

The Crucible

Play Guide for AQA GCSE Drama

Downloadable Worksheets

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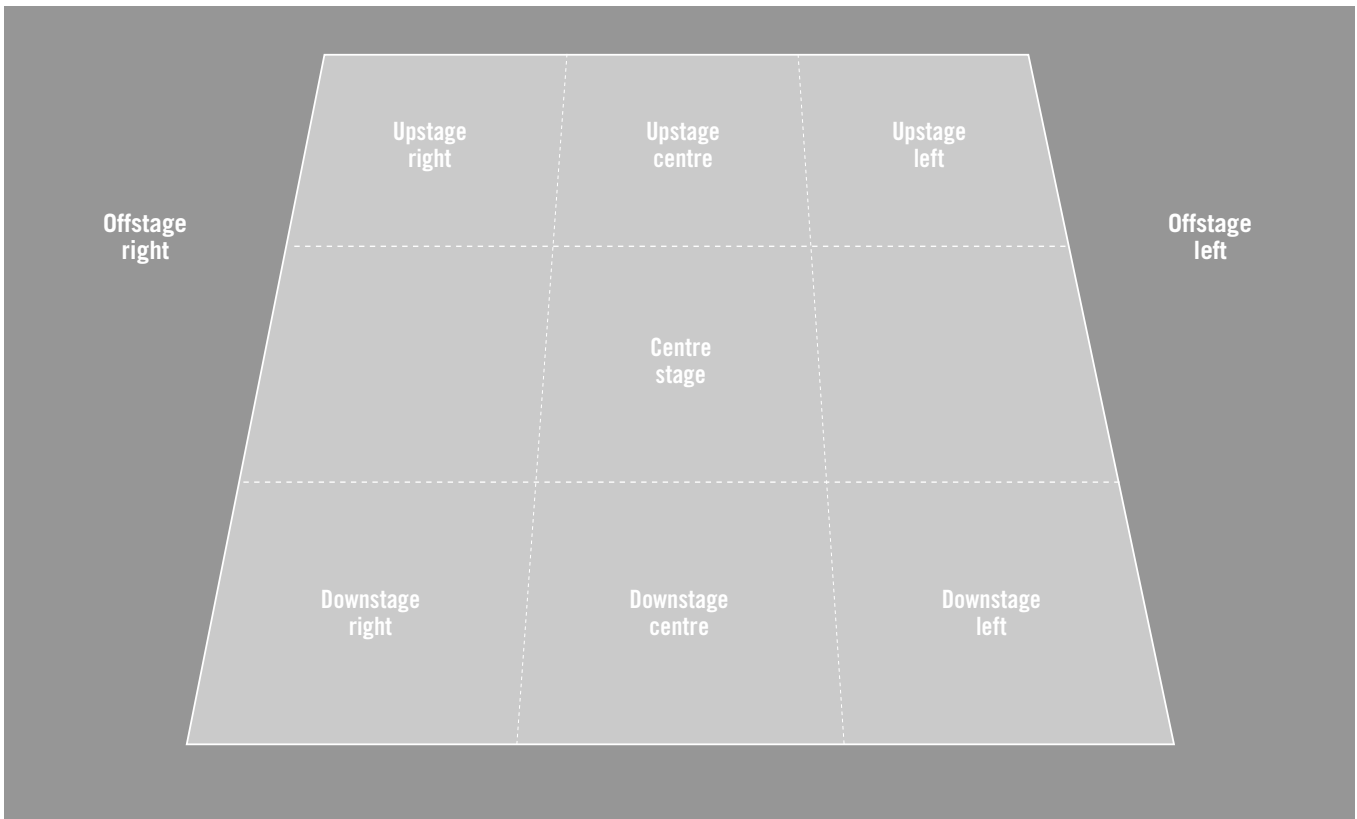
Stage positioning

TASK A1

1 Imagine you are a set designer and the director has asked you to put the following items on stage:

- A A wide doorway, upstage centre
- B A pair of chairs and a table, centre stage
- C A small rug, downstage right
- D A window, upstage left
- E A kitchen sink, stage right.

Use the diagram below to note where you would put them.



2 Now imagine you are an actor and you have been asked to do the following blocking. Note where on the stage you will be each time.

- A Enter through the wide doorway.
- B Make yourself a cup of tea.
- C Sit down on a chair.
- D Look dreamily out of the window.
- E Stand as close and centrally to the audience as you can.
- F Move as far away from the small rug as you can.

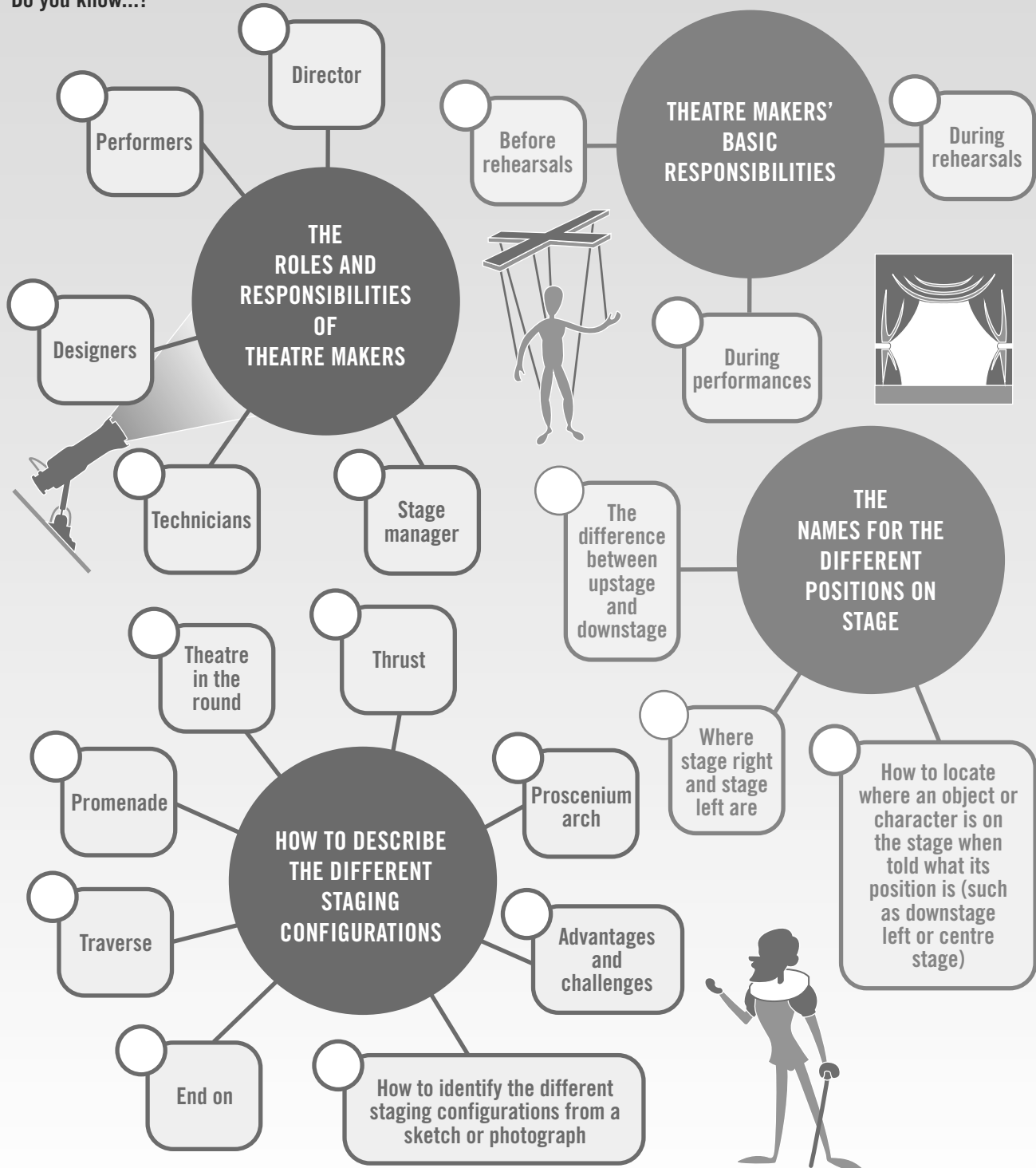
3 Copy a new version of the stage space and decide where you would position the characters at the end of Act 3, when Hale denounces the court (page 109). After you have marked where the characters and furniture are positioned, annotate the diagram by describing their stage positions. For example, if you have put Proctor downstage, you might write: *Proctor: downstage left (or DSL)*.

