

Drama 2.2

“What are you saying?”

Supports internal assessment for: Achievement Standard 91213

Apply drama techniques in a scripted context

Credits: 4

Student Instructions Sheet

The teacher will have introduced you to a range of acting techniques. These will prepare you for the assessment activity which involves 4 weeks of **interpreting scripts** leading to performance, including exercises and practice in the process and a final presentation.

Your focus will be on **use of voice, body, movement and use of space** to interpret and present a script, working interactively with another person.

As you work on this activity, you will need to **document the process**, your **interpretation** and **intentions** for performance. While this does not directly inform your grade, the more practice you have in writing about these techniques, the easier an external paper will be.

This documentation, in addition to an **annotated script** and a post-performance **reflection** will make up your portfolio of evidence.

TASK INSTRUCTIONS

Preparation

The first tasks, over the next 4-5 periods will involve you in interpreting and preparing for performing a practice open script as a model for your final presentation.

Task One –Choosing a Role

Your teacher will give you an open script from the practice selection, for two actors. You will play either A or B. Decide on a possible scenario for the text.

Answer the following questions in full sentences in order to create specific circumstances for your character:

- Who are you? Make a profile of your character -age, sex, occupation, education, health.....
- Where are you?
- Why are you here?
- What do you see and hear in your immediate and also in your more distant environment?
- What time of day or night is it? What season of the year and in what country?
- What is the ‘journey’ of your character and how does s/he change in the course of the text?

Task Two – Sub-textual strands

The **subtext** is the meaning of the text that lies behind what is said. Sometimes people do not say exactly what they mean. Often they take responses for granted by assuming something about the other person.

- Read the script through carefully and then write an imagined sub-text that suits the situation. E.g. character B may have already decided he or she wishes to end the friendship with A. A does not fully realise this fact although they know something is wrong. Or it may be that B has decided to end the friendship and A already knows this but expects it will blow over as it has done before. Both are possible sub-texts. There are many possibilities.
- Rehearse the scene focusing on your chosen sub-text.

The next step is to explore a range of acting techniques that you will be able to select from to convey your interpretation to an audience.

Task Three – Use of Breath

Read through your open script with a partner and work out where **pauses or breathing** takes place to express a particular emotion e.g. surprise, fright, delight, having an idea, displeasure, amazement, excitement. These will sometimes be caused by an external happening, eg something your partner says or does. Or they may be triggered by your own inner thoughts. In either case you will need to think how you can most clearly show this to an audience.

Use a pencil to mark the exact place where the intake of the breath occurs. Beside this mark, write the name of the emotion you will use. Rehearse the script with your partner practising the use of breath.

Task four – Inner and Outer Action

Answer the following questions:

- What does your character want? (This should be described as an active verb e.g. to push, to cajole, to twist, to seek.) E.g. character A wants to seek the truth from character B.
- You need to repeat the questions several times throughout the script as the character's "wants" change. Mark in pencil where this happens. Write the new verb that best describes this new "want".
This will help you to develop "outer action playing" appropriate to the character's motivations.

To help you convey inner action, find one prop that best suits the context so that you can sign your inner thoughts and feelings by the way you use it. This will help the audience to understand your character. For example, character A wants to seek the truth from character B. The chosen prop is a torch, which character A plays with during the scene.

Rehearse the script with your partner practising the connection of inner and outer action playing.

Task Five – Conflict Between Characters

This is the meeting of two inner actions or different points of view or "wants". Locate likely points of conflict in the text and mark them accordingly.

Rehearse the script so that you emphasise these points of conflict e.g. develop a build-up to one angry and explosive line. The way you respond to this conflict will be important evidence of your ability to be interactive, but of course your chosen character may not be openly demonstrative, so that you will need to find subtle ways to show tension and record your intentions fully.

The next task is an example of the way in which some depth of characterisation and interpretation can be shown through the combined use of drama techniques.

Task Six– Play Against Meaning

This happens when a character says one thing, but means another. E.g. A: "You're angry with me". B: "No I'm not". B in fact may well be exceedingly angry and this is expressed in a guarded tone of voice because of other 'wants' eg for some reason wants to keep the atmosphere positive.

Find suitable lines to try out the "play against". Rehearse and perform the whole script including the "play against" lines.

Task Seven – Title

Write your own title to capture the essence of your interpretation.

Task Eight – Working with play script

Use the acting technique skills you have workshopped to develop a rich meaning for **a fresh script, taken from an established play and provided by your teacher.**

You will need to **read the play** that the script originates from and make notes about the character, so that you can interpret the text. Explore the world of the play and record these notes in your portfolio.

Document your ideas and selection as you explore vocal and physical possibilities for the new character.

Make sure you apply the techniques explored already, so that the final presentation of the text has depth and is compelling to watch.

Do not alter the words of the script. Make them work. **Your annotated script and a final reflection must be included in your portfolio.**

Perform your learned script.

Complete a final **reflection** showing your understanding of interpretation and how to combine techniques, interacting with another person to convey an interpretation.

