

Hedda Gabler

AQA A Level Drama Play Guide

Downloadable Worksheets

Contents

Book page number

Section 2: Set play: *Hedda Gabler* by Henrik Ibsen

1	Relationships between characters: Character revision sheet	29
2	Form and structure: The four acts of the play	40
3	Researching context, genre and style: Your discoveries and ideas	42
4	Noting your rehearsal discoveries: Motivations, skills and effects	62
5	Noting your rehearsal discoveries: Notes on a section of the play	62
6	Acting choices: Vocal skills: Key lines	67
7	Acting choices: Physical skills: Key moments	70
8	Stage space: Locations in the play	81
9	Using tension in the play: A tension graph	88
10	Set design: Setting and props design: Visual imagery	93
11	Lighting and sound design: Sound and lighting together: Lighting and sound design grid	109
12	Creating a cohesive concept: acting, directing, design: Ideas for your ideal production	115

Section 3: Writing skills for your exam

13	Making a plan: Mind map	124
----	-------------------------	-----

Relationships between characters

Character revision sheet

As you study the characters, use this table to note your discoveries.

Name of character	
Age and appearance	
Status/occupation/relationships (servant, employer, friend, aunt; middle class, upper class, etc)	
Background (place of birth, family, childhood, education, etc)	
Key role or function in play (protagonist/antagonist, messenger, helper/obstacle, lover, foil). Explain their actions within their role.	
Key scenes/moments	
Key lines	
Costume and make-up design	

Form and structure

The four acts of the play

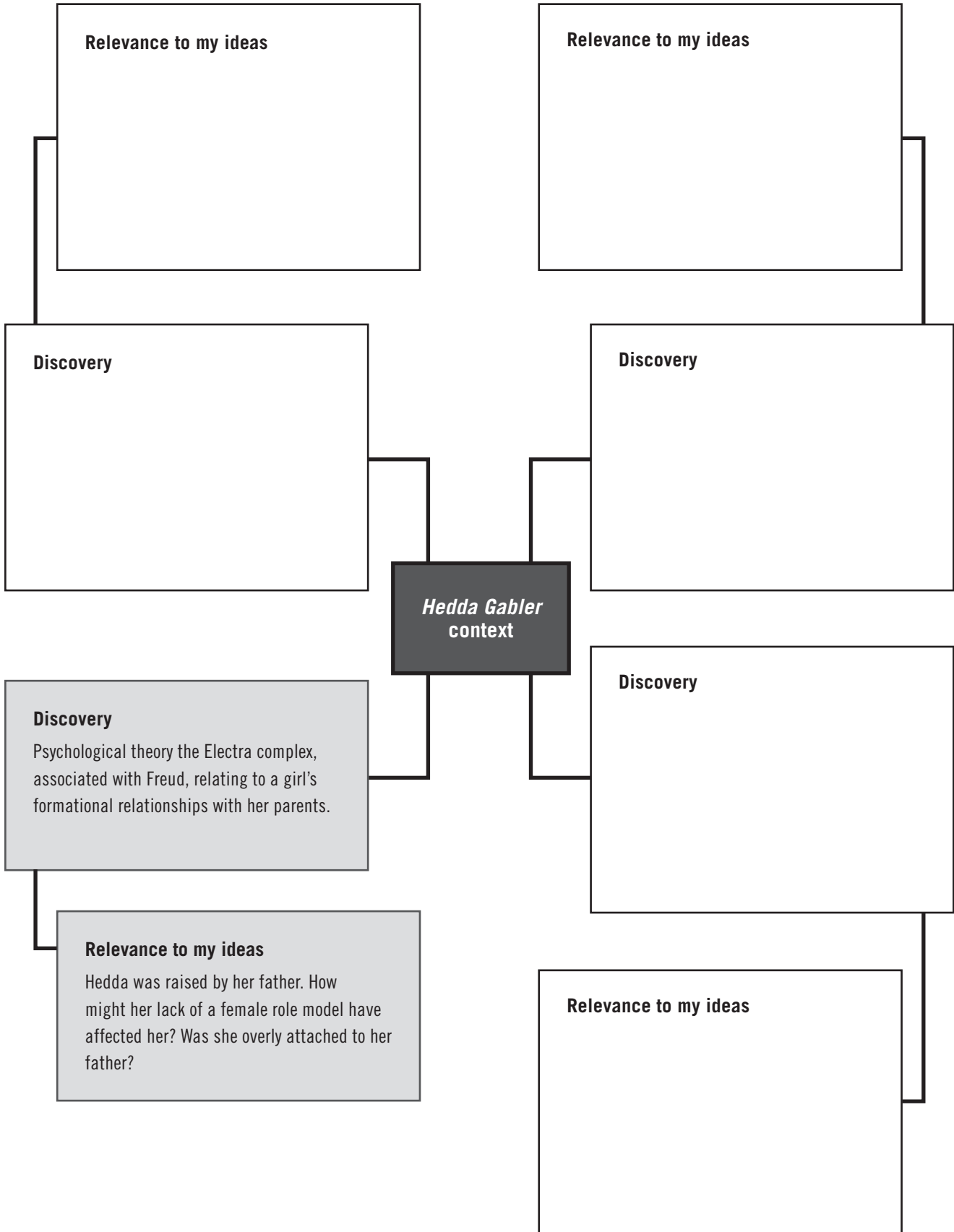
Use this chart to analyse the form and structure of the play's four acts. (An example has been suggested.)