LEARNING CHECKLIST: SECTION A

Tick each aspect of theatre roles and terminology if you are confident of your knowledge.

If you are unsure of anything, go back and revise.

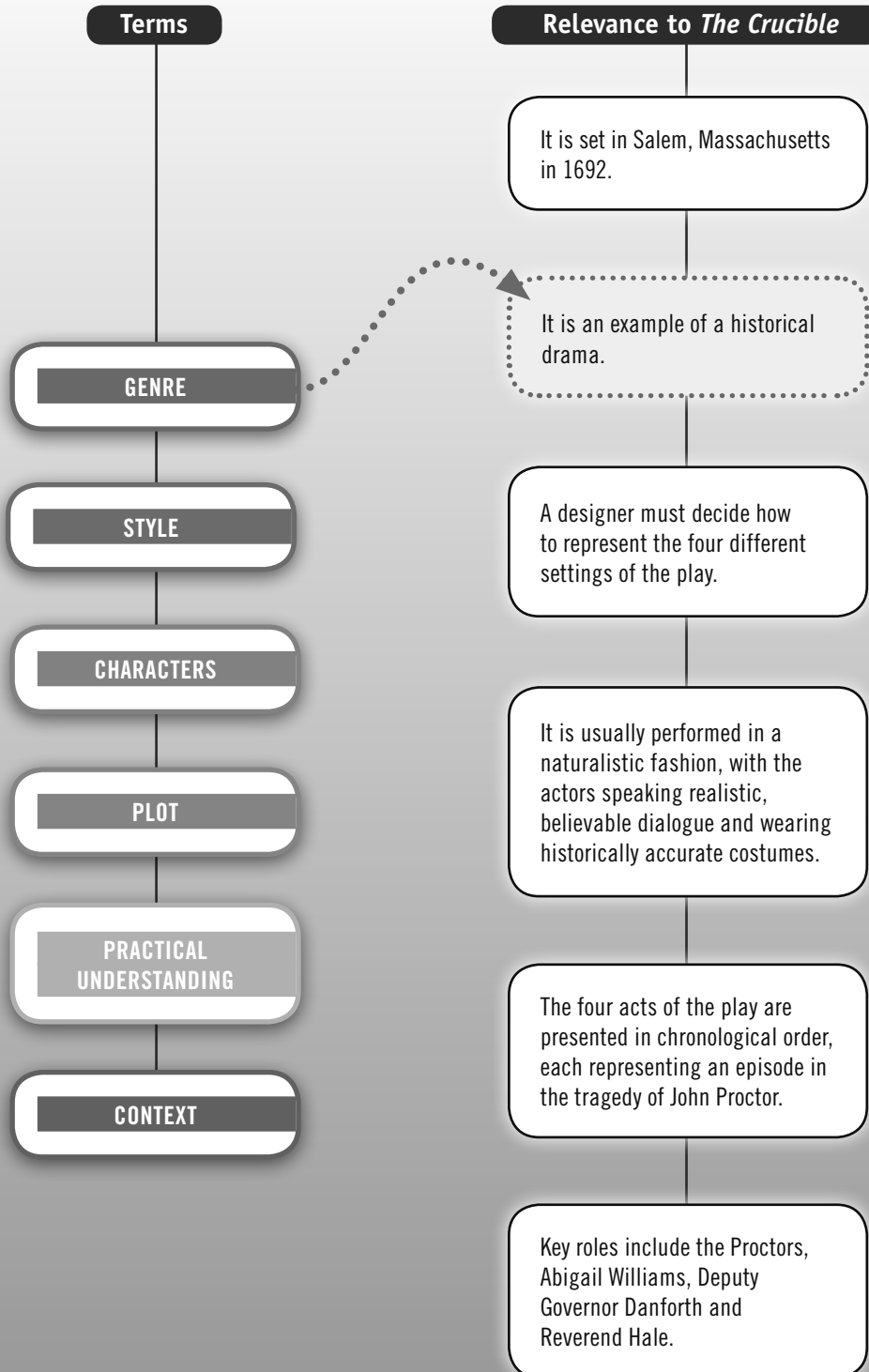
Do you know...?



The features of drama

TEST YOURSELF B1

Match the theatrical term with its correct application to *The Crucible*.



When did it happen?

Task B2

Below are 12 key plot points from *The Crucible*. Put them in the order in which they occur in the play, numbering them 1 to 12.

Mary Warren gives Elizabeth a poppet that she made.

In court, Proctor urges Mary to tell the truth.

Reverend Hale arrives carrying books.

Proctor tells Elizabeth that he regrets confessing his sin to her as she won't let him forget it.

John Proctor and Rebecca Nurse are taken out to be executed.

Mrs Putnam believes Tituba's accusations about Goody Osburn.

Reverend Hale tries to get the prisoners to confess that they are witches so they will not be executed.

Giles threatens to kill Putnam.

Danforth says that Proctor's confession must be written down.

Abigail accuses Mary Warren of envying her and attacking her.

Abigail tells John that she knows he looks up at her window and thinks about her.

Elizabeth tells Proctor that she believes that Abigail wants her dead so she can take her place.

