Drama

GCSE

Drama

Costume Design

March 2015

OCR
Oxford Cambridge and RSA

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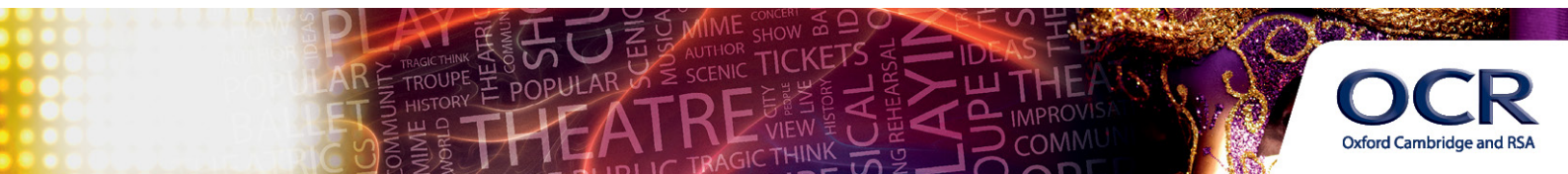
Costume Design

Introduction

For Unit A582: Drama in the Making candidates will need to prepare three items for workshop presentation. One of these items must be an improvisation; the other two can be chosen from a range of options fulfilling the Performer, Designer, Director or Designer brief. No candidate may use performance for all three presentation items.

The unit is marked out of 60:

AO1 & AO2 – rehearsed improvisation – 20 marks
AO1 & AO2 – two additional presentation items – 20 marks
AO1 & AO3 – working record – 20 marks.

The focus is on the potential of the items to be developed into a full realisation; no item is expected to be a complete fully realised performance, design or script. All ideas should be as fully developed as possible in terms of how they would work as practical drama.

One of the options within the Designer brief is Costume Design. Candidates should prepare design ideas for a drama that does or could derive from the stimulus. Candidates should explain how the design would support the drama alongside any social, cultural and political connections. The work will illustrate potential for further development and be between two and four sides of A4 or equivalent as a 'compendium' of their design ideas, or a two minute demonstration/presentation, or a mixture of these.

Based on recent examiners' reports highlighting misconceptions or weaknesses in relation to tackling design elements, the following should be considered:

- Ensure candidates have been giving a minimum 'kit bag' of information during the course to tackle design items so they are able to use standard conventions e.g. how design sheets for costume are presented
- Items 2 and 3 should generally evolve from the work completed for item 1 by taking the investigation further and showing clear development. If item 1 was not successful, a new approach can be attempted, if an explanation is given for this
- Design tasks should be tackled individually, not in groups
- Costume designs do not need to be filmed for assessment unless this is to be included as part of their working record

- Candidates should ensure they are designing a costume and not just presenting clothing with elevated symbolic reasoning.

The Costume Design should demonstrate the candidate's knowledge of the Areas of Study, for example demonstrating how the genre or style of the performance is echoed through the costume or how it would work with and complement the other design elements such as set or lighting.

Teaching Activities

Unit Preparation

Teachers should familiarise themselves with the marking criteria for AO2 and the aspects which are particularly pertinent for design elements. The three activities listed are designed to develop students' ability to create effective costume design, using standard conventions, in addition to enabling them to link their ideas to the areas of study. The activities are purposefully generalised so that they can be adapted to suit the stimulus chosen by the teacher.

This activity offers an opportunity for English skills development.

Activity 1

Aims and Objectives

- To explore social, cultural and historical connections in the development of costume design.
- To develop a design that responds to the allocated social, cultural or historical area.

Exploring how costume supports context

The activity consists of students researching a particular social issue, culture or time period and then designing a costume based on this area. This will then be presented to the rest of the group in order for all students to gain a broader understanding of how costume design is affected by social, cultural and historical elements and what costume can reveal about a character's context.

Examples of social, cultural or historical areas to research:

- Goth subculture
- Puritans
- World War II soldiers
- Geisha
- Mods
- Crips and Bloods gangs.

Each group should be presented with a task card (Resource 1).There is a space left at the top of the task card for a relevant research area to be inserted for each group. This could be relevant to a stimulus to which they have been introduced or this activity could be completed prior to beginning the Drama in the Making unit. A wide variety of different contexts could be suggested to broaden students' knowledge.

Presentation back to the rest of the group could take a variety of forms; discussion of ideas, design examples, PowerPoint presentation, role-plays with character placed in context and then action frozen to highlight and analyse their costume or catwalk where each group parades their character. The group could choose their method of presentation or requirements could be stipulated based on the resources available.