Act	Structural purpose	Explanation
Act 1	Exposition and complications	We are introduced to all of the characters, except Eilert. Thea's arrival alerts us to the complications that Eilert will provide when he arrives and suggests that Hedda's intentions will change. For example...
Act 2		
Act 3		
Act 4		

Researching context, genre and style

Your discoveries and ideas

Use the mind map below to begin noting your discoveries. (An example has been suggested for you.)



Noting your rehearsal discoveries

Motivations, skills and effects

Using a grid like the one below: locate a key line or stage direction, then consider what the characters want, the skills to be used and the effect on the audience.

Act _____ Pages _____		
Line Actions/motivations	Acting skills used (vocal, physical; interactions, spatial relationships, reactions, etc)	Effect on audience (understanding of character and/or situation, creation of conflict/tension/comedy/surprise, etc)
Act 2, page 35, 'Good afternoon, Judge'. A bored Hedda wants to shake up Brack by shooting a pistol in his direction.	The actor's light, pleasant tone contrasts with the menacing physical action of her loading a gun (expertly). She and Brack are about three metres apart.	This will probably provoke shocked laughter. It is evidence of Hedda's daring, outrageous nature and her confidence. She does a typically masculine activity: shooting.

Notes on a section of the play

Use this grid to collate your overall discoveries about a scene.

Act _____ Pages _____	
Positioning of characters on stage Are they standing or seated? Downstage, centre or upstage? How do they use the set?	(You could sketch this.)
Characters' motivations/actions What do they want? How will they try to achieve their wishes?	
Sources of conflict What obstacles do they face? How are their desires in opposition to another character's?	
Vocal and physical skills Changes in pitch, volume, tone, etc. Use of pause/pace. Gestures, movements, stillness, handling of props, etc.	
Spatial relationships How near or far are they from each other? Do they avoid or dominate another character?	
Listening and reacting How do they react to key moments? (Expressions, stillness, gestures, eye contact, etc)	
Pause/pace/silence Does the scene speed up or slow down? Are there pauses or silences? Why?	
Use of props/costume/set How do props, costumes and the set aid the scene?	(You could sketch an example.)
Purpose of scene; its effect on the audience What is the importance of this scene? How does it further the plot or reveal information or insight? How do we feel about the characters and plot here?	