Who said that?



TEST YOURSELF B3

Based on your reading of the play and your understanding of the main characters, match each line of dialogue with the correct character.

See if you can remember too in which act each line is spoken.

- 1 Because it is my name!
- 2 I think I ought to say that I – I saw a kettle in the grass where they were dancing.
- 3 He come at me by night and every day to sign, to sign, to...
- 4 I never sold myself! I'm a good girl! I'm a proper girl!
- 5 She wants me dead. I knew all week it would come to this!
- 6 Oh, how many times he bid me kill you, Mr Parris.
- 7 John, I counted myself so plain, so poorly made, no honest love could come to me!
- 9 You think it God's work you should never lose a child, nor grandchild either, and I bury all but one?
- 10 Oh, I marvel how such a strong man may let such a sickly wife be –
- 11 I cannot lie no more. I am with God, I am with God.
- 12 I will not receive a single plea for pardon or postponement.
- 13 I'll not have your suspicion any more.
- 14 And how do you imagine to help her cause with such contemptuous riot?
- 15 I saved her life today!
- 16 Woman, plead with him!

TITUBA

ELIZABETH PROCTOR

MARY WARREN

ABIGAIL WILLIAMS

REVEREND PARRIS

GILES COREY

REVEREND HALE

ANN PUTNAM

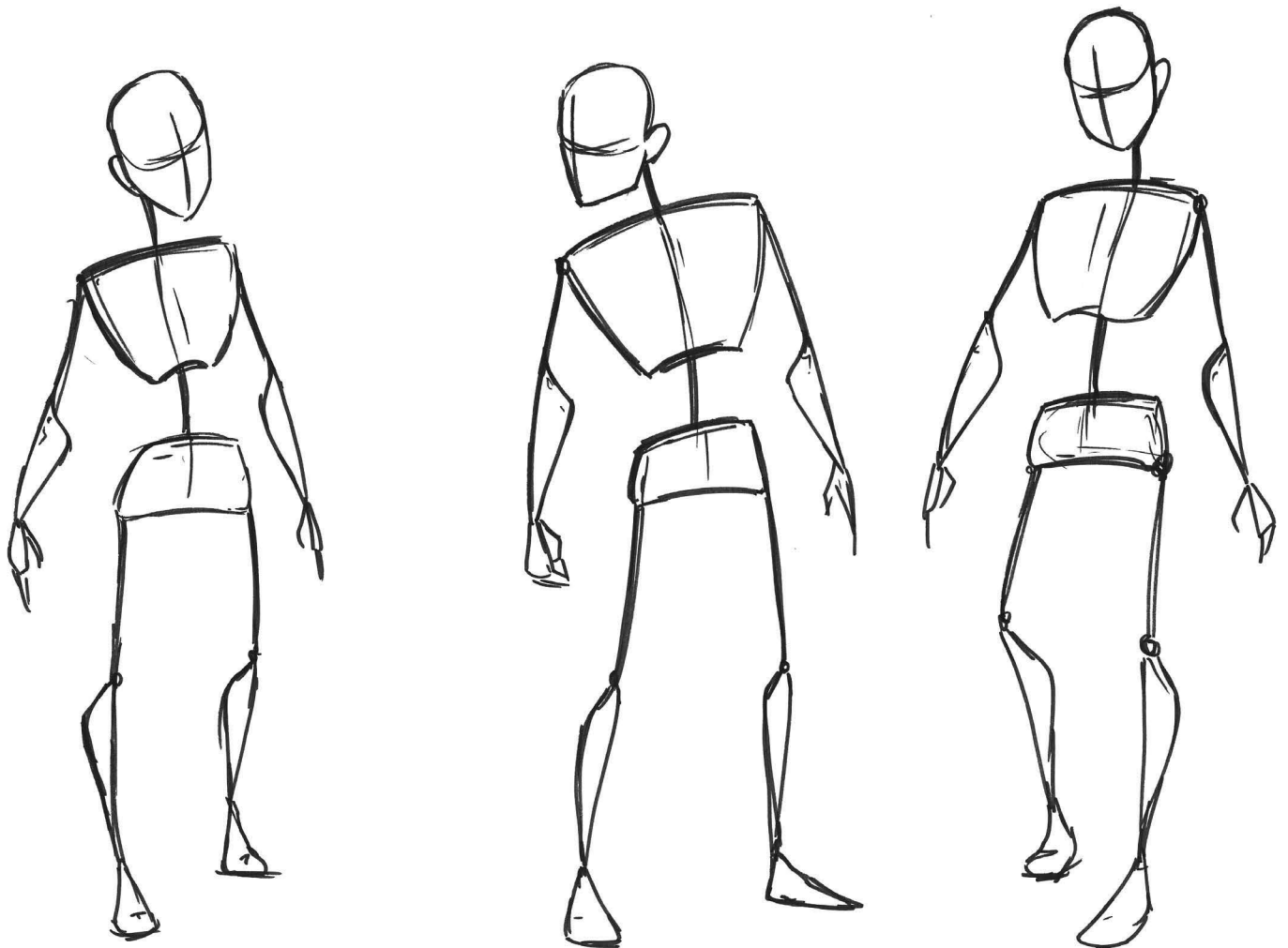
DEPUTY GOVERNOR DANFORTH

Creating costumes to suit the characters

Task B8

Draw sketches of costume ideas for the following moments.

- Act 1, page 31: Reverend Hale arriving from the town of Beverly.
- Act 2, page 52: Mary Warren arriving back from a day in court.
- Act 4, page 118: Elizabeth Proctor, after spending months in prison.



Sample answers for Component 1, Section B, Question 1

Task B18

Below are extracts from sample answers focusing on Act 4, pages 130–131, relating different design specialisms to the play's context. Highlight them for: • Context • Design detail • Understanding of the play and characters.

Costume

For Proctor's costume, I want to show how a Puritan farmer in the 17th century would dress, but also to reflect the hardships he has experienced in prison. I would dress him in dark-brown breeches, a loose linen shirt and a russet wool jerkin. In Act 4, the shirt would look filthy: a dull grey shade and stained dark brown in places. The cuffs would be frayed. His hair will be oily and tangled. Dark make-up under his eyes will suggest he hasn't slept. The fit of his clothes will be looser, to show he has lost weight. The effect is of a once proud man brought down by the cruelty of false accusations.

Sound

My sound design will highlight the impending deaths of the accused. Beyond the jail door, will be a recording of the sound of a horse and wagon drawing up and heavy footsteps as guards arrive. Executions at this time often took place in public and I want to create the sense that this will be a watched event. When the prisoners are led out, there will be a shockingly loud burst of drum rolls, produced live off stage.