Resources

- Task card – Resource 1.
- Computers (although paper resources could be provided if they are not available).
- Material and clothing (if available).
- Paper and felt-tips/crayons.
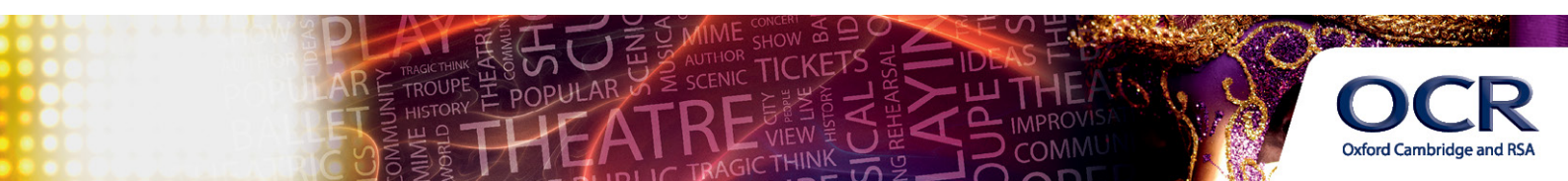
Activity 2

Aims and Objectives

- To explore and analyse existing non-naturalistic costume designs.
- To develop a non-naturalistic costume design.

Exploring costume for non-naturalistic style performances

The activity consists of students designing a costume to suit a non-naturalistic performance. This will enable students to consider what they are conveying through the costumes they create and encourage them to think 'outside of the box' in terms of creativity and style.

Begin by introducing the students to Noh theatre, where costumes express visually the essence of a play and, along with the masks, are seen as the most important elements. Originally, Noh costumes were modest, everyday clothes which emulated the clothing that the characters would genuinely wear. In the late sixteenth century, as Noh became popular with aristocracy and ruling military classes, this changed as they began to receive more finely crafted kimonos to perform in. These were works of art, steeped with symbolic meaning for the role that was being played. There are a number of set rules in Noh regarding combinations of costume pieces. You can accurately tell the gender, age, social status, occupation and personality of a character from their costume. For example in terms of colour, the use of red in a female costume denotes that they are younger and the combination of colours on a collar represents social status and inner feelings. Motifs and designs on costumes also hold meaning; thunder gods have hexagons and serpents have triangles to represent scales.

A series of images of non-naturalistic costumes from film and theatre can then be shown to the students for them to analyse and discuss what meaning is represented through them e.g. Romeo and Juliet in the 1996 film version where they are dressed in angel and knight outfits, Alex DeLarge in the Clockwork Orange film, Glinda and Elphaba in Wicked or a pantomime dame.

Students can then design their own non-naturalistic costume for a character. This could be a character related to a stimulus to which they have been introduced or the activity could be completed prior to beginning the Drama in the Making unit. Each individual/group could be allocated a well-known or stereotypical character for whom to design a costume.

Resources

- Information about Noh theatre.
- Images of non-naturalistic costumes.
- Paper and felt-tips/crayons.
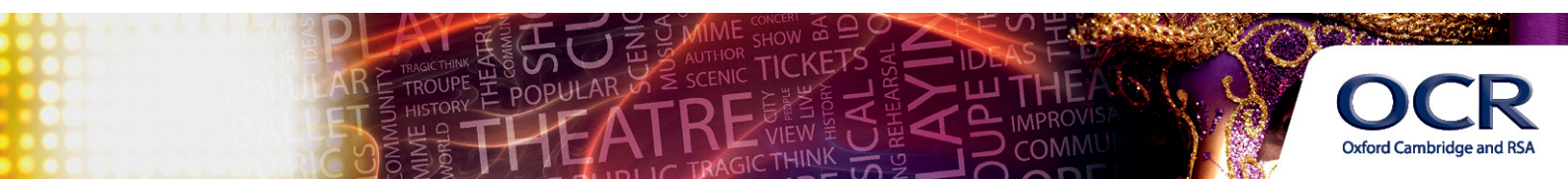
Activity 3

Aims and Objectives

- To examine and analyse existing costume design sheets.
- To consider factors which may have an effect on the costume design and make choices according to what best suits the physical representation of the character and the performance.
- To create a costume design sheet.

Creating a costume design sheet

The activity consists of students undertaking initial planning and then creating a costume design sheet. This will enable them to think about a variety of factors that costume designers need to consider before they begin planning and to understand how to create an accurate and professional costume design sheet.
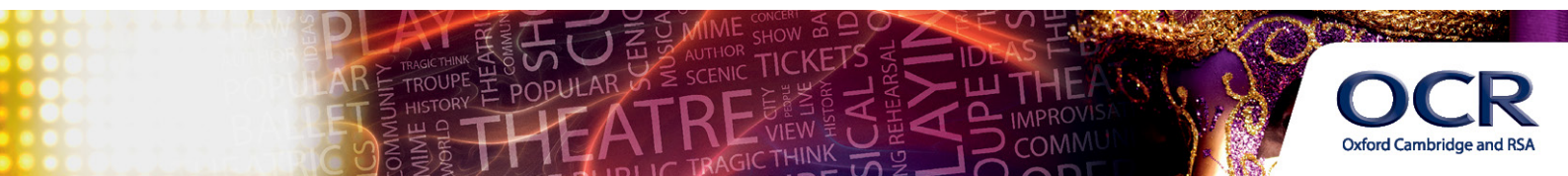
Begin by showing students some examples of costume design sheets. Exemplar material from the internet, past students' designs or professional examples from websites such as Victoria and Albert Museum (see resources) could be used.

