

# Drama

**GCSE**

**Drama**

Topic Exploration Pack

Lighting Design

December 2015

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# Introduction

**Drama in the Making** is about the potential of the ideas presented and not creating a polished final product. When students are completing their designs it is important that they remember that they are not restricted by budget and the space they use is entirely their choice.

Lighting design will be completed as either Item 2 or Item 3 for the Drama in Making unit and can be based on either the given stimulus or on Item 1. For example if your stimulus for Item 1 is a painting and a group chooses to create an improvisation for this based on the theme of the painting e.g. poverty, then for Item 2, the students might perform a duologue based on two of the characters from the improvisation. For Item 3, they would not be able to perform so the design (or director/ deviser) element could be used and they could base this on the original idea for Item 1 or even Item 2. As long as the students can relate their designs back to original stimulus and can identify the *potential* for the design elements of the scene they can choose either.

Collectively Items 2 and 3 are worth 20 marks of the whole unit. Some students thrive on this element as this is something that they may already do in their practice and don't always get to put it down on paper or even acknowledge it. A successful design has detail and students often question whether they should refer to their choice of materials or even where entrances and exits lead to. The more detail the better. However this does not mean writing a long essay. Designs can be annotated with explanations for the working records.

For all design elements set, lighting, costume, props, sound, etc. the key to success in design is context. Once this is firmly established all other ideas generated should fall in to place; considerations for style, semiotics and practicalities. This should be done through a design concept for the performance.

When presenting their work, the students must use the relevant terminology to show their understanding of their design and considerations and these should be identifiable throughout their recording on the video camera. The work should illustrate ideas for potential development and will be between two to four sides of A4 or a three minute presentation or a mixture of the both.

For a Lighting design, an audience-view design is required and a ground plan. This could also be accompanied by photographs, gel choices, diagrams that could include angles and using, of course, relevant terminology throughout. Students could also include a cue sheet if they have used a script during the design process. All the choices made should be annotated in detail with reference to the desired effect on the piece, the relevance to the text and through their choices the potential connotations from the colour, type of light, sharpness etc. that impact on context, genre and style.

## Teacher preparation

The way to get the best from students is to give them a practical guide to lighting design rather than just on paper. If you have a lighting rig, allow the students some time to experiment with it and guide them through the basic effects that can be created. If you haven't got a lighting rig, a selection of torches and black box would help the students to understand the fundamentals of lighting and potential effects. There is software that can be used to show effects of certain lights and the atmosphere and mood that can be created. Designs can be created and printed off with these, depending on the programme.

There are many websites that are very useful both for teachers and students alike that give examples of designs for shows that are currently running. Many productions now have resource packs that often have a design element to them and images of the set design, with lighting, that would provide examples to refer to when discussing the topics.

In this resource we have not covered how to write a lighting plot but there are many examples online of how to create a successful lighting plot and this would be the next step in the learning process. Because Drama in the Making is predominantly about the design and not the running of the lighting programme throughout the performance it is important to concentrate on this area.

There are also some picture examples at the end of the resource that would be good discussion points as to the success of the lighting choices and these can be found easily online and in any theatre programme that you may have at your disposal.



## Lesson One

### Learning objectives

Recognise the necessary design elements of stage lighting.

### Starter

Discuss and talk through McCandless information sheet.

### Main

Resources needed:

- A selection of torches that have various sized lights and focus capabilities.
- A box of some kind (reasonably large) with three sides to represent a proscenium arch stage preferably painted black.
- Some 'models'. These could be Lego men, dolls, craft people etc. something to represent a human on stage and will show light and shade capabilities.

### Task

Experiment with lighting effects of the various torches, both as a class and in small groups. Discuss restrictions and possibilities with where you can position the torches.

Practically experiment with McCandless theory and discuss.

### Plenary

Using the Match the Lamp worksheet, cut and paste the lighting description matching the descriptions to the light.

Discuss what lights you might use for creating various effects in relation to the knowledge the students have learnt about McCandless' theories.

## Lesson Two

### Learning objectives

Use semiotics (light) to enhance emotion on a stage.

Interpret a text and make artistic decisions about the emotion of the piece.

### Starter

Gel Semiotics worksheet.