Acting choices

Vocal skills

Key lines

When you are experimenting with vocal skills to convey the character and their situation, use this chart to note the effect you want and how you could accomplish it. (An example has been started, along with some other key lines.)

Scene/line	Desired effect/understanding	Vocal skills used
Mrs Elvsted: Oh, I don't know. I think he finds me useful. And then I don't cost much to keep. I'm cheap. (Act 1, page 23)	Thea is reluctantly beginning to open up to Hedda about her unhappy marriage and to admit how few choices she had.	I vary my pace, quickly countering Hedda's comment about love with, 'Oh, I don't know.' I stress 'useful', a very practical, unromantic word and yet the most positive thing I can say about my marriage. I pause before 'And then...' I meet Hedda's eyes and smile bitterly, saying with a forced light-hearted tone, 'I'm cheap.'
Brack: You haven't a tiny crack in the door through which we might have negotiated? (Act 2, page 36)		
Hedda: (<i>curtly</i>) I've no leanings in that direction, Judge. I don't want any – responsibilities. (Act 2, page 45)		
Loevborg: Oh, Hedda, Hedda! How could you throw yourself away like that? (Act 2, page 53)		
Tesman: Yes! The whole of that precious, irreplaceable manuscript! And he went and lost it! Didn't even notice! What about that? Tragic. (Act 3, page 71)		
Miss Tesman: Oh, there's always some poor invalid who needs care and attention. (Act 4, page 88)		

Acting choices

Physical skills

Key moments

Another way of exploring Eilert's physicality is to choose a few key moments when his movement, gestures, posture and so on might change. You could use the chart below to note your ideas. (An example has been done for you.)

Chosen moment	Physical skills	Effect
Moment 1: Loevborg enters from the hall (page 47)	He is tall, striking, dressed in dark colours that emphasise his lean physique. His expression is alert and curious, though his bowed head and shy smile acknowledge the awkwardness of the situation. He stands back, waiting to see if he will be welcomed. He meets George's eye and warmly receives his hand in greeting. He quickly glances at Hedda. He makes a movement towards her, then steps back.	Loevborg should be a compelling presence who is not entirely comfortable in this situation. He is a passionate man, who at this point is trying to control his emotions. He hides his feelings towards Hedda in front of George, barely meeting her eyes and asking permission to shake her hand. The tension in his movements reflects the uncertainty of his relationships.
Moment 2:		
Moment 3:		
Moment 4:		
Moment 5:		
Moment 6:		

