the production team who has the responsibility for planning and executing the layout of all sound playback and reinforcement equipment for the show. This role also includes the sourcing of music and sound effects for the production.

Stage managers

The Head of the Stage Management team comprising the deputy stage manager (DSM) and assistant stage manager (ASM). The DSM is normally "on the book" calling the cues from the prompt corner.

Understudy

A member of the cast of a musical or play who understudies one (sometimes more) of the principal roles and is also in the chorus.



What are acting skills?

Communication through **physicality** and the use of **body language, facial expression** and **gesture**.

Vocal techniques an actor might use to **communicate** a role.

Blocking

The process of arranging moves to be made by the actors during the play, recorded by stage management in the prompt script.



Improvisation

Performing quickly in response to something or acting without previous planning. Spontaneous improvisation refers to making up a role as you go along. Prepared/ planned improvisation refers to working and reworking within a structure of ideas and roles agreed in advance.

Characterisation

The art of creating a character. Within the text, characters may be presented by means of description within stage directions or character descriptions which the actor must try to convey or through their actions, speech, or spoken thoughts within the text.



What about design?

The design and use of a set including:

Box sets

Naturalistic setting of a complete room built from flats with only the side nearest the audience (the fourth wall) missing.

Composite sets

A stage setting where several locations are represented in the same space and isolated or highlighted by lighting each area separately.

Non-naturalistic sets

A set which does not represent a specific location or place where the scene is set.

The development of character through the creation and use of:

Costume

Clothes worn by the actors on stage.

Hair and makeup

The hair style created for the character and the products applied to the face or body of an actor to change or enhance their appearance.

Masks

Form of theatre where actors' faces are covered with masks.

The use of contemporary light, sound and media technology in contemporary performance

What can influence the understanding of the audience in a performance?

The use of semiotics

How meaning is created and communicated through systems of signs and symbols of drama. All of the elements that make up a theatrical performance have meaning and an audience 'reads' or interprets them to understand the events in the performance.

How performance styles affect the direction, acting and design of a performance

Performance style is the way the actors perform, the visual characteristics of the setting and costumes, and the choice of conventions used.



What are the features of a performance text?

Acts and scenes

Subdivision between sections of a play. Acts are subdivided further into scenes.

Antagonist

A character that is working against or is opposing the hero character. The opposite of the protagonist in a drama.

Character

A named individual within the play (e.g. "There are ten characters in scene one, all of whom have speaking parts.").

Dialogue

The spoken text of a play – conversations between characters – is dialogue.

Duologue

Part of a scene in a drama which is a scripted conversation between only two characters.

Flashback

A moment during the action of a play when the natural flow of time is interrupted so that a moment from the past can be presented.

Monologue

A speech within a play delivered by a single actor alone on stage.

Plot

The basic story thread running through a performance/play which gives the reason for the characters' actions.

Subplot

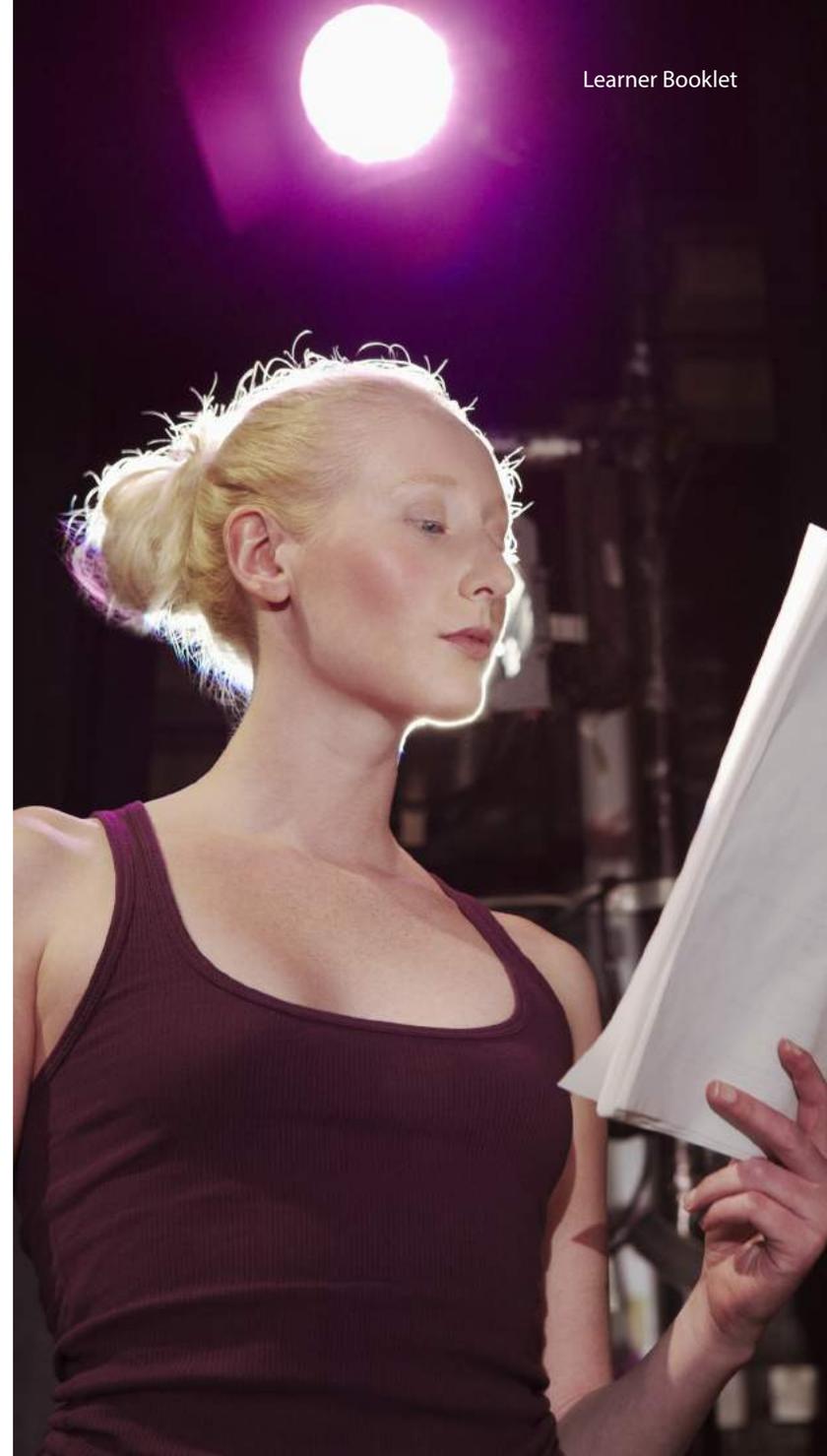
In narratives, this term refers to a secondary plot or storyline.