Students are to annotate the worksheet showing their understanding of what colours could represent on stage e.g. emotion, feeling, tenseness.

Context could be developed here. A period drama played in a naturalistic style may have different connotations depending on the technology or culture at the time of performance as this could impact on the colour choices.

### Main

Rhyme light worksheet.

Students need to:

1. Annotate the nursery rhyme Jack and Jill with the emotions and feelings that the main characters are experiencing.
2. Annotate what colours could be used with reasons why.
3. Either:
  - Prepare a presentation on the choices made with references to:
    - choices of lamp
    - colour
    - beam size
    - density
    - the effects they have on the action
    - how they aid the portrayal of emotion on stage.

Or

Put their choices into practice, either with members of the group taking on the characters of Jack and Jill or reading through the rhyme whilst moving through the lighting cues.

### Plenary

Students present their choices to the class and allow for feedback on the effects of their lighting choices including their successes and where improvements could be made.



# Lesson Three

## Learning objectives

Identify keywords in stage directions that impact practical lighting decisions.

Design a basic lighting plan.

## Starter

**Task:** Highlight keywords in a script extract that a) affect the lighting and b) affect the set, ultimately effecting the lighting.

**Task:** Complete Five W's sheet (page 11).

<http://www.ncsu.edu/theatre/12-13/inspector/inspectorcomplete.pdf>

You could use this set from '*An Inspector calls*' for the students to work from. Alongside the opening stage direction, there may be other examples for the scripts presented here.

## Main

Using the template given for Proscenium arch audience view and Ground plan, on pages 14 and 15, students are to create a lighting design for the text (see worksheet examples) with considerations for 5 W's the students have previously created. NB. It is tricky in one hour to cover all of the information given on the five Ws but it could be used as a group decision making process and then split the group to cover certain areas which would mean the whole class would experience the whole possibilities rather than just what they can get through in the lesson.

## Task

Students need to design lighting choices annotating:

- the type of lantern used
- the power and shape of the beam
- the focus of the beam
- the colour of the beam
- the angle of the beam
- the effect of all these choices.

Throughout the process the students need to annotate the design and make notes of the reasons why they made those choices.

**Extension Task:** Ask students to focus on the decisions of style of the piece and consider how that would affect the choices of lighting used.

## Plenary

Present designs and decisions to class.

The class can ask the presenters questions about their design. This should highlight aspects that have worked well or ideas that they have missed. This could also be done in the style of an interview.



# McCandless information sheet

There is no one method of lighting design but Stanley McCandless produced a systematic approach which has become the foundation for modern stage lighting design today.

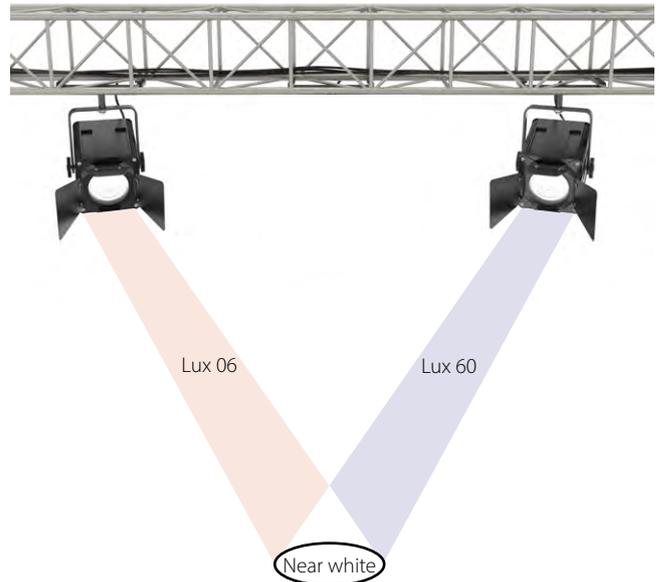
## Basic McCandless method

Actors are fully front lit with at least two angled lights.

A backlight and/or top light will help to add dimension to the actor.

- Use two gels; one cool, one warm.

Cool colours are associated with sky and water.