Set

I want to suggest the severe conditions of the jail for those awaiting their deaths. My design would reflect the materials available in 17th-century America, so I would create a floor and lower level of the walls to resemble large stones, with the upper level having heavy timber beams, rough-plastered walls and a small barred window. Along stage left and stage right will be two rough wooden benches. Upstage will be a large heavy door with a substantial iron ring-handle on it. This door will figure prominently because the characters are aware that their executions await them outside.

Props

In this extract, Proctor finally decides that he cannot allow the confession to be posted. At this time, a document like this would be handwritten on thick paper, possibly with uncut or rounded edges. The confession has been written by Cheever using a quill pen. The writing would be large and cursive, so that it would make an impressive document when it is displayed to the village.

Lighting

This scene will be dark, with some areas of the stage in shadow, suggesting the grim and frightening conditions of the jail. There will be a light from Herrick's lantern and from a fresnel lantern illuminating the small leaded window upstage left. That will have a filter creating a dark rosy glow, as morning is arriving. The effect will be ominous, however, as gobos in additional profile lanterns will create a pattern of prison bars on the floor.

Characterisation

TEST YOURSELF B5

The following simple descriptions of characters from *The Crucible* indicate some of the important features that need to be considered when developing characterisations. Match each one with the correct character's name.

Characters	Descriptions
REVEREND SAMUEL PARRIS	A religious Puritan woman who has suffered from the infidelity of her husband. She escapes execution when she is found to be pregnant.
REVEREND JOHN HALE	A powerful government figure who takes a prominent role in the trial. He wants Proctor to confess, but is unwilling to allow any compromise or postponement.
REBECCA NURSE	One of the first to be accused of witchcraft as the girls have begged her to conjure spirits. She in turn accuses others of being in league with the Devil.
ANN PUTNAM	An elderly, argumentative farmer who inadvertently causes his wife to be arrested.
ABIGAIL WILLIAMS	A bitter middle-aged woman who is resentful of the good fortune of some of her neighbours. She believes evil forces are responsible for the deaths of seven of her babies.
MARSHALL HERRICK	The minister in Salem whose daughter is apparently afflicted after being found in the woods with the other girls. He is disliked by many of the villagers.
ELIZABETH PROCTOR	A respected minister who has been summoned to help identify possible witchcraft in Salem. He ends up renouncing the actions of the court and is desperate to save those he believes to be innocent.
JOHN PROCTOR	A highly respected, older and fairly prosperous woman with a large family. It is shocking when she is accused of witchcraft.
DEPUTY GOVERNOR DANFORTH	The niece of Reverend Parris and the former servant of the Proctors. She is known for 'dissembling' and Reverend Hale says that she always struck him as 'false'.
GILES COREY	A respected farmer who sacrifices his good reputation by admitting to an affair in an attempt to prove false the accusations of witchcraft.
MARY WARREN	The Proctors' servant who reluctantly agrees to tell the court the truth, but, under the powerful words and actions of Abigail and the girls, makes new accusations against John Proctor.
TITUBA	A man in his thirties responsible for arresting the accused and looking after the prisoners. He appears drunk in Act 4.

Characterisation focus on John and Elizabeth Proctor

Task B21

Use this grid to note how actors might use their vocal and physical skills to trace the changes in the characters.

	John Proctor	Elizabeth Proctor
Act 1		
Key events	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The disturbance at the Parris house. Abigail and Proctor are alone together. He meets Reverend Hale. 	Doesn't appear. Abigail, however, describes her as a 'bitter woman' (page 13), a 'sickly wife' (page 23) and a 'cold, snivelling woman' (page 24).
Vocal skills	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Low-pitched, masculine voice. Can be frightening, with a dominating tone. Quite loud, except in his secret conversation with Abigail, when, at times, his tone is softer and warmer. When Abigail speaks ill of Elizabeth, his tone is harsh. A hint of a rural Suffolk English accent. 	
Physical skills	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Strong, dominates the space, stands tall, makes confident gestures and takes broad steps. Prone to anger, so makes some sudden violent gestures. 	
Impact on audience	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A strong, confident man, with a weakness for Abigail. 	
Act 2		
Key events		
Vocal skills		
Physical skills		
Impact on audience	There is tension in his relationship with Elizabeth and he will strongly defend what is important to him.	She is hurt by Proctor's infidelity. There is tension in their relationship.
Act 3		
Key events		
Vocal skills		
Physical skills		
Impact on audience	His determination to save his wife comes across, even at the risk of his reputation in the community.	Shock that she goes against a lifetime of truthfulness in order to try to save her husband's reputation.
Act 4		
Key events		
Vocal skills		
Physical skills		
Impact on audience	He is almost a broken man, tempted to lie and surrender the last shreds of his reputation in order to save his life.	The conflict about wanting her husband to live but for him also to be at peace with himself.

Experimenting with vocal and physical skills

Task B38

Read this description of how an actor playing Tituba might play the same scene as in Task B37. Put a **V** next to each vocal skill described and a **P** next to each physical skill, or use different-coloured highlighters to show vocal and physical skills.

As Tituba, I would use my body position, gestures and expressions to show how frightened I am of punishment. I would fall to my knees and have my hands clasped and raised towards Reverend Hale. When he says that I have seen the Devil, I will hunch forwards, look down and begin to cry. When he asks who might be bewitching the children, there will be a slight pause as I am having to invent a reply. Throughout, I will use a Barbadian accent, with a range of inflections and pitch. Because of my fear and awareness of my precarious position in this society, I will only make eye contact with Hale when he orders me to look at him.

Task B39

Match the character and appropriate scene with the following physical skills. (There might be more than one suitable answer.) Who might...?

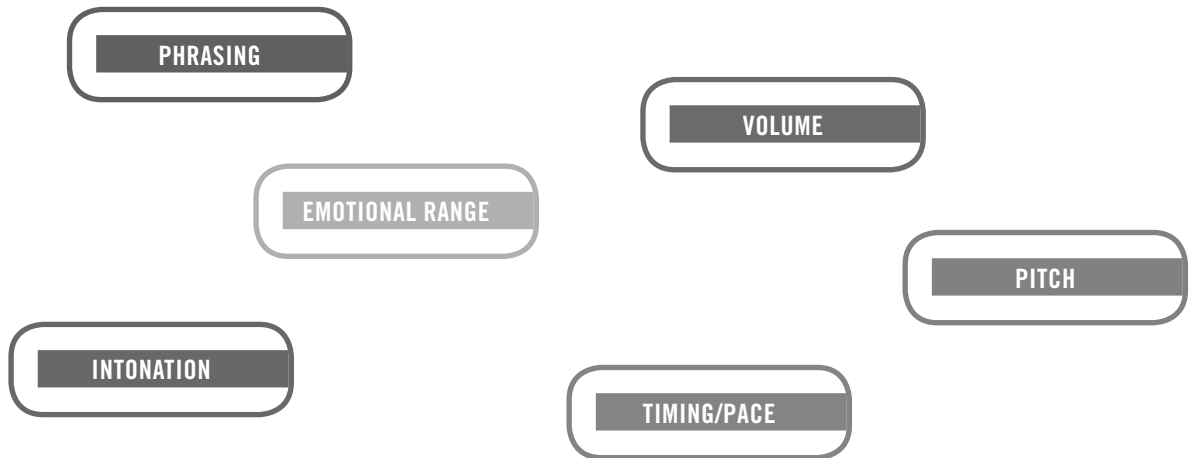
- Leap up on the bed and stare wide-eyed *Betty, at the end of Act 1.*
- Walk a little hesitantly, while leaning on a walking stick
- Raise their hand in anger towards someone else
- Point in accusation at someone
- Stumble because of physical weakness
- Be half-carried out of a room
- Touch someone seductively
- Fall to their knees in prayer
- Stumble because they are drunk
- Stare at someone in disbelief.

