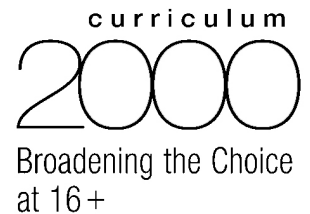


A Student's Guide to the AS and Advanced GCE in



Drama & Theatre Studies

What do I need to know or be able to do before taking this course?

It is useful to have taken Drama at GCSE level but not essential. It is important that you are interested in gaining a greater understanding of how theatre and plays work and that you are keen to be involved with performances.

What will I learn on this course?

The course demands practical, creative and communication skills in almost equal measure. You will extend your ability to create drama and theatre, either in a performing or production role. You will also be required to write about drama and to develop your powers of analysis to become an informed critic. The course will involve taking part in drama productions, as well as studying plays and playwrights.

What kind of student is this course suitable for?

You need to be curious about issues and ideas and have a creative instinct for communicating your views through drama. You may be keen on acting, writing or on the visual and technical side of theatre and wish to develop your skills in some or all of these areas. Equally you will be interested in going to the theatre to see plays performed by different theatre companies.

What examinations will I have to take to get my qualification?

AS

AS is short for Advanced Subsidiary. This is the first half of the Advanced GCE course. It is a stepping-stone to the full Advanced GCE qualification. You can take just the AS on its own at the end of the first year, if you and your tutor agree that this is best for you. You can even decide at the end of the AS course whether or not to continue on to take the full Advanced GCE qualification. The AS consists of the following three units:



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Unit 1 Exploration of drama and theatre

15%

In this unit you will be introduced to at least two plays, by one or more playwrights. You may also look at the work of some famous theatre directors or theatre companies. Your tutor will take you through the chosen plays to look at the ways in which a play is put together, and to examine what you have to do to bring it to life on the stage. The plays that you study could have been written quite recently or hundreds of years ago, and you will learn something about the conditions under which a play was first written and performed. As well as undertaking detailed practical study of the plays, you will begin to acquire a wider vocabulary and knowledge of drama and theatre, to use in the rest of the course.

Your tutor will explore the two plays with you through a series of practical workshops. You will be assessed on both your practical work and notes that you keep about what you have learnt about the two plays. Your work for this unit will be marked by your tutor.

Unit 2 Text in performance – I

20%

In this unit you will perform a role in a production of a play. The play will not have been studied in Unit 1, but could be by one of the playwrights studied in that unit. In preparation for this unit you will take part in workshops that will help you to develop your performance or design skills. Your tutor may well try out several different scenes from different plays to find a play that suits the group and you as an individual. You may also be asked to audition for a part in the play. As a performer, you will have to learn lines and think about how to play a part in order to convince your tutor (the director), that you are the right person for the role. If you have an interest in lighting, sound, set, mask or costume design, you can discuss with your tutor the possibilities of taking on a role on the production side. If you are also studying Art and Design, you might find that this part of the course is a useful and original way of developing and applying your art and design skills.

The exam for this unit takes the form of a practical test. You will be assessed on how well you use your performing or design skills in the performance. This unit is linked with Unit 3 and during the rehearsals you will need to keep notes to record your thoughts, observations and questions about the production. You will be able to refer to these notes during the examination for Unit 3.

Unit 3 Text in context – I

15%

This unit is partly linked to Unit 2 where you took on the role of performer or designer in a production of a play. During the process of rehearsing the play, you will learn something about the conditions under which the play was originally written and performed. You will also need to consider the relevance of the play to a contemporary audience, and what the play means to you as an actor or designer. The second part of this unit is based on performances you have seen during the course.

In the exam for this unit, you will answer one question asking you to discuss aspects of the play you performed for Unit 2, and to evaluate the way in which your interpretation as an actor or designer communicated the playwright's intentions to an audience. You will also answer a second question using your notes taken during a theatre visit to show your understanding and appreciation of "live" theatre. The examination lasts for two hours.

Are there opportunities to develop Key Skills as part of this course?

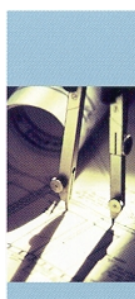
As well as covering advanced level study of drama and theatre, the course will enable you to develop Key Skills, which will be essential to you in whatever you go on to do afterwards:

- ◆ **Application of number**
Utilise appropriate measurements or statistics in budgeting and theatre design
- ◆ **Communication**
Discuss and present ideas and opinions concerning a drama production you are part of, a production you have seen, or a play/playwright you have studied
- ◆ **Improving own learning and performance**
Plan for a production and keep comprehensive notes
- ◆ **Information technology**
Use the Internet as a research tool
- ◆ **Problem solving**
Work within constraints to create an effective production
- ◆ **Working with others**
Contribute to creating drama and collaborate effectively with fellow performers/designers

What could I go on to do at the end of my course?

This AS and Advanced GCE can lead to further study in Drama, Theatre Studies and Performing Arts in Higher Education at degree or HND level. It can be used as part of your course to broaden your studies and may lead on to a career in the performing arts industries.

Drama and Theatre Studies AS and Advanced GCE complements a range of subjects and is useful in building confidence and improving presentation skills in a range of careers.



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