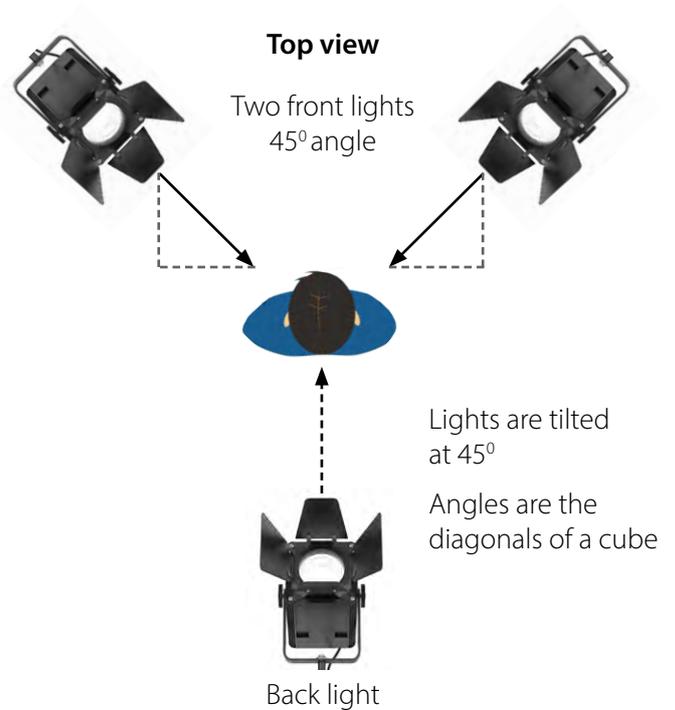
Warm colours are associated with sunlight and fire.



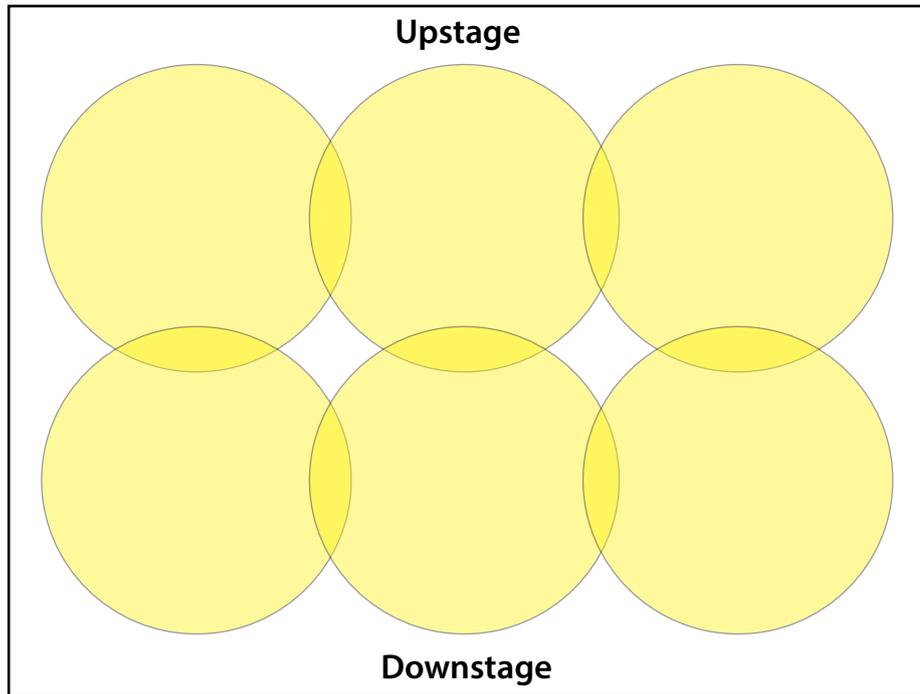
Neutral colours appear warm when compared to a cool colour, and cool when compared to a warm colour.

A gel wheel will help to make choices about which two colours to use.

<https://www.rosco.com/filters/roscolux.cfm>



Stage can be split into either six or nine areas depending on resources. You need a minimum of two lights per stage space.



# Match The Lamp



**Name:** Profile spot.

**Effect:** Can give a sharp defined image with a strong beam.

**Limitations:** If as a follow spot, the operator needs a lot of practice to make a smooth lighting performance.

**Advantages:** With focus knobs can have soft-focus and sharp edges.

Can accept Gobos/ project shapes.