Revealing characterisation through vocal effects on dialogue

Task B40

Now you have tried out a range of vocal acting techniques, choose some that you could use on the lines in the table below to express the character and their situation.

Try to include two examples of vocal skills for each line. Think about:



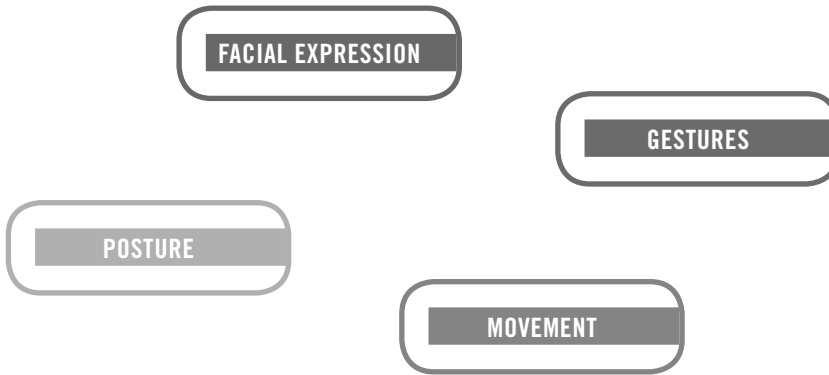
Line	Vocal skills	Details and explanation of what these choices will express to the audience
(page 57) Elizabeth: She wants me dead. I knew all week it would come to this.	Volume	<i>Though usually softly spoken, Elizabeth will exclaim this loudly, as if she has been wanting to say it for a long time.</i>
	Emphasis and emotional range	<i>She will emphasise the word 'She' to make clear it is Abigail about whom she is speaking. Her usually gentle voice, will be ragged and full of feeling on the word 'dead'.</i>
(page 91) Danforth: Mr Hale, you surely do not doubt my justice.		
(page 23) Abigail: How do you call me child!		
(page 124) Proctor: I want my life.		

Revealing characterisation through physical effects on dialogue

Task B41

Look at some other lines of dialogue in the table below. Choose physical skills you could use to express the character and their situation.

Again, try to include two skills for each line. Think about, for example:



Anna Madeley as Elizabeth, Old Vic ▲

Line	Physical skills	Details and explanation of what these choices will express to the audience
(page 63) Hale: Theology, sir, is a fortress; no crack in a fortress may be accounted small.	Levels, from sitting to standing	<i>By standing and pacing in the room, the audience will sense Hale's unease. He is trying to work out how to proceed, as he senses the Proctors are innocent.</i>
	Facial expression and body language	<i>He will frown and look down as he paces, showing that he is worried. His body language will demonstrate more tension. Despite his 'attempt at a smile', he will nervously pound one fist into the other hand.</i>
(page 108) Mary Warren: My name, he want my name.		
(page 52) Proctor: Oh, Elizabeth, your justice would freeze beer!		
(page 114) Parris: Thirty-one pound is gone. I am penniless.		

Showing understanding of the play, characters and performance skills

Task B52

Use this grid to make notes on key characters at three points in the play.

Character	First key moment	Second key moment	Third key moment
John Proctor	Act 1, page 22: With Abigail	Act 2, page 52: With Elizabeth	Act 4, page 130: Ending of the play
Interpretation	A strong, confident character, used to getting his way, but still feels some attraction to Abigail whom he must try to resist.	After the unexpressed tension earlier in this scene, Proctor's anger and resentment emerges.	Last chance to regain his honour. His care for his reputation and the truth has won out over his desire to live.
Physical skills	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Expression: Smiling at first at Abigail, thinking he can tease her into telling the truth, but suddenly serious, with a furrowed brow when he sees she believes she can win him over. • Proximity: Attempts to keep at a distance. • Touch: Gently removes her hand from his. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Proximity: Separated by the dining table to show the distance between them. • Gesture: He will slam his fist onto the table on the line 'No more!' 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Posture: After being bent and defeated, he will suddenly stand up straight on 'Because it is my name.' • Gesture: He will hold his arms out to the sides on 'leave me my name.' • Expression: Torment will be clear, with his eyes wild as he tears up the confession.
Vocal skills	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A slight Suffolk accent. • Tone: Warm and playful at first, then darkening and more serious. Firmly rejects her on 'Put it out of mind, Abby.' 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Volume: Loudly on lines like 'Spare me!' and 'No more.' More softly, almost to himself, on the line about freezing beer. • Tone: Sarcastic on 'Some dream...' Bitter on 'your justice would freeze beer.' • Pace: Lines after 'No more' spoken quickly as if he has been wanting to say this for a long time. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Volume: He will shout 'Because it is my name.' • Emotional range: His voice will crack on the line 'leave me my name.' • Tone: More confident and calm on 'And there's your first marvel.'
Elizabeth Proctor	Act 2, page 51: With Proctor	Act 3, page 103: In court	Act 4, page 124: With Proctor
Interpretation			
Physical skills			
Vocal skills			
Abigail Williams	Act 1, page 22: With Proctor	Act 1, page 42: With Parris and Hale	Act 3, page 104: In court
Interpretation			
Physical skills			
Vocal skills			
Reverend Parris	Act 1, page 12: With Abigail	Act 1, page 44: Interrogation of Tituba	Act 4, page 115: Argues for postponement of hangings
Interpretation			
Physical skills			
Vocal skills			
Deputy Governor Danforth	Act 3, page 101: Orders Elizabeth to come to court	Act 3, page 105: Reacts to girls' 'visions'	Act 4, page 129: Tries to convince Proctor to sign confession
Interpretation			
Physical skills			
Vocal skills			
Giles Corey	Act 1, page 32: Argues with Putnam	Act 2, page 67: Reacts to his wife being taken	Act 3, page 88: Interrogation with Hathorne and Danforth
Interpretation			
Physical skills			
Vocal skills			

Design ideas for an extract and the whole play

Task B57

Read Act 1, pages 45–46, from ‘Hale: Take courage...’ to the end of the act. Then complete the following grid with design ideas for each of the specialisms.

