

Stretch and Challenge Activities for (DRAMA AT KS4 and DRAMA & THEATRE AT KS5)

KS4

Challenge 1: Visit Frantic Assembly Digital and take part in some active dance/ physical theatre work-outs to extend your knowledge of physical theatre techniques:

<https://www.franticassembly.co.uk/frantic-digital/>

Try a 'warm up with us' workshop, which you can find under the title of one of their shows, and if you enjoy it, try a 'Frantic Create' task, taking you through a physical theatre rehearsal technique. There will be other pages to explore too, based around other shows- perhaps select a play by watching some of the show reels on their website and choosing the resources for the show that looks most interesting to you?

Challenge 2: Visit National Theatre Online or Digital Theatre to rent a theatre production you can watch and enjoy. Perhaps choose a show that is different from any others you have seen- a Shakespeare play you do not know well, a play with a historical setting or a play that is in an interesting style you know little about? Whilst watching it is a great idea to mind map the key moments and skills you find effective, being as specific as you can about how these effects are created and why they are high in impact. Alternatively email Dr. Barnsley for a note making grid that allows you to create an 'information organiser' for the show you saw. Make sure you write down or discuss your own evaluative response to what you see- how did the play make you think and feel? Did it create a shift in your awareness, attitude or perspective on a particular issue? Do you think this was the director's intention? Even better if you can watch with someone else and compare ideas and perspectives on what you saw!

<https://www.dramaonlinelibrary.com/> (National Theatre Online) (Email Dr. Barnsley for a login- there are shows you can watch here for free)

<https://www.digitaltheatre.com/consumer> (these are 48 hour rentals you will need to pay for)

Before paying to watch a play, check what performances may be available on BBC iplayer currently, as well as on Youtube from National Theatre At Home:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Uw68DjwzexU> (at time of writing)

Challenge 3: Have a go at finding and rehearsing a monologue that you can learn, deliver and refine:

<https://www.dailyactor.com/contemporary-monologues/>

Learn and perform your monologue and film yourself or ask someone at home to film you. Watch it back and give yourself a good, honest critique. Make sure you research a given play to understand the character's circumstances, personality, motives, social background and accent.

If you would like to try a Shakespearian monologue, this website will give you some options:

<https://www.shakespeare-monologues.org>

You will find lots of resources on the RSC website too:

<https://www.rsc.org.uk/education/about-rsc-education/home-learning-with-the-rsc>

Or this website will allow you to see what monologues other young actors have been having a go at:

<https://www.nickhernbooks.co.uk/isolated-but-open-collection-and-films-now-available>

Challenge 4: Learn about theatre history, theatre movements/practitioners and theatrical styles:

The National Theatre have a Youtube channel with many informative videos- see what you can discover and decide what you would like to know more about.

Look up 'Crash Course Theater and Drama' (American spelling!) with Mike Rugnetta on Youtube for a guide to theatre history from ancient Greek theatre to twentieth century practitioners. These videos can take you from medieval miracle plays through to expressionism, absurdism and epic theatre, to name but a few, but will also give you a great overview of theatre through history.

<https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PL8dPuualjXtONXALkeh5uisZqrAcPKCee>

If you find a style or period of theatre history you want to know more about, take your research from there and see what other informative web pages you can find. You will find drama blogs on most topics!

Challenge 5: Read a play! Yes, you can read plays, just like you might read a novel! The only difference may be that you may not have a bookshelf of them at home to work through. You will find, however, that used copies in good condition are cheaply available on sites such as Amazon, and you can get practiced at reading a play in a couple of hours (or several cups of tea!)

Currently, Nick Hern Books are offering a free play every week that you can read online.

This offering is followed by a weekly Q and A with the playwright which you can listen to as a podcast. You can also join them on Twitter to discuss the plays or send in a question for the playwright.