Can accept Gels/ project colour.

Great for using as a follow spot to light movement around the stage.



**Name:** Moving head.

**Effect:** Various effects depending on colour, size, gobo and beam choices.

**Limitations:** When programmed they will only pan according to their instructions (tricky when things go wrong on stage). Very difficult to manipulate during a show.

**Advantages:** Very flexible.

Can pan independently once programmed.

Can project colour and patterns. Can split beam.

Can tilt to meet action.



**Name:** Flood light.

**Effect:** Provides a large area wash of light.

**Limitations:** Beam cannot be shaped.

**Advantages:** Good for lighting backcloths.

Can hold gels to add colour.



**Name:** Fresnel.

**Effect:** Soft edged spotlight.

**Limitations:** Less control than Profiles.

**Advantages:** Size of the beam can be adjusted by a mechanism on the side of the lamp.

Beam can be shaped by barn doors.



**Name:** Birdie.

**Effect:** Bright, soft-edged pool of light.

**Limitations:** Cannot be focused (beam size and shape cannot be altered).

**Advantages:** Ideal for hiding in small areas (behind set, front of the stage).

Good for using as footlights to provide an up-light.



**Name:** Parcan.

**Effect:** Powerful narrow beam (width of beam can vary).

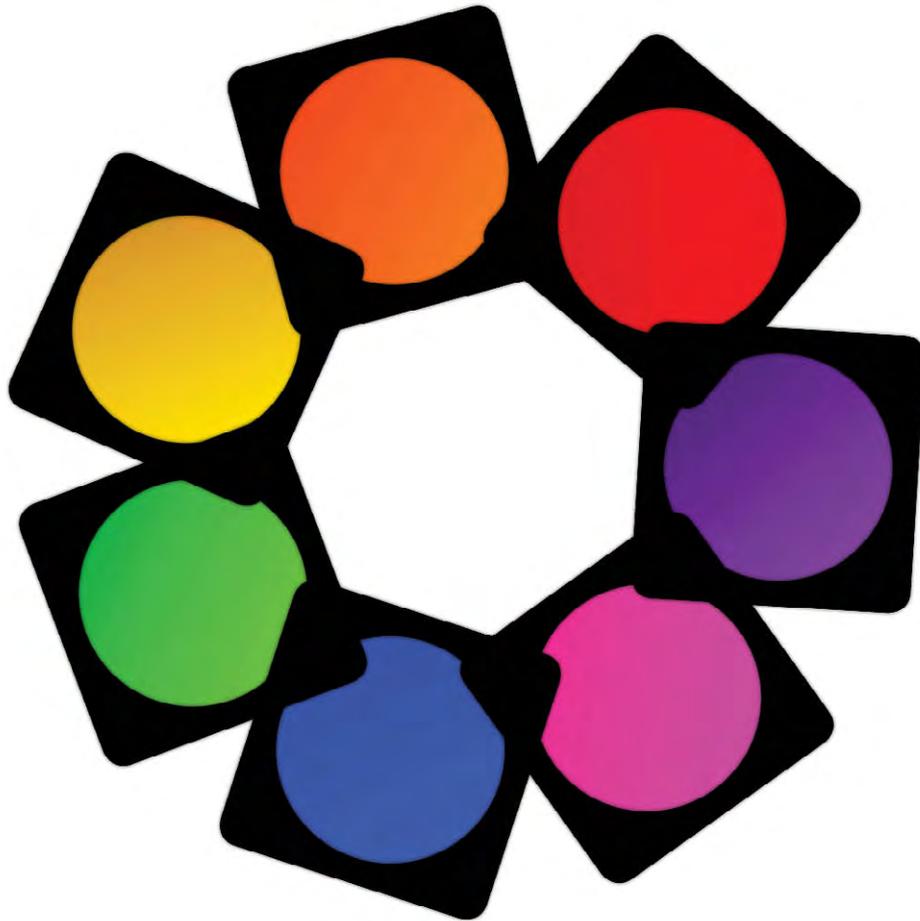
**Limitations:** Cannot be focused (beam size and shape cannot be altered).

**Advantages:** Can project colour well – can hold gels.



# Gel semiotics worksheet

Annotate the wheel to show what emotion/ feeling each colour could represent on stage.



