

# JCG Drama Department

## Transition Work for A Level Drama and Theatre



Well done for selecting A Level Drama and Theatre! Great choice!

To allow you to transition from Year 11 to Year 12 we thought we would offer you some Drama activities to keep you busy. It's important to keep the brain stimulated, especially as you seek to make the transition to A level, and vitally important that you allow yourself a chance to be imaginative and inventive if you're planning to pick up a creative subject like Drama. We hope that this work will be useful and enjoyable. The research tasks are based on the specification we study at JCG (AQA Drama and Theatre). We hope that, at the very least, this will provide you with something to focus on and will give you some structure for your independent learning.

The work doesn't require any complex equipment, but you will need access to a computer or phone! There are lots of hyperlinks. Just click to be transported to the resources...

We look forward to seeing you again soon.

Best wishes,

Caroline Stone and Katie Stirk

### **Keeping it practical**

It will be hard to do Drama practically when not in school – but not impossible! Here are some suggestions to keep active and to exercise your performance skills.

1. Developing physical skills: Vamos Theatre Company specialises in mask work. With the face covered and the voice silenced, the emphasis is on the body. The physical performance of the actor is important no matter what play you are doing and what style you are working in so why not work through Vamos' tutorials (<https://www.vamostheatre.co.uk/films-and-trailers#filter=.mask-techniques>) on mask work and refine your physical expression. Create a

mask of your own (a paper plate would do!) and practice to the camera on your phone or in front of the mirror.

2. Learn and stage a monologue to camera. Watch it back and give yourself some constructive criticism. Click here [https://www.dailyactor.com/monologues-from-plays/?utm\\_content=cmp-true](https://www.dailyactor.com/monologues-from-plays/?utm_content=cmp-true) for some interesting monologues for both genders. Research the plays and find out about the characters and their circumstances to make choices about age, accent, state of mind etc.

3. Give Shakespeare a go! This site has a number of monologues by Shakespeare you could try. (<https://www.shakespeare-monologues.org/home>)  
The following series is an excellent introduction to playing Shakespeare with plenty of practical exercises and demonstrations by notable RSC actors (including some young famous faces!). Hours of expertise here.  
([https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=D2VnxiW3oqk&list=PLboSQWmG70j\\_S2nWkRlncZYW49nLeFKWj](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=D2VnxiW3oqk&list=PLboSQWmG70j_S2nWkRlncZYW49nLeFKWj))

4. Make a puppet and learn how to make it come to life! Click here to find out more.  
(<https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLJgBmjHpqgs41un5eRyQFIYrL42qWjE5U>)

5. Learn some warm-up exercises here and practise them at home.  
(<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Et0RGcrgkpA&list=PLJgBmjHpqgs7GmUqB8vXVQc7Qqa5eXJWH>)

### **Get lost!**

The National Theatre has a YouTube channel with tonnes of informative videos. Why not get lost in it all?

([https://www.youtube.com/user/ntdiscovertheatre/playlists?disable\\_polymer=1](https://www.youtube.com/user/ntdiscovertheatre/playlists?disable_polymer=1))

### **Swot up on your theatre history and theatre movements**

YouTube channel *CrashCourse*

(<https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PL8dPuualjXtONXALkeh5uisZqrAcPKCee>) offers bite-size videos on theatre history and important movements in theatre, for example expressionism, epic theatre and absurdism (to name just three). Watch these informative videos and make notes on them. Search for online productions of any plays mentioned. Then go down the rabbit hole of YouTube to explore these movements, plays and playwrights in more depth. Some of the work you see may be bad. Very bad. But you need to see bad theatre as well as good theatre!

### **JCG specific – preparing for the written paper 1: read and research your set texts**

The plays we will study for the written paper will be *Antigone* for Section A and *Yerma* for Section B.

- *Antigone* by Sophocles (Penguin, translated by Robert Fager, ISBN: 978-0140444254)
- *Yerma* by Federico Garcia Lorca (Methuen Drama, 2007, ISBN: 978-0713683264)

If you are planning to join us in September, why not source these plays and read them? Then research each play's historical context, genre, style and themes. Search for reviews of recent productions to find out more about the plays' themes and to find out how the plays have been staged.