Stage space

Locations in the play

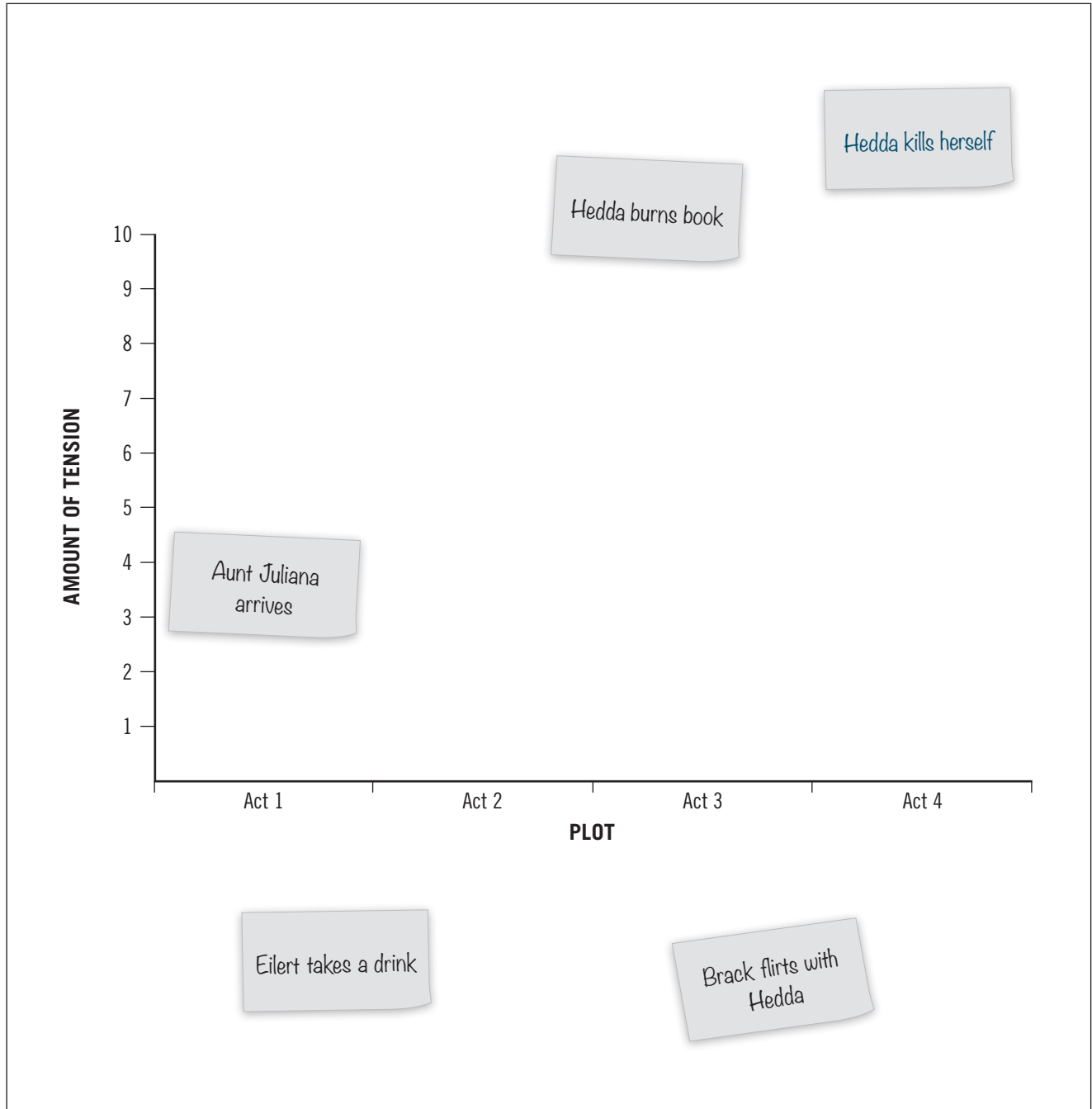
All the action of the play takes place in the drawing room, but the appearance of it changes depending on the time of day and what has just happened. Alongside details specified in the stage directions, you might want to consider what you wish to say about each scene by indicating particular set details. Use this grid to help you prepare your ideas. (Some examples have been suggested.)

Act	Set/lighting/props/sounds	Effect on audience
Act 1, a September morning	Golden morning light, the room in some disarray. A combination of stiff formal furniture with Hedda's large, expensive-looking trunks and George's simple carpet bag and boxes from their trip. Bouquets of flowers are in an odd assortment of vases and jars.	The contrast between the furnishings of the house and the disorganisation of the baggage and flowers suggest that it is not yet home to the young couple. It will also highlight the differences between George and Hedda. George might indicate Hedda's luggage later in the scene when he apologises for not giving his aunt a lift.
Act 2, the same day, afternoon		
Act 3, the next morning		
Act 4, that evening		

Using tension in the play

A tension graph

Use the graph below to locate the moments in the play that are most tense and those that are most relaxed. A few moments have been plotted for you. Add others that you think are important, such as scenes between Eilert and Hedda, Hedda and Thea or Hedda and Brack.