## Rhyme light

Highlight and annotate any feelings or emotions that you think these two characters would be experiencing during this action.

*Jack and Jill went up the hill to fetch a pail of water*

*Jack fell down and broke his crown*

*And Jill came tumbling after.*

*Up got Jack, and home did trot*

*As fast as he could caper*

*He went to bed and bound his head*

*With vinegar and brown paper.*





# Script extracts

## **An Inspector Calls - J.B Priestley**

The dining room of a fairly large suburban house, belonging to a prosperous manufacturer. It has good solid furniture of the period. The general effect is substantial and heavily comfortable, but not cosy and homelike. (If a realistic set is used, then it should be swung back, as it was in the production at the New Theatre. By doing this, you can have the dining-table centre downstage during Act One, when it is needed there, and then, swinging back, can reveal the fireplace for Act Two, and then for Act Three can show a small table with telephone on it, downstage of fireplace.. By this time the dining-table and its chairs have moved well upstage. Producers who wish to avoid this tricky business, which involves two re-settings of the scene and some very accurate adjustments of the extra flats necessary would be well advised to dispense of an ordinary realistic set, if only because the dining table becomes a nuisance. The lighting should be pink and intimate until the INSPECTOR arrives, and then it should be brighter and harder.)

At rise of curtain, the four BIRLINGS and GERALD are seated at the table, with ARTHUR BIRLING at one end, his wife at the other, ERIC downstage, and SHEILA and GERALD seated upstage. EDNA, the parlourmaid, is just clearing the table, which has no cloth, of dessert plates and champagne glasses, etc., and replacing them with decanter of port, cigar box and cigarettes. Port glasses are already on the table. All five are in the evening dress of the period, the men in tails and white ties, not dinner jackets. ARTHUR BIRLING is a heavy looking, rather portentous looking man in his middle fifties but rather provincial in his speech. His wife is about fifty, a rather cold woman and her husband's social superior. SHEILA is a pretty girl in her early twenties, very pleased with life and rather excited. GERALD CROFT is an attractive chap about thirty, rather too manly to be a dandy but very much the easy well-bred man about town. ERIC is in his early twenties, not quite at ease, half shy, half assertive. At the moment they have all had a good dinner, are celebrating a special occasion, and are pleased with themselves.

### **Source**

<http://genius.com/J-b-priestley-an-inspector-calls-act-one-setting-annotated/>



## Miss Julie

The action of the play takes place on Midsummer Night in the Count's kitchen.

CHRISTINE stands on the left, by the hearth, and fries something in a pan. She has on a light blouse and a kitchen apron. JOHN comes in through the glass door in livery. He holds in his hand a pair of big riding boots with spurs, which he places on the door at the back, in a visible position.

### Source

[http://archive.org/stream/missjulieotherpl00striiala/missjulieotherpl00striiala\\_djvu.txt](http://archive.org/stream/missjulieotherpl00striiala/missjulieotherpl00striiala_djvu.txt)