	Design ideas and challenges of extract	Examples	Details in extract	Rest of play (pick key moments to discuss in detail)
Costume	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To differentiate the ministers from the villagers. To set Tituba apart. To show how young Puritan girls dressed. 		Fabrics: Colours: Fit/condition: Footwear/accessories:	
Set	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Puritan bedroom. Emphasise the nearby woods – seen through the window and large, gnarled tree branches arching over the stage. 		Staging configuration: Colours: Materials: Levels: Props:	
Lighting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Late spring light coming from small, high window. Profile lanterns highlighting the faces of the accusers. Fade at the end. 		Colours: Angles/intensity: Special effects: Transitions:	
Sound	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Abstract high-pitched noise underscoring girls’ accusations. Music begins as curtain falls, with volume increasing. 		Volume: Live or recorded: On stage or off: Transitions:	

Sample answers for Component 1, Section B, Question 5

Task B61

The following three extracts are from three student-style responses to the question above. Read them and put:

- **C** next to creative ideas
- **U** next to any points which show understanding
- **T** next to any examples of correct terminology.

1 At this point, the act is approaching its climax and, as a lighting designer, I will want to increase the excitement and tension of this scene. So, I will gradually increase the intensity of the lighting.

In addition to the fresnel lanterns that will provide a wash of light across the stage, and golden filtered light through the windows, I will use more defined lighting provided by profile lanterns to pick out Abigail and Mary Warren's faces to stress the conflict between them.

I will also make a subtle use of a followspot, which will indicate where the 'bird' is in the scene, high upstage. The followspot light will swoop around the stage which the girls' eyes will follow, adding to the confusion of what the girls are 'seeing' and what is happening. This will add to the supernatural effect of the scene and leave the audience wondering how much the girls believe they are actually seeing a spirit of some sort.

2 As a set designer, it is important to establish the formality of the 'court' scene, which is taking place in what is usually the village's meeting house. I will use off-white plastered walls with heavy beams to replicate the type of architecture of the 17th century, and the judges will sit or stand behind a long, heavy, dark-wood table.

I want to suggest that something mysterious and fearful is just beyond the room. Therefore, I will have a large tree, upended as if it has been torn out of the ground, lying downstage stage right. This will symbolise how the very roots of their community are being torn up.

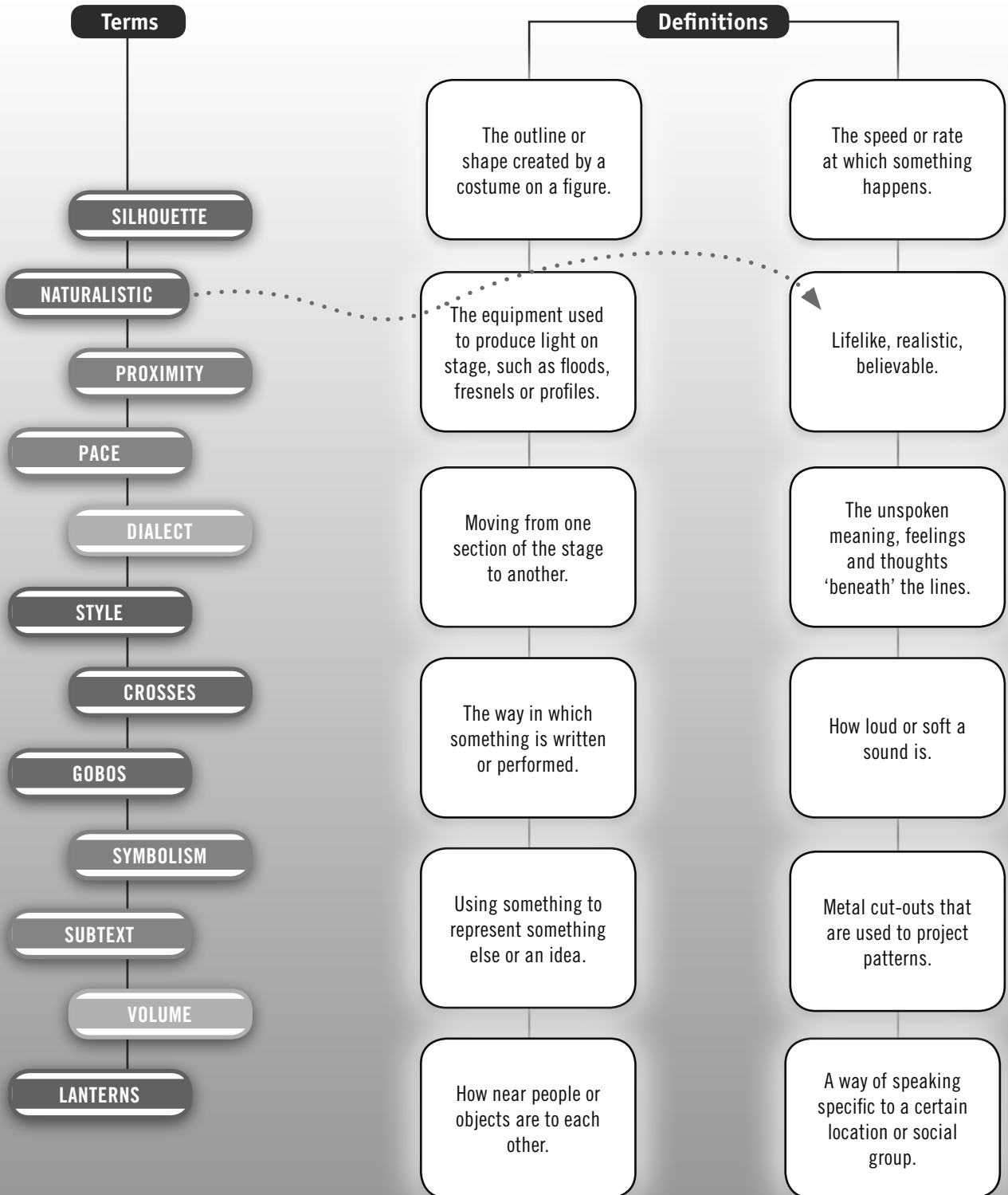
3 Sound design has an important role to play in creating the intensity and confusion at this point in Act 3. Instead of realistic sound, I would choose non-naturalistic, overly amplified sounds. When Abigail is fearful of the bird, I will have an eerie high-pitched sound representing that spirit. The girls' repeated lines will be amplified with microphones, and the use of reverb will make them more frightening, suggesting how terrifying they sound to Mary Warren. On the line, 'Abby, you mustn't', there will be loud recording of a clap of thunder, adding to the feeling of Mary being overpowered.

Performance and design



TEST YOURSELF B7

Match the correct definition with each technical term used in theatre performance and design.