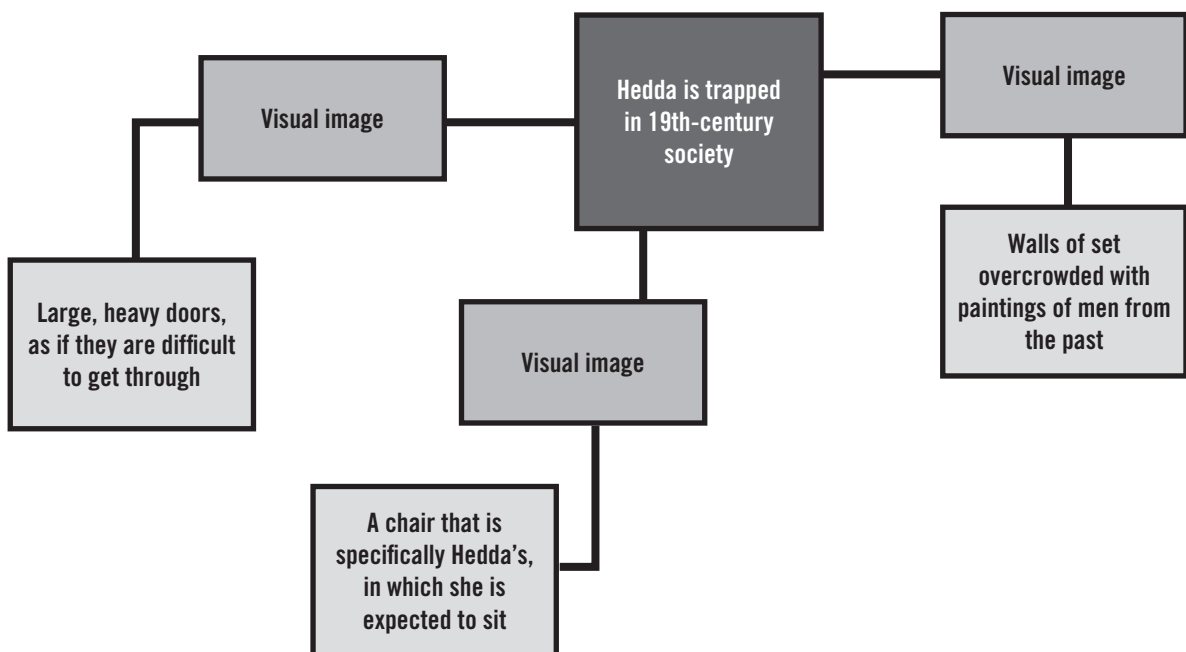
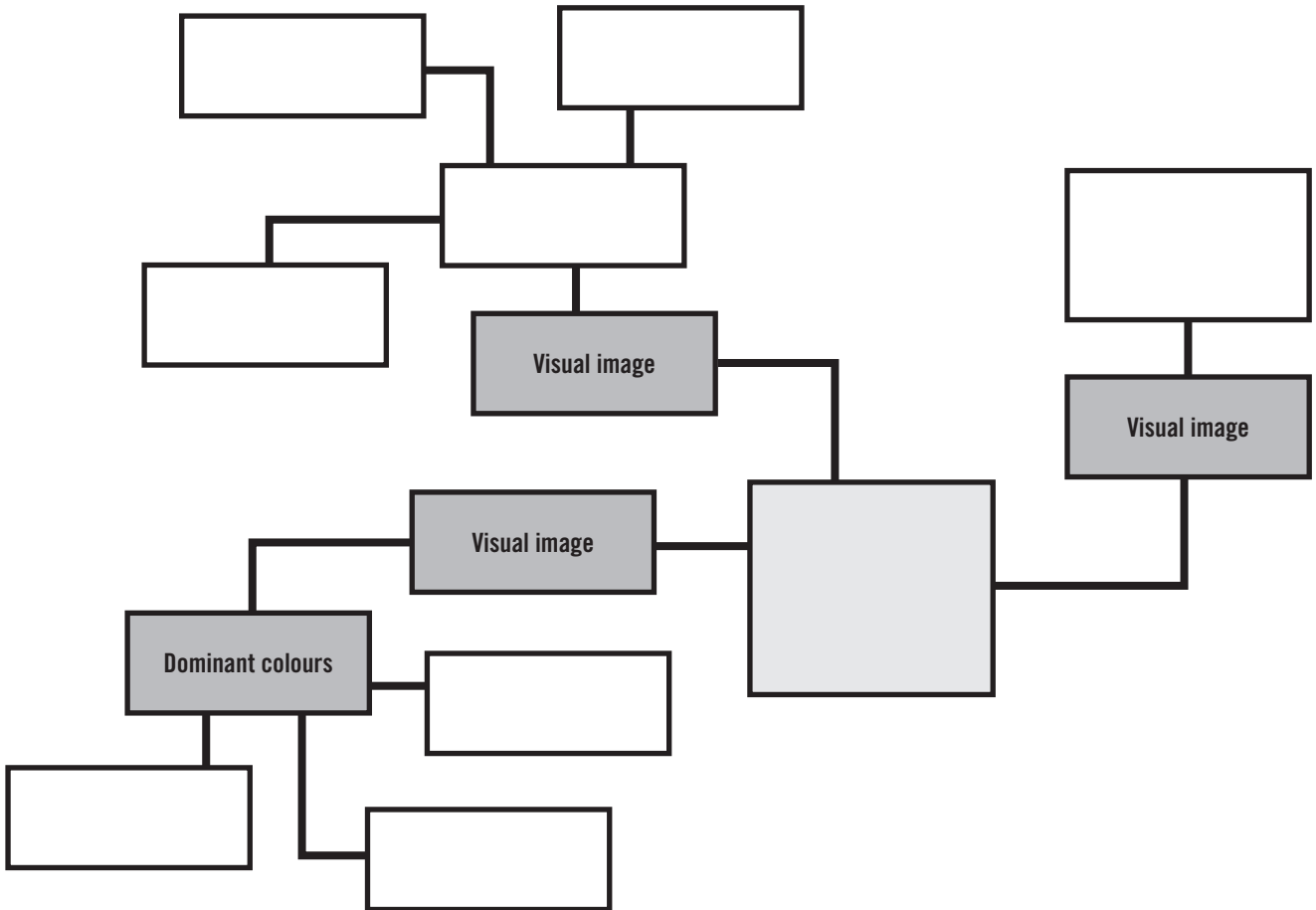