### **JCG specific – preparing for the written paper 2: watching and analysing live theatre**

At JCG we have membership of the National Theatre Collection. To watch some of the full length plays on there, follow the link using the details below:

**Generic User Login:** Click [here](#)

Public Username: JerseyColl

Public Password: JCGdrama20

For each play you watch, why not choose a key moment – about two or three minutes of footage you thought was really successful – and practise vividly and analytically describing what you saw and evaluating why you thought it was successful? You could create a grid to plan your work.

<b>The Who</b>	<b>The what</b>	<b>The how</b>	<b>The why 1</b>	<b>The why 2</b>
Name of the actor and the character being played	A line of dialogue or a movement	Describe how it was performed by the actor – use vivid descriptions as well as terminology	What was the effect? For example, what was conveyed about the character? What mood was created?	Why was this successful? Because it evoked your sympathy, made you laugh, successfully highlighted an important theme in the play, created suspense and tension?

– and then write it up in a paragraph.

Here's a reminder of those key acting skills:

**Voice:** tone, accent, emphasis, pause, volume, pitch, inflection, pace

**Physical:** gesture, posture, stance, gait, facial expression, spatial relationships

The BBC iPlayer also has past productions from the RSC that might be of interest to you. The same applies to Sky Arts.

### **Learn about different theatre practitioners**

What is theatre? Different practitioners have different ideas. Spend some time watching and researching their work. Discover the work and practices of some new theatre practitioners you may not have studied at GCSE:

- Kneehigh, Wise Children and Emma Rice
- Theatre de Complicite
- Paper Birds
- Headlong Theatre
- Alecky Blythe
- Frantic Assembly
- Max Stafford-Clark
- Katie Mitchell
- Marianne Elliott
- Antonin Artaud
- John Godber

Each company / practitioner has a website / web pages you can explore. What makes each company / practitioner different and special? What ideas do they have about theatre and theatrical experiences? What key features define their work?

Here are some practitioners you probably did look at – but may not have done:

- Konstantin Stanislavski
- Bertolt Brecht
- Steven Berkoff

Research these too. Their influence can be seen in all kinds of theatre we see today.

You can also watch various productions on *Digital Theatre / Digital Theatre +*. They have pieces directed by Steven Berkoff (I would recommend *The Trial* and *Metamorphosis*), Complicite's *A Disappearing Number*, and Frantic Assembly's *Things I know to Be True*.

### **Brush up on your GCSE knowledge**

If you were studying for a GCSE in Drama, you might like to brush up on the knowledge and the skills you acquired. You can carry this into your A level studies. The BBC Bitesize website

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/bitesize/subjects/zbckjxs>) offers useful revision notes on all aspects of the course, including design.

### **Useful books and suggested reading**

Below are some suggestions to chomp your way through but note that Nick Hern Books (<https://www.nickhernbooks.co.uk/playgroup>) will be giving away a play every month! No need to spend any money to keep reading. You could join them on Twitter to discuss the plays.

Why not work your way through these 25 excellent contemporary plays?  
(<https://www.theguardian.com/stage/2018/jun/27/the-25-best-british-plays-since-jerusalem>)

JCG specific reading – AQA revision guide:

– *AQA Drama & Theatre Studies* by Su Fielder and Pat Friday.

JCG specific reading – our set texts:

- *Antigone* by Sophocles (Penguin, translated by Robert Fager, ISBN: 978-0140444254)
- *Yerma* by Federico Garcia Lorca (Methuen Drama, 2007, ISBN: 978-0713683264)

A good book on directing:

- *The Director's Craft* by Katie Mitchell

A good book on acting:

- *An Actor Prepares* by Konstantin Stanislavski

Two good books by actors about acting:

- *Being an Actor* by Simon Callow
- *The Year of the King* by Antony Sher

A good practical book on becoming a better actor:

- *Actioning and how to do it* by Nick Moseley