LEARNING CHECKLIST: SECTION B

Tick each aspect of your understanding of *The Crucible* if you are confident of your knowledge.

If you are unsure of anything, go back and revise.

Do you know...?

How to describe the use of the performance space and character interaction

The context of the play, including time period and location

How to plan an answer to an exam question about the set play

How to write about an extract and expand it to the rest of the play, including choosing key moments to discuss in detail

How to write about acting skills, including correct terminology

How the context could be reflected by costume, set, sound and lighting design

At least four physical skills that actors can use

That everyone must answer the first three questions in the exam

At least four vocal skills that actors can use

The names of all the characters and their importance to the plot

That you will have a choice whether to answer either Question 4 (performance) or 5 (your choice of design specialism)

How to write about design skills, including correct terminology

Discussing vocal and physical skills

Task C6

Read the following response to a performance and annotate it with the vocal skills being discussed.

As the music producer, the actor sounded a bit like the Rolling Stones singer Mick Jagger: he drawled certain words and used nasal elongated vowel sounds. This use of a slightly old-fashioned Cockney-type accent associated him with famous rock stars of the 1960s. He had excellent comic timing, saying some words very quickly, so that the audience couldn't help but be caught by surprise and laugh at some of his more outrageous lines. He would throw away lines like, 'a genius like me', showing how big his ego was. One scene that particularly showed the actor's skills was when he when he alternated between talking into his mobile and barking instructions at the singer. His use of two different tones was very noticeable, one which was softly intimate changing to one which was commanding and a bit frightening, especially when he said in a cold, matter-of-fact way, 'You're nothing without me.' The emphasis on the word 'nothing' was hard and cruel. This showed how the character was used to controlling people and being obeyed.

Task C9

Read the performance response given below. Annotate it to show which physical acting skills are being discussed.

In the ghost scene, the actor portrayed both Hamlet and the ghost of his father. This involved very sophisticated use of physical skills. When playing the ghost, he would put on a large overcoat and change his posture, becoming very upright and rigid, seeming to grow before our eyes. He would use slow, powerful gestures, such as pointing where Hamlet had previously stood. He also made piercing eye contact with some members of the audience, suggesting his pain and the urgency of his demands. When becoming Hamlet again, the actor would throw off the coat and appear to shrink, his posture becoming hunched and his gestures tentative and fluttering. The transformation was accomplished very quickly, so that the audience was amazed by this virtuoso display of physical skills. At the end of the sequence, Hamlet collapsed to the floor as if exhausted.

Analysing costume design, including hair and make-up

Task C14a

Look at the photograph below and annotate it with as many points as you can about:

Fabric

Colours

Texture

Silhouette

Make-up

Style

Context

Hair

Accessories

Condition and fit



June Moon, *Williamstown Theatre Festival*

Analysing costume design, including hair and make-up

Task C14b

Look at the photograph below and annotate it with as many points as you can about:

Fabric

Colours

Texture

Silhouette

Make-up

Style

Context

Hair

Accessories

Condition and fit



Dental Society Midwinter Meeting, *Williamstown Theatre Festival*

Analysing costume design, including hair and make-up

Task C14c

Look at the photograph below and annotate it with as many points as you can about:

Fabric

Colours

Texture

Silhouette

Make-up

Style

Context

Hair

Accessories

Condition and fit



Photo: Steve Tanner / Kneehigh. Designer: Michael Vale

Midnight's Pumpkin, Kneehigh Theatre, Battersea Arts Centre

How set design contributes to action, style and context

Task C23

Read the following samples of candidate-style responses about two set designs for two different productions. Note any examples of:

- Description (D)
- Analysis (A)
- Evaluation (E).

The set of Summer and Smoke, designed by Tom Scutt, was not the naturalistic type of set many associate with the work of playwright Tennessee Williams. Instead, the design was minimalistic (D) and stripped back, showing the bare brick walls of the theatre and a plain floor. Two steps up from the main acting area was a semi-circle of nine pianos around the acting space. These pianos were used by the actors to create music, but also to represent Alma's love of the arts. This choice was highly effective because it removed the clutter which often accompanies naturalistic plays and put the focus on the characters, particularly Alma. The pianos also added excitement to the staging, as actors would perch on top or walk across them or sit down to play them, creating a soundtrack.

The set of Sunset Boulevard recreated Hollywood of the early 20th century. The designer had the difficult task of creating a range of complex sets which had to be moved quickly into place to suggest new locations. (A) Also, as this was a touring production, the set had to fit a wide range of theatres. Norma Desmond's house, with its grand staircase and yellow velvet sofa suggested an earlier era which contrasted with the bright casual diner set where the studio workers met and partied. This made clear the choice Joe would have to make – the dark past with Norma or the bright future with Betty. One element of the design which divided opinion was the use of an incomplete prop-type car. While some didn't like it as it distanced them from the impending tragedy, I felt it worked well because it reflected Norma's inability to separate fantasy from reality. The use of projected films, including Norma as a young girl, was also successful as it reinforced the play's preoccupation with film-making and the distance between Norma as a young woman and how she now appeared.

How lighting contributes to a play's action, style and context

Task C27

Read the following samples of candidate-style responses about two lighting designs. Note any examples of:

- Description (D)
- Analysis (A)
- Evaluation (E).

The lighting had an important role to play. The set was minimalistic, so the lighting established the location, time of day and mood of each scene. Instead of employing a general wash of light across the stage, the designer used a combination of profile and fresnel lanterns to focus attention on particular areas of the stage. Barn doors were used on the fresnel lanterns to restrict the spill of light and shape the illumination into tight rectangles, which suggested the claustrophobia of the cabin's rooms. The lighting added to the mystery and tension of the play, as you never knew where you would need to look next. **A** One particularly effective section was the scene when a gentle white light streamed in diagonally from upstage left to suggest the light from a kitchen window as a woman washed dishes. The mood was calm. Then suddenly a pinspot high-intensity green light snapped onto a strange woman's face outside the window, which made us jump with surprise.

Colour was important in this lighting design. This was particularly noticeable in the fight scene when red filters were introduced and increased in intensity and brightness as the gangs approached each other. When the physical altercation occurred, a strobe was employed. The effect was to plant a series of suspenseful still images in the audience's mind which occurred so quickly we could barely take them in. There would be a flash of light and we would see the group in a huddle, with Joe's arm outstretched. The next flash revealed a knife. Another showed the group pulling away from the centre. The last revealed Joe, apparently dead, on the ground centre stage, in the pool of an intense white spotlight beaming directly down from the lighting rig in the flies. Although it was undoubtedly an exciting use of light, I felt that using red to show violence was a little clichéd, but judging by the audience silence at the end of the sequence, it was clearly effective for others.

How sound design contributes to action, style and context

Task C30

Read the following samples of candidate-style responses about sound design in two different productions. Note any examples of:

- Description (D)
- Analysis (A)
- Evaluation (E).

