

Transition to Advanced Level Drama and Theatre



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Questionnaire

Take some time to consider your starting point and the areas you need to develop.

1. Have you studied any Performing Arts subjects at KS4 level? (e.g. drama, dance, music, music technology)
2. If Yes, which subject(s) and what grades did you achieve?
3. Do you have any other relevant Performing Arts qualifications? (e.g. graded exams in music or different dance disciplines such as tap or ballet)
4. Are you a member of any local Performing Arts organisations? (e.g. dance schools, drama groups, choirs, operatic societies etc.) or where you, before lockdown?
5. What recent (over the past three years) performance 'experience' do you have?
6. What do you feel are your strengths and areas for development in the Performing Arts?
7. Did you regularly attend Performing Arts events in your local area, before the pandemic? List any you have seen relatively recently. (This does not just apply to lavish professional productions. You should also refer to concerts, school/amateur productions etc.)
8. List the Performing Arts venues you are aware of in your local area. (This can include concert halls, church halls, even pubs, and not just theatres.) How many of these have you visited?
9. What are your reasons for wanting to study Drama A Level? Tick as many of the statements below as apply.
 - I enjoy practical Drama activities
 - It is something I feel I am good at.
 - I feel it will complement my other courses.
 - I find it easy.
 - It is a passion and something I want to pursue as a career.
 - It is something I can imagine pursuing as a leisure time activity.
 - I recognise and value the transferrable skills that studying drama will develop in me.
 - I am interested in learning more about the history of theatre and scripts/texts.
 - I enjoy essay-based subjects.
 - Give any other reasons....

Task 1: Perform

Learn and rehearse the monologue below in the style of naturalism (be prepared to perform this monologue in September). It will help you to do a little research about the play and character, as well as the style of naturalism, if you aren't familiar.

Research the play and create a character profile about Amy.

Annotate the script with:

- Objective
- Units
- Actions
- Performance direction (when you will move, change pace etc)

AMY from BREATHING CORPSES by Laura Wade

AMY: I'm Ok. *Amy wipes her eyes and smiles weakly.*

Just – you're dead and I'm going to get sacked I think, so – Not very – not very good, is it? *She laughs at herself.*

Talking to you. *She frowns, looking around the room.*

That's new. *She sighs and turns back to the corpse.*

What's your name Mr Man? *She turns back to the bed, pretending that the corpse spoke.*

I'll go down and tell them in a minute. Probably think I'm joking this time. *Beat*

Amy sees an envelope propped up on the dressing table.

Oh, you did a letter. Nice. *Amy picks the envelope up.*

You know you look – I bet you were lovely. I bet you were really – really kind. Not a person I'd ever really talk to but. But you look lovely. Don't fancy you or anything, you're a bit too old for me. Probably got kids my age.

Oh God have you got *Beat. She looks at the envelope.* Does it say here? Who's Elaine? *She turns it over in her hand.*

You didn't lick it. You know they'll take this. Evidence. She'll not get it for days. She'll have a few days of not knowing why, while they're doing tests on it and stuff. If you've said why in here. Do you mind if I- its just you've not sealed it, so no one'd know, cept you and me and I wont tell anyone if you don't. *Amy opens the letter and turns it over to see the name at the bottom.*

Jim. Hi Jim. *She reads the letter.*

Oh my God. A woman in a box. Like a cardboard box? God. Yeah, that's really hard. Hard enough finding you, cant imagine if I found one in a box. Didn't you wonder about who was going to find you? *Amy finishes the letter.*

That's a really nice letter, Jim. I mean, you know . . . For that kind of letter its nice. Not too long, you don't blame anyone. Wouldn't seem fair, really, they never get chance to say anything back. Good you haven't blamed anyone. D'you mind if I open the window? Its just you smell a bit. No offence, but. It's just –you've had a stressful time what with the – *(gestures to the letter)* and I think you've – on the sheets, so – *She opens the window.*

Cold out there. Don't want to smell nasty when they come in, do you?

Task 2: Live Theatre

Just as reading as much as possible is one of the best ways of improving your writing skills, there are other important ways in which to improve your performance skills.