Protagonist

The leading character or 'hero' in a play who has to fight against/oppose the ANTAGONIST.

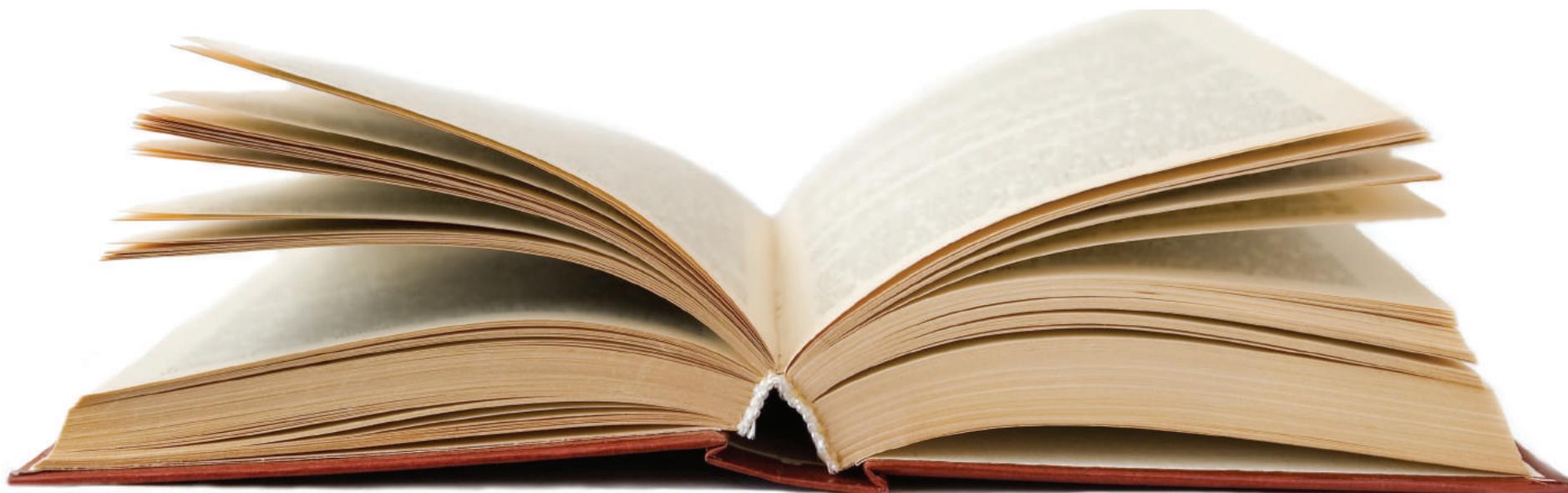
Stage directions

Instructions given by the author about how a play should be staged, when actors should make their entrances and exits and how lines should be delivered.



Am I able to...

- Evaluate the roles that theatre makers (from contemporary professional practice) have on developing, performing and responding to a set text?
- Apply knowledge and understanding of the development of drama and performance to my set text?
- State advantages and disadvantages for the decisions made directing, acting and designing for a performance?





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