## Lysistrata by Aristophanes

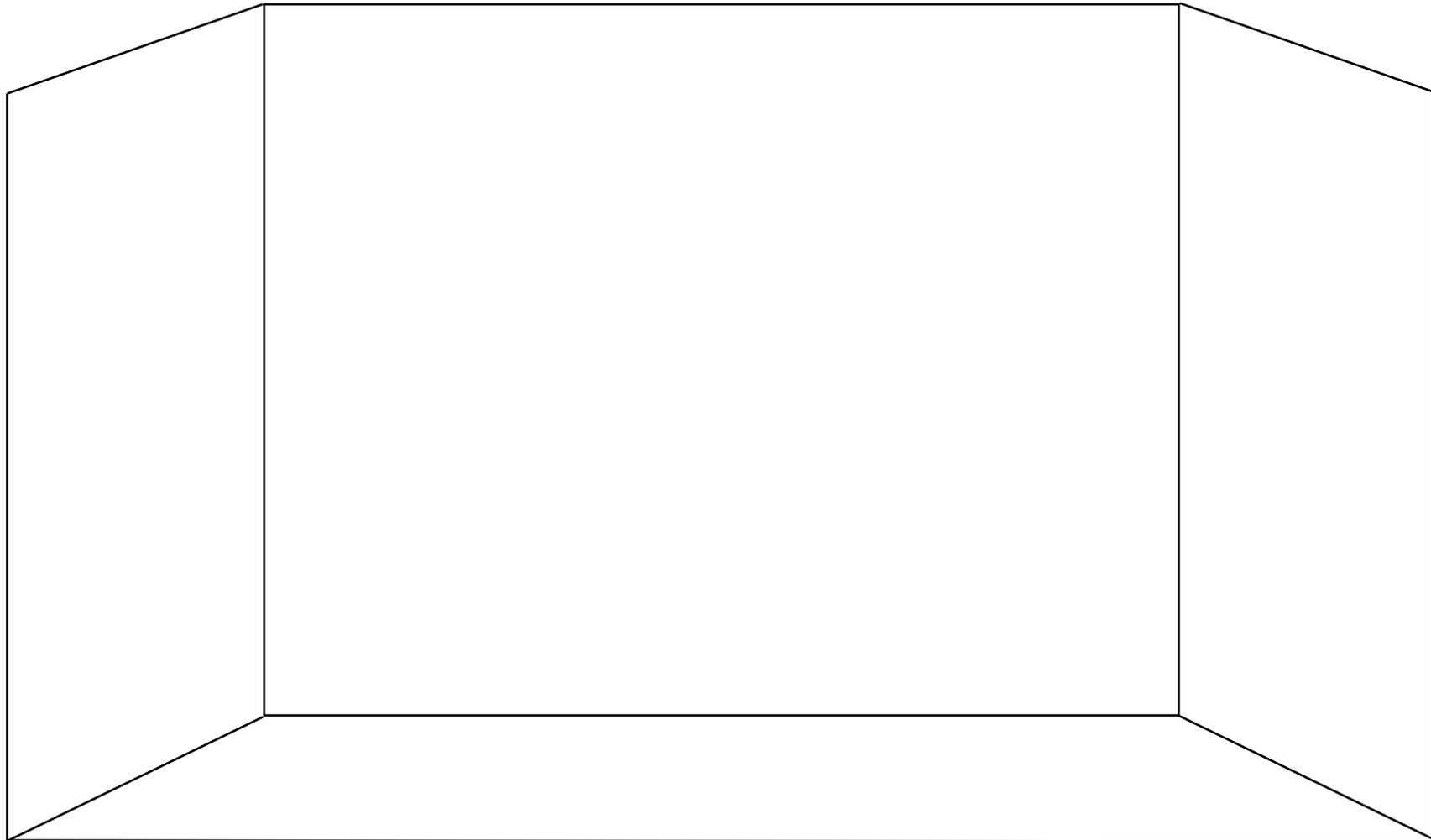
[Scene— At the base of the Orchestra are two buildings, the house of LYSISTRATA and the entrance to the Acropolis; a winding and narrow path leads up to the latter. Between the two buildings is the opening of the Cave of Pan. LYSISTRATA is pacing up and down in front of her house.]

### Source

<https://ebooks.adelaide.edu.au/a/aristophanes/lysistra/>



# Proscenium arch design



# Ground plan of design



# Helpful links and resources

[http://www.thewomaninblack.com/connectwp/wp-content/uploads/downloads/2012/11/wib\\_pack.pdf](http://www.thewomaninblack.com/connectwp/wp-content/uploads/downloads/2012/11/wib_pack.pdf)

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/schools/gcsebitesize/drama/performing/supportrev3.shtml>

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/education/guides/z39x34j/revision/3>

<http://www.onstagelighting.co.uk/category/lighting-design/>

[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Stage\\_lighting](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Stage_lighting)

<http://www.mts.net/~william5/sld/sld-100.htm>

<http://www.theatre crafts.com/lighting>

<http://www.dramainfoweb.co.uk/>

<http://www.theatredesign.org.uk/>

<http://www.iar.unicamp.br/lab/luz/ld/C%EAAnica/Livros/Larry%20Wild/Lighting.pdf>

(This is very detailed overview of lighting functions and designs for university students.)

<https://www.tes.co.uk/teaching-resource/Stage-lights-with-lenses-6189856>



# Lighting examples









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