The best way is to **see or experience as much live theatre as possible**. So, you can:

- Support local and west end theatres who are just opening back up again, by attending a live performance of a play or musical!
- Watch a virtual performance: https://www.whatsonstage.com/london-theatre/news/stage-shows-musicals-opera-free-stream-online_51198.html
- Virtually attend Shakespeare's Globe productions online by either checking out free YouTube Premieres or by renting/buying other films on Globe Player
- There are useful features to watch on the website such as leading actors performing Shakespeare's iconic speeches.
<https://www.shakespearesglobe.com/discover/blogs-and-features/>
- HWS has signed up for The National Theatre Collection, accessible to members of the school community using the following link and sign in details. Please don't share beyond HWS.
- <https://bit.ly/hwsnat20>
- Username: **6Jl%8Xw-**
Password: **8li%3Pm'**

Write a Live Theatre Evaluation (for each play you see) in your own words.

Include:-

1. Plot summary, including key themes or message, in no more than 100 words
2. Mention the genre and style of the play, and how well this was conveyed.
3. Mention the impact and success of the set and/or costumes, or anything else related to design that impacted you.
4. Focus on one actor's portrayal of one or more character/s, in a moment/scene that stood out for you. This should include you analyzing how the actor used their skills to portray their role, and the impact this had on you.
5. Conclude by evaluating how this actor contributed to the success of the production and the exploration of any key themes, or the delivery of a message.

Task 3: Play texts

Read a play that you haven't read before, and then choose a character that interests you:

- Find out 5 things they say about themselves and 5 things others say about them in the play. Explain why you have chosen these and what it shows about the character.

- What does your character really WANT in the play? How do they try to get this? Who or what blocks them: a weakness in themselves (eg. an addiction?) Or do others block them?
 - How does your character speak? Choose 10 lines: is it questions, statements, commands, responses to the other characters? What does this tell you about your character's status in the extract?
 - Choose a turning point in the play for your character. Write a paragraph to communicate their secret thoughts. Use first person and try to write as they speak in the play, using some of the language.
6. Your thoughts on the play - Did you like the style, the plot, any of the characters? Why? If not, why not?

Task 4 - Devise

Use one of the images below as your stimulus for a piece of theatre. You can write a script, devise alone (monologue) or within a group.

Consider: performance style, character's, themes, context, staging (end on, traverse etc) storyboard of key scenes, overall intention (what you want the audience to take away with them).



Task 5: Research

What to watch:

TED talks is a great resource, particularly if you only have a few minutes but want to be inspired. Here are a couple of example: Devising Theatre Transforms Lives <https://youtu.be/jL-fg4V-br4> and The life changing power of live theatre <http://youtu.be/ack6ZtlrEEA>

Live, digital, or live-streamed theatre, of course!

What to read...

There are also many interesting blogs and features to read at <https://www.shakespearesglobe.com/discover/blogs-and-features/> exploring themes such as 'Shakespeare and climate change' and 'Romeo and Juliet: A tale of heaven to hell' as well as Thought of the week.

A list of 25 most important plays every actor should read can be found here <https://actinginlondon.co.uk/most-important-plays-every-actor-should-read/> I can't fault their choices and you'll be at a huge theatrical advantage in the future if you know some or many of these!

What to listen to...

National Theatre talks on apple podcasts: a range of interesting talks from actors, directors, writers and critics. <https://podcasts.apple.com/gb/podcast/nt-talks/id486761654>

Check out BBC sounds for all sorts of theatre-related audio delights, including The Archers (longest running British soap!) and Drama of the Week.

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/sounds/category/drama>

What to experience...

The NHB playgroup offers a regular online play to read and discuss, as well as a Q&A session with the writer.

<https://www.nickhernbooks.co.uk/playgroup>

Frantic Assembly have put together digital resources for lockdown and beyond, which will be fascinating to watch (and try out!): <https://www.franticassembly.co.uk/frantic-digital>

Check out courses and resources/articles on the OpenLearn (Open University) website that might interest you. Type in a key word to reveal what they have!

[“In the Envelope: The Actor’s Podcast”](#) features in-depth conversations with today's most noteworthy actors and creators. Join host and Awards Editor Jack Smart for this guide on how to live the creative life from those who are doing it every day <https://www.backstage.com/magazine/article/black-voices-in-hollywood-diversity-inclusion-podcast-72643/>