

GCSE (9–1) DRAMA A LEVEL DRAMA AND THEATRE



Keeping drama creative

Opportunities for choice and diversity in OCR GCSE and A Level Drama

This is a brief and broad guide to where in our GCSE Drama and A Level Drama and Theatre specifications you can make choices that inform your planning and curriculum to:

- **represent** students and their backgrounds
- be relevant to their interests and aspirations
- be relevant to **industry and real life** roles
- **broaden** horizons.

At OCR we believe in keeping our creative qualifications just that – creative!

Our GCSE Drama and A Level Drama and Theatre specifications are designed to offer **choice and optionality**. Teachers and students need to have freedom to explore the broad subject that is Drama and Theatre. Teachers should feel empowered to include their own areas of expertise, but also to learn alongside students as the world of Drama and Theatre evolves around us!

Here is some food for thought for each of the components in our Drama and Theatre Qualifications.

The written exams and their set texts

The set texts in our specifications are assessed in the written exam components. Students study the set text in its entirety and explore practically how drama is developed, performed and responded to.

Social, historical and cultural context can all be explored in a variety of ways to reflect both the context they were written in and how these texts could be viewed and presented now.

The set texts are regularly reviewed and may be subject to change. If a text is to be removed from the list and replaced with another text, centres will be notified a year in advance.

The other side of the written exam..!

In the GCSE Performance and Response paper and the A Level Analysing Performance, students analyse and evaluate the work of others through watching live drama and theatre.

This is a centre-choice performance and a great opportunity to expose students to a wide range of diverse practitioners, artists and theatre makers. Anything you watch with your students throughout the course, either in full or extracts, live or digitally, can add to their experience.

Beyond the set texts...

The practical NEA components of drama across the suite are designed to be as flexible as possible and inspirational not prescriptive.

There is so much scope here to explore interesting and meaningful performance texts, topics, themes and more.

Presenting and Performing Texts/Exploring and Performing Texts (Scripted performance):

Both GCSE and A Level scripted performance assessment are a free choice of performance texts (with some parameters to be met such as duration, cast size, etc).

There is opportunity here in both GCSE and A Level Drama for teachers to choose plays that cover a wide range of diverse backgrounds, issues, playwrights and contexts. We want to support teachers to do so and to feel confident that they can.

This provides opportunities for students to explore themes, cultures, characters, context and issues in a creative way through practical drama skills.

Devising Drama/Practitioners in Practice:

Each year we provide a choice of GCSE devising stimulus. These are deliberately varied to spark as many creative ideas and directions as possible. They are a starting point – students can explore, research and discover what the stimulus may mean to them, and what messages they want to communicate through their devised pieces. You can guide them towards current affairs, historical issues, people, playwrights, artists or so on that may relate to each one.

At A Level, their stimulus is even freer. It is centre choice of text again for the explorative extract. There is also a very large choice of practitioners. All approved practitioners can be found on [the text management page](#) in the relevant drop down lists. This list is updated regularly to remain current. Again this provides opportunity to explore and be inspired by a wide range of theatre makers.

Students' devised piece of drama can be inspired by either or both of their practitioners and anything they have discovered during the practical exploration of their chosen text extract.

How to choose your performance texts?

Think about relevant themes, character roles, representation of cultures, backgrounds, historical events. What will engage your students? Could you give them a selection of texts to choose from and find the end decision together?

This can apply to the live theatre component too.

Some further ideas

Embed diversity in the environment. Consider your displays - posters, photographs, theatre adverts, student work – so the environment around students represents and includes as much as possible.

When a play (set text or otherwise!) presents an opportunity to **confront challenging issues** or perceptions, plan this into your lessons. Practical exploration and understanding how to