<https://www.nickhernbooks.co.uk/the-nhb-playgroup-a-free-play-each-week-to-read-and-discuss>

Challenge 6: write your own play! I recommend starting with a 'short' or a one act play but it may of course grow from there. Write about an issue you feel strongly about and ensure that the characters tell a story that matters to you. Ask someone whose opinion you value to read the first scene and tell you if you have established the setting clearly and whether there is a sense of the intended context and whether the atmosphere is what you intend. Remember that a play is written to be staged so keep reading back aloud to yourself as you are writing to hear how the lines sound and ensure that you convey what you are visualising in terms of movement, action and set, in clear stage directions.

KS5 – Further Reading or Research Opportunities:

All of the above suggestions for KS4 students also apply to KS5 students! You must watch as many plays as you can, read as much about theatre as you can, and listen out for news about what is on

and where. Get in the habit of reading plays and researching playwrights and practitioners and look out for opportunities to join online workshops that extend your knowledge.

Here are some practitioners you may not have learnt about in-depth at GCSE but whom you will find interesting to learn / learn more about. You will find lots of information online about them and at A-level it is very important to learn as much as you can about practitioners because you will be choosing styles to work in:

- Kneehigh Theatre
- Emma Rice and her company Wise Children
- Headlong Theatre
- Theatre de Complicite
- Steven Berkoff
- Frantic Assembly
- Max Stafford Clark
- Katie Mitchell
- Marianne Elliott
- DV8
- Punchdrunk

There are also styles to learn about such as:

- Theatre of Cruelty (Artaud)
- Total Theatre (Berkoff)
- Epic Theatre (Brecht)
- Verbatim Theatre
- Documentary Theatre
- Physical Theatre
- Theatre of the Absurd
- In-Yer-Face Theatre
- Expressionism
- Immersive / promenade/ site-specific theatre

There are many books on the work of actors and theatre practice. Here are a few suggestions:

The Director's Craft- Katie Mitchell

An Actor Prepares- Konstantin Stanislavski

Being an Actor- Simon Callow

The Year of the King- Anthony Sher

Actioning and How to Do It- Nick Mosely

The Empty Space- Peter Brook

The Frantic Assembly Devising Handbook- Scott Graham and Steven Hoggett

The Kneehigh Theatre Cookbook (online resource) <https://kneehighcookbook.co.uk/> This is free to delve into but you do need to sign up to gain access

Applied Theatre- the gift of theatre- Helen Nicholson (this is about how theatre can be used in the community- interesting if you like the sound of a career in theatre within the community)

Dramatherapy- Dorothy Langley (again, this could be of career interest)

We also have school access to e-magazine of the English and Media Centre which has an abundance of interesting theatre articles- please email Dr. Barnsley to request the login details.

<https://www.englishandmedia.co.uk/e-magazine/>

You should also read articles from:

The Stage newspaper:

<https://www.thestage.co.uk/>

BBC One: On Stage:

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/b06ns3m7>

The Guardian stage section:

<https://www.theguardian.com/stage/theatre+tone/reviews>

Front Row on Radio 4:

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/b006qsg5>

a live magazine programme on the world of arts, literature, film, media and music

Plan a club for younger students: they will learn by doing, and you will learn even more by teaching! Talk to Dr. Barnsley if this is something you would be interested in doing.

Parents:

You can help your young person learn about drama and theatre by watching productions together, live or streamed online, and discussing what you see, sharing theatre related news and reviews from your newspaper reading, and talking about films and tv series you have watched together in terms of why particular performances were effective and what issues were raised for the audience. Discussion will develop evaluative skill and the ability to analyse skills and effects critically.

LAMDA lessons in Speech and Drama are also available (at a cost) in school from specialist teachers and these lessons help with confidence, stage presence, knowledge, range and repertoire and may be useful for audition preparation for older students wishing to apply for drama school, conservatoires and other drama higher education courses. Students can also take accredited exams. Please enquire to Dr. Barnsley for further information.