The Costume Design Planning Sheet (Resource 2) should then be completed. This guides students through a range of questions that are considered by a costume designer before they commence designing.

Students can then create their own costume design sheet for a character, implementing the decisions they have made on the planning sheet. This could be a character related to a stimulus to which they have been introduced. This activity could be completed prior to beginning the Drama in the Making unit and each individual/group allocated a well-known or stereotypical character for whom to design a costume.
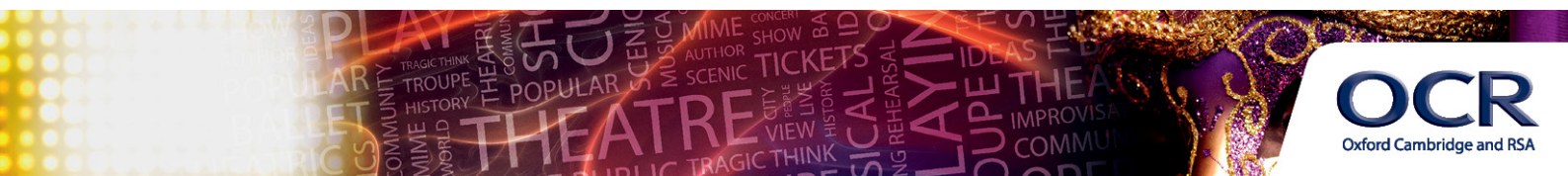
Resources

- Exemplar costume design sheets.
- Costume Design Planning Sheet – Resource 2.
- Paper and felt-tips/crayons.

Resource 1: Task Card

Task Card: Costume Design	Notes
Task: *With your group research the above context and design a suitable costume for a character to demonstrate this context. Justify the reasons for your decisions.*	

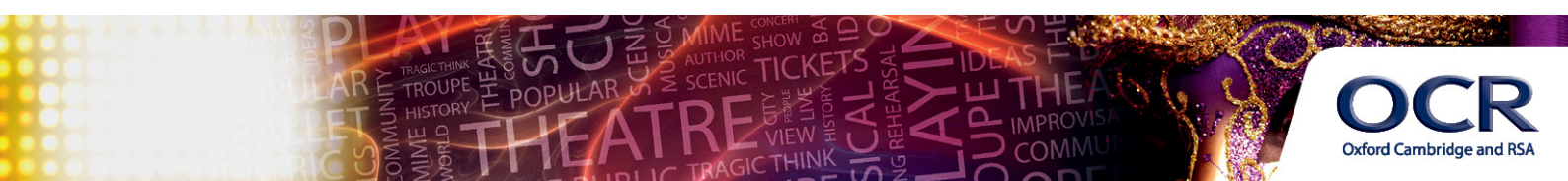| Context:	What does the costume represent about your character's context? • Where they live. • The time period in which they live. • What society is like.	
Character:	What does the costume represent about your character? • Age. • Gender. • Status. • Beliefs.	

Resource 2: Costume Design Planning Sheet

Costume Design Planning Sheet	
Consider the questions below before beginning your costume design.	
What is the time period of the play?	
In which geographic location is the play set?	
What time of year is the play set and what is the weather?	
Is the play set indoors or outdoors?	
Is the style naturalistic or non-naturalistic?	
What colours will you use?	
What materials will you use?	
Will make-up or masks be used?	
What accessories will be added?	
In what condition will the clothing be in – new or worn?	
Does the actor have to do any particular moves where restrictive clothing may be an issue?	
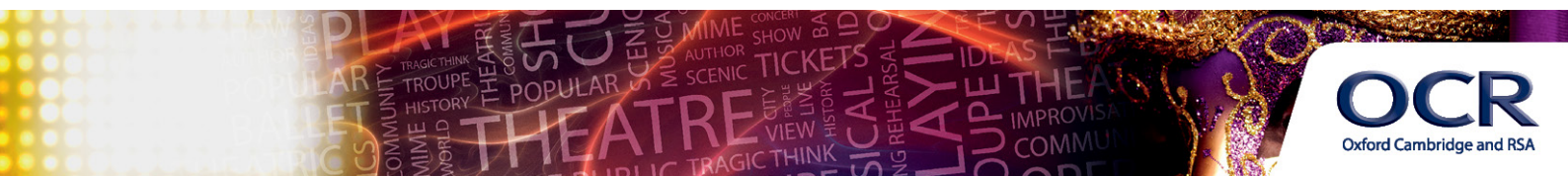
Will there be costume changes? If so how will the costume be designed to accommodate these changes?	
Links with lighting – consider the effect of colour combinations.	
Links with set – will there be connections with colours, motifs etc.?	

Costume Design resources

- Victoria and Albert Museum http://www.vam.ac.uk/page/c/costume/

- National Theatre http://www.nationaltheatre.org.uk/backstage/costume

- Royal Shakespeare Company http://www.rsc.org.uk/explore/collection/costume.aspx

- Fashion Museum http://www.museumofcostume.co.uk/

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