



Department
for Education

Drama

GCSE subject content

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The content for drama GCSE

Introduction

1. GCSE subject criteria set out the knowledge, understanding, skills and assessment objectives common to all GCSE specifications in a given subject.
2. They provide the framework within which the awarding organisation creates the detail of the specification.

Aims and objectives

3. GCSE specifications in drama must offer a broad, coherent and rigorous course of study. They should inspire creativity in students. They should provide opportunities for students to make and understand drama, recognising it as a practical art form in which ideas and meaning are communicated to an audience through choices of form, style and convention. They should prepare students to make informed decisions about further learning and progression opportunities.
4. GCSE specifications in drama should enable students to:
 - apply knowledge and understanding (as specified in paragraph 8) when making, performing and responding to drama
 - explore performance texts¹, understanding their social, cultural and historical context including the theatrical conventions of the period in which they were created
 - develop a range of theatrical skills and apply them to create performances
 - work collaboratively to generate, develop and communicate ideas
 - develop as creative, effective, independent and reflective students able to make informed choices in process and performance
 - contribute as an individual to a theatrical performance
 - reflect on and evaluate their own work and that of others
 - develop an awareness and understanding of the roles and processes undertaken in contemporary professional theatre practice
 - adopt safe working practices

¹ A performance text is one that has been written specifically for theatrical performance

Subject content

5. GCSE specifications in drama must require students to study a minimum of one complete and substantial performance text and a minimum of two key extracts² from a second contrasting performance text, both of which must have been professionally commissioned or professionally produced. The texts must be studied to gain a practical understanding of drama.

6. GCSE specifications in drama must require students to participate in a minimum of two performances, one devised and one from a performance text³ which has been studied as part of the course.

7. Specifications must require students to experience live performance, where they are a member of the audience in the same performance space as the performers. This may be a professional or amateur, but not a peer, performance.

Knowledge and understanding

8. GCSE specifications in drama must require students, whether making, performing or responding to drama, to know and understand the following:

- characteristics of performance text(s) and dramatic work(s), including:
 - genre
 - structure
 - character
 - form and style
 - language
 - stage directions
- social, historical and cultural contexts including the theatrical conventions of the period in which the performance texts were created
- how meaning is interpreted and communicated through:
 - performance conventions
 - use of performance space and spatial relationships on stage
 - relationships between performers and audience

² A key extract is a scene or moment that is significant to the text as a whole

³ Extract only (from any performance text studied as part of the course)

- the design of: set (including props), costume, lighting and sound
- actor's vocal and physical interpretation of character
- the drama and theatre terminology used by theatre makers and how to use it appropriately
- the role of theatre makers in contemporary professional practice, including:
 - performer
 - director
 - designer

Skills

9. Drawing on the knowledge and understanding in paragraph 8, GCSE specifications in drama must require students to acquire, develop and apply skills in:

- creating and communicating meaning and realising artistic intention, in a live theatre context for an audience, through:
 - research
 - developing ideas
 - interpreting texts
 - devising
 - rehearsing
 - refining and amending work in progress
 - their contribution to the final performance
- analysing and evaluating their own process of creating live theatre
- analysis and evaluation of live theatre work⁴ by others⁵

All these skills should be developed and assessed through the disciplines of performer and/or designer⁶.

⁴ For the purposes of the analysis and evaluation of live performance in the assessment, live performance can include recordings or streams of live performance.

⁵ Their peers, amateur or professional work

⁶ Designer: set (which can include props), costume (which can include hair, make-up and masks), lighting, sound, puppets



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