

Introduction to A Level Drama
Ruislip High School
2024/25

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Welcome!

Welcome to one of the most unique courses that can be undertaken at Ruislip High School. The most important thing, in terms of being a *good* student of Drama, is to focus on making sure that you are always fully committed to each stage of the course and to your classmates.

Taking Drama A Level is to remove the concept of 'the class' and to enter into 'the company'. Both Components 2 and 3 of the course require students to work closely, independently and with a vulnerability that will only be possible if there is trust and commitment.

Effort is rewarded exponentially in this subject, and in the Summer of 2024 we say goodbye to our most successful A Level students for some years, both in the rehearsal room and in the profession - we have two students going to Drama School.

Please take the time to complete the tasks outlined here as fully as possible but most importantly see them as preparation rather than obligation.

Have a great summer, and please contact us with questions if you have any!

Mr Randall and Miss Pennell

Course Overview - AQA A Level Drama

The course, like the GCSE course, is divided into 3 'components'.

Component 1 is a 3 hour exam, which is divided into 3 sections (A, B and C)

- **Section A** comprises **one 25 mark question** about a play we have read and studied. There are options to write about this as a performer, director or designer.
- **Section B** comprises **three 10 mark questions** about the second play we have read and studied. These are all compulsory, and there is a directing question, a performing question, and a design question.
- **Section C** comprises **one 25 mark question** that is a review of a piece of live theatre we will watch; this is an evaluative question.

Component 1 is worth 80 marks out of a total of 200, which is 40% of your grade.

Component 2 is a devising unit, which also includes a heavily-weighted coursework element.

- Students choose and evaluate a variety of stimuli which they then use to inspire further research and artistic direction.
- Students are introduced to an array of practitioners' work and decide which practitioner's methodology is best suited to achieving their artistic aims and ensure that they use the practitioner's methodology in their own piece
- Students perform their piece
- Students write a two-part piece of coursework about the devising process

Component 2 is worth 60 out of a total of 200 marks, which is 30% of your grade.

Component 3 is a performance-based unit, but there is also a written element in which students write about plays they have read, studied, rehearsed and performed

- Students read three plays and study the work of any practitioners involved in the artistic process or wider context of the play
- Students perform an extended extract of one of the plays, using an appropriate practitioner's methodologies
- Students write a 'working notebook' about the process and the plays they have studied, and their artistic aims and intentions for their performance.

Component 3 is worth 60 marks out of a total of 200, which is 30% of your grade.

Component 1

Section A Preparatory Tasks

Watch	Watch this summary of Brechtian techniques <i>if</i> you need a refresher from KS3/4, then watch this production of “The Threepenny Opera” by Bertolt Brecht. See if you can begin to spot and understand the theatrical conventions. (if you need the login details for the Drama Online Library, they are: Username: 7Pe-1Pw\$ Password: 8Cg)9Ji&
Read	Read either “The Resistible Rise of Arturo Ui” or “Mother Courage and her Children”, both are by Brecht
Do	Create a ten bullet point biography of Bertolt Brecht, and a ten bullet point list of his theatrical techniques and/or theatrical principles

Section B Preparatory Tasks

Listen	Listen to the Spanish, specifically Andalusian, genre of music known as Cante Jondo. Lorca wrote plays but he always referred to them as poems, and was especially interested in how words and music combined. If you want a starting point, start with the album “La Leyenda del Tiempo” by Camarón de la Isla.
Research and make notes	Find out as much as you can about life in Spain in the 1930s, leading up to and including the Spanish Civil War. Look particularly at what life was like in rural communities if you can.
Read	“The House of Bernarda Alba” or “Blood WEdding”, both by Lorca

Section C Preparatory Tasks

Watch	Whichever plays take your fancy on the Drama Online Library (login details above), but you should aim to watch at least one a week in the Summer.
Do	Write a list of every play you watch, and make a note of any performers that particularly stand out and why.

Component 2 Preparatory Tasks

Find	A collection of one of each of the following: a photograph, a song, a painting, an interview and a poem. They need to all be linked together in some thematic way - but this is totally open to your interpretation.
Do	Choose three of the practitioners below, and make notes on what makes their styles or work stand out

Antonin Artaud
Early 20th century
Theatre of Cruelty

Steven Berkoff
Contemporary Expressionism/physical theatre

Alecky Blythe
Contemporary Verbatim theatre maker

Augusto Boal Late
20th century
Theatre of the Oppressed

Peter Brook
Contemporary
Wide spectrum of approaches

Complicite
Contemporary Physical theatre

DV8 Contemporary
Physical/verbatim theatre/multimedia

Polly Findlay
Contemporary Director

Dario Fo & Franca Rame
Contemporary Political/comic theatre

Frantic Assembly
Contemporary Physical theatre

Gecko
Contemporary Stylised/physical theatre

John Godber
Contemporary Political comedy

Rupert Goold
Contemporary Director

Jerzy Grotowski
Mid 20th century
Poor theatre

Handspring Puppet Company
Contemporary Puppetry

Nicholas Hytner
Contemporary Director

Kneehigh Theatre
Contemporary Multi-disciplined/storytelling/physical theatre

David Mamet
Contemporary Director

Vsevolod Meyerhold
Early 20th century Constructivism

Katie Mitchell
Contemporary Naturalism/multimedia

Punchdrunk
Contemporary Immersive theatre

Konstantin Stanislavski
Late 19th, early 20th century Naturalism

Talawa Contemporary
Black-led company

Tamasha
Contemporary Multiculturalism in Britain/British Asian influences

Component 3

Read	Any two plays a week, but do not count any reading for the Comp 1 and Comp 2 tasks
Rehearse	Choose a speech, it doesn't need to be very long at all, or even a section of dialogue to learn and perform. You should have learned the lines off by heart, and be ready to perform on the first day back
Evaluate / Write	Choose at least five moments / lines in your performance and write a page detailing how and why you performed the lines the way you did, and the changes you made in the rehearsal process.