In this production of The Caucasian Chalk Circle by Bertolt Brecht, the sound designer used sound to contribute to the epic style of the play. (D) Brecht believed that the audience should not think they are watching real-life and used the alienation effect to remind them they were in a theatre watching actors. The sound design supported this, by showing the actors setting up microphone stands and testing microphones as the audience came in. In the scene by the river, an actor placed a general-use microphone on a low stand next to a bowl of water and created the splashing noises next to the actors enacting the scene. This added to the artificiality of the play's style. Additionally, all the actors played instruments (guitar, drums, tambourine, violin) and sang music which had been specially composed for this performance. This was always done in view of the audience, with the musicians either at the centre of the action or sitting downstage, watching the action. The music was more modern (rock rather than folk) and relevant to the audience than the style more usually associated with Brecht's plays.

In this play, set in an Internet chatroom, music played a vital role. (A) The audience was immediately startled when the characters entered to a recording of the Oompa Loompa song from the 1971 Willy Wonka film. The volume was loud, with speakers at the front of the stage blasting the song out as the actors, dressed in ordinary contemporary clothes, but moving rigidly in time with the music, entered. The effect was odd, making the audience laugh and preparing them for a play which would surprise them repeatedly. The song snapped off and the actors seamlessly began their dialogue. To reinforce the setting, the sound design incorporated a range of recorded notification 'pings' and 'whoosh' sound effects to punctuate the characters' online debates. At the end of the first scene, there was loud burst of Prodigy's 'Firestarter' song, approximately 20 seconds, which accompanied the actors' 'choreography' as they positioned the chairs for the next scene. This use of sound and music made the production seem modern and relevant, as well as keeping the pace high. Additionally, the choice of 'Firestarter' added a sense of danger.

Theatre production

 TEST YOURSELF C2

Read these responses to different productions and identify whether they are about **performance**, **sound**, **lighting**, **costume** or **set**. Do they describe, analyse or evaluate?

1 The use of a revolve contributed greatly to the excitement of the party scene. As it slowly turned, the set revealed a new room in the house. As the party continued, the rooms became more and more cluttered, suggesting that the party was getting out of hand.

4 The uniform established the character's status, as well as his appeal to the women of the town. The close-fitting scarlet jacket, with gold braid trim, made him stand out from the other characters who were generally dressed in muted greys, greens and browns.

8 Whenever the children entered, a gentle piece of piano music accompanied them, making their scenes seem almost dream-like.

11 Columns of lights descended from the fly space. The mystery of the effect was increased by the use of a haze machine, making the light seem thick, like mist.

2 From the actor's first entrance, the audience was captivated. To create the recklessness of his character, he hurtled onto the stage, appearing to be wild and, judging by the bottle he was holding, drunk. He suddenly stopped and smiled slyly, enjoying the impression he had made on both the other characters and the audience.

5 The actors' German accents were truly impressive.

9 The audience jumped at the unexpected explosion at the end of Act 1. The speakers were positioned all around the auditorium, creating the effect that we too were caught up in the blast.

12 A speaker at the back of the auditorium was used to project the sound of a car driving along a gravel drive.

3 The use of music from the 1950s highlighted the period of the play.

6 A pinpoint spotlight, or pinspot, closed in on the actor's face, showing her distressed expression, followed by a sudden blackout that left the audience shocked.

7 As a major theme was women's beauty, the designer had made the three-storey set resemble a beauty counter: white smooth reflective, curved surfaces, racks of pastel products and a large white surface upon which advertisements could be projected.

10 The outfits were stylised and extravagant: primary colours, exaggerated silhouettes and rich fabrics and decorations.



Technical vocabulary

TEST YOURSELF C3

Match the correct definition with the technical production term.

TERMS			
Theme or motif	Acoustics	Pinpoint	Prosthetics
Truck	Set dressings	Fade	House lights
Reverb	Cross-fade	Wash	Trapdoor
Composer	Cyclorama	Fly system	Trim
			Black hole
			Corsetry
			Drapes

DEFINITIONS			
1 A spotlight so tightly focused that it lights only a very small area, such as a single object or an actor's face.	2 Curtains or other hanging fabric.	3 A distinctive recurring section of music, often associated with a particular character or mood.	4 The range of colours used.
5 Additional pieces of make-up that can be attached, such as false noses, artificial wounds or horns.	6 A large semi-circular stretched curtain or screen, usually positioned upstage.	7 The sound quality in a given space, such as whether or not a theatrical space affects sound making it clear, echoing, warm or muffled and so on.	8 A means of raising and lowering scenery or other items onto the stage using a system of ropes and pulleys.
9 The lights in the auditorium that are usually up when the audience arrives and before the play begins.	10 Undergarments such as corsets, girdles and bustles used to shape a body and alter its silhouette.	11 Someone who writes music.	12 A lighting transition involving changing lighting states by bringing up the new state while reducing the old state.
13 A platform on wheels upon which scenery can be mounted and moved.	14 An area of the stage which has accidentally been left unlit.	15 Items on the set not actually used as props, but that create detail and interest, such as vases or framed paintings.	16 Additional decorative items such as fur on a collar or cuffs or a fringe on a jacket, dress or skirt.
17 An echoing effect, sustaining the sound longer than usual.	18 Gradually turning sound or lighting up or down.	19 Lighting that covers the entire stage.	20 A door in the floor of a stage allowing objects or performers to be dropped, lifted or lowered.

LEARNING CHECKLIST: SECTION C

Tick each aspect of 'Live theatre production' if you are confident of your knowledge and ability.

If you are unsure of anything, go back and revise.

Do you know...?

The specialisms you could choose to write about

The genre, style and period of the play you have seen and how they might affect the acting and design choices

How to make detailed notes about the production you have seen

How to select key moments or sections to write about

How to describe, analyse and evaluate

The technical terminology appropriate for different specialisms

Which characters you might choose to discuss if writing about performance

How to plan an answer to a question about a production you have seen

How to evaluate if the acting or designs are effective

Which examples you could discuss to demonstrate your knowledge of design skills

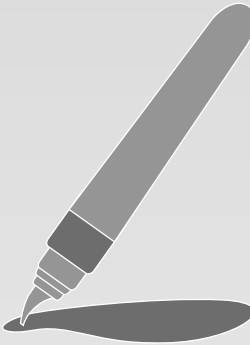
How to describe the impact of the acting or design choices on the audience

LEARNING CHECKLIST: EXAMINATION PRACTICE

Tick each aspect of exam preparation if you are confident of your knowledge.

If you are unsure of anything, read through this section again.

Do you know...?



How to look for
key words in the
questions

The difference
between your
Section B and
Section C texts

How to avoid
running out
of time

How to include
detail and refer
to specific
examples

How to plan
an answer



How to use
discursive markers

How to include
technical
terminology

The range of
questions you
could be asked