Set design

Setting and props design

Visual imagery

Think about what the play means to you and how you can use items in the set to help the audience understand that meaning. You could use a mind map, like the examples below, to set out your concept.



Lighting and sound design

Sound and lighting together

Lighting and sound design grid

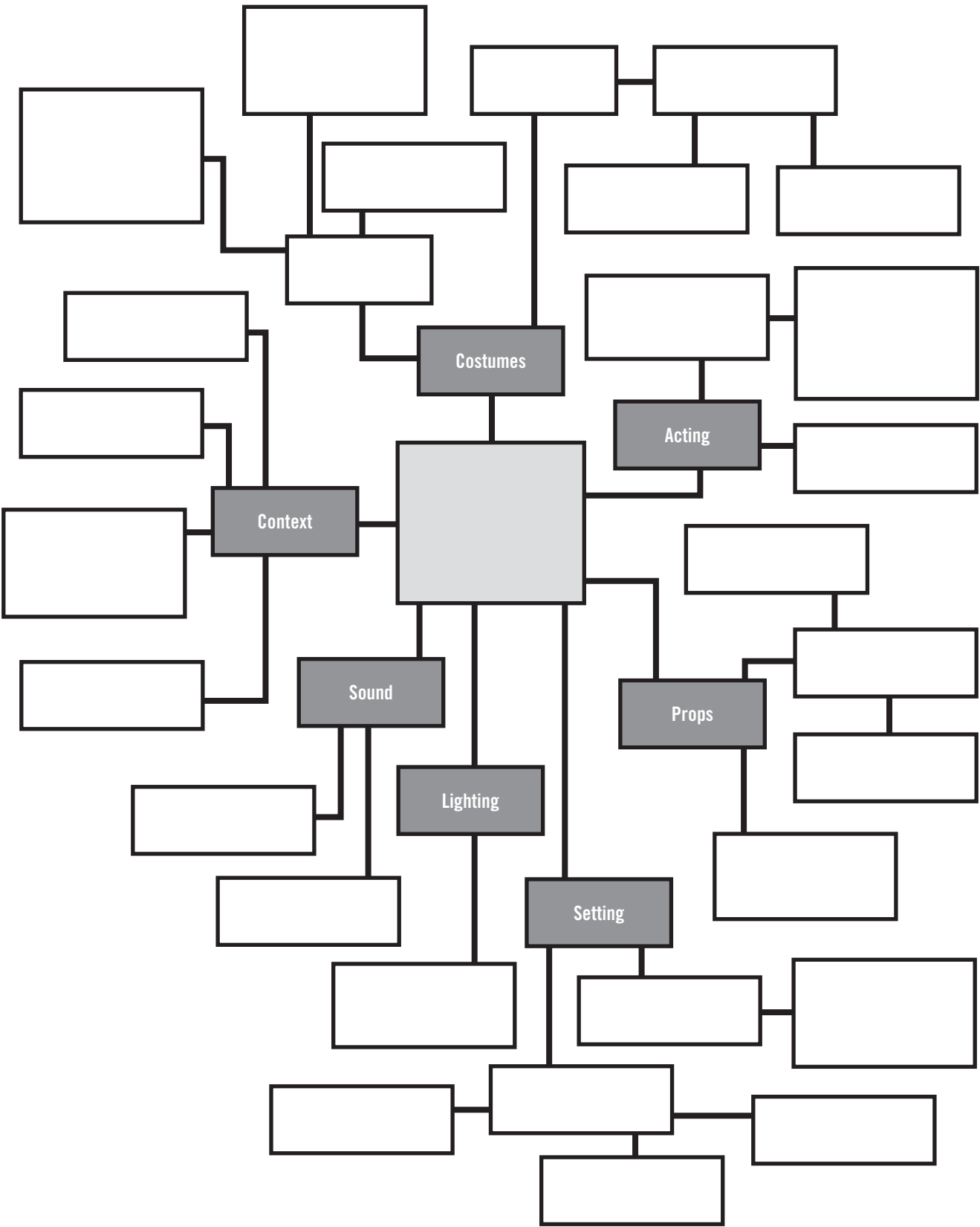
Use the grid below to begin planning your lighting and sound design choices for important moments in the play.

Act/key moment	Lighting (intensity, angle, colours, lanterns, etc)	Sound (music, sound effects, live, recorded, volume, etc)	Effect on audience (setting, mood, context, tension, psychological insight)
Act 1, beginning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Gobo in profile lantern (leaf pattern) ■ Amber wash ■ Multi-angled ■ Low intensity / fade up. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Music: Debussy prelude (live or recorded) ■ Recorded sound: bird song ■ Live sounds: noises at door ■ Music fades out. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Establishes time of day and season. ■ Sculptural effect of lighting. ■ Heightens sense of naturalism. ■ Music suggests Hedda's mood.
Act 2, shooting at Brack			
Act 2, Eilert's entrance			
Act 3, beginning			
Act 3, burning of book			
Act 4, beginning			
Act 4, Brack and Hedda			
Act 4, end of play			

Creating a cohesive concept: acting, directing, design

Ideas for your ideal production

Use the mind map below to set out your ideas for your ideal production.



Making a plan

Mind map

Use this mind map to plan a response to an exam question about the relationship between characters. (You could use a similar map for another question.)