PORTFOLIO CHECKLIST

Open practice scripts
Notes on the world of the play and the character from the new play script
Notes on characterisation and techniques
Annotated script
Record of chosen techniques with justification
Reflection

ASSESSMENT CRITERIA

Achievement with Excellence	Achievement with Merit	Achievement
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Apply drama techniques effectively in a scripted context.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Apply drama techniques skilfully in a scripted context.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Apply drama techniques in a scripted context.

Apply drama techniques involves selecting and using voice, body, movement and use of space to convey an intention for a scripted context through interpretation of a role, relationships and situation.

Apply drama techniques skilfully involves selecting and using voice, body, movement, and use of space with dexterity, competence, control and a sense of purpose. It involves sustaining a credible character and situation for the duration of the performed text.

Apply drama techniques effectively involves selecting and using voice, body, movement, and use of space to present work with impact. It requires the use of drama techniques to enhance the performance of the scripted context. It involves a sustained, truthful, and convincing performance.

Appendix A

Examples of voice, body, movement and use of space techniques:

Voice	pitch	- the highness or lowness of a sound
	pace	- the rate at which words are spoken(also the overall rhythm of a scene)
	pause	- where sound stops, how often and for how long
	projection	- enables audience to hear the voice
	volume	- how loudly/softly the words are spoken
Body	posture	- stance
	gesture	- movement of any part of the body
	body-awareness	- ability to select appropriate use of body
Movement	timing	- when you move or respond
	direction	- where you are going
	energy	- how you move
Space	levels	- low, medium, high
	personal	- own space
	general	- all the other space

Practice Texts

Text 1

A Don't be angry with me
B Angry?
A Yes. You're angry with me
B No I'm not
A Yes you are
B I'm not
A Alright.
A Well, don't be
B I'm not
A Mmmmm.
Do you think we'll ever come back here?
B Back here?
A Yes.
B No.
A I'd like to.
Sometime
B Maybe. Are you ready then?
A Yes.
B Last time we...
A I remember
B Do you?
A Mmmm
B Alright.
Sorry I was angry
A My fault
B Strange room, this.
A Eh?
B You know. Strange room.
A Perhaps
B Strange smell.
A I've grown quite fond of it
B Yes.
A So.
Come on then.

Text 2 Supply punctuation and assign roles.

So
So
I'm sorry
I'm sorry
We shouldn't be here
That's what you always say
I hoped you'd understand
Too late. It's too late to say all this now
Just get on with it
I don't think I can
After a while it'll be better. You can believe that
You're not listening. You never listen
You never do anything. It's all talk and no action I'm tired of making things happen
So

Text 3

- A Is that what I think it is?
- B I'm not sure
Yes – definitely
- A Well remember what we agreed
- B No - no I don't
- A Why have you had a sudden lapse of memory?
- B I haven't
- A Well anyway we ought to -well we've got to move
- B I'm not sure
- A Do you want me to do this by myself
- B No – we're both in this – that was the arrangement
- A Arrangements can change
- B Not this one too much at stake.
- A Right – well we need to move quickly. Have you got the -
- B No
- A Well take this.
- B I think I'll stay here
- A Hmmm
And how will we explain your ...change of heart?
- B Who is going to know? I don't see the need for anyone to speak
- A No – it's not part of what we agreed. Look we went over all this.....
- B Plans

Assessment Schedule AS 91213 "What Are You Saying?"		
Excellence	Merit	Achieved
<p>The student has selected and used voice, body, movement and use of space to present work with impact.</p> <p>The student has used their drama techniques to enhance the performance of the scripted context.</p> <p>The student has given a sustained, truthful and convincing performance.</p> <p><i>e.g. The student plays a sustained and convincing role using a range of drama techniques to relate effectively to another actor in the space. The student is able to convey an imaginative and coherent meaning from the script. The student playing Albany in Children of the Poor by Mervyn Thompson has interpreted the character in the context of the play as a whole showing an understanding of the play and the character. In the scene about the rat the student has captured the anxiety and fear that Albany is experiencing as he sits on the bed, with his arms around his legs and gently rocks backwards and forwards, between speaking in a hushed tone to the mother, while she is telling the story.</i></p>	<p>The student has selected and used voice, body, movement and space with dexterity, competence, control and a sense of purpose.</p> <p>The student has sustained a credible character and situation for the duration of the performed text.</p> <p><i>e.g. The student plays a consistently realised role using a range of drama techniques to relate to another actor in the space and conveys a coherent meaning from the script. The student playing Albany in Children of the Poor by Mervyn Thompson has interpreted the character in the context of the play as a whole showing some understanding of the play and the character. In the scene about the rat the student sits on the bed with his arms around his legs and gently rocks backwards and forwards, between speaking in a hushed tone to the mother, while she is telling the story.</i></p>	<p>The student has selected and used drama techniques (voice, body, movement and use of space) to convey an intention for a scripted context.</p> <p>The student has interpreted their role, relationships and situation.</p> <p><i>e.g. The student plays a clear, straightforward role, using some pausing, eye contact and controlled movement to relate to another actor in the space and convey a simple meaning from the script. The student playing Albany in Children of the Poor by Mervyn Thompson has interpreted the character in the context of the play as a whole, showing an awareness of the play and the character. In the scene about the rat the student sits on the bed with his arms around his legs and speaks in a hushed tone to the mother while she is telling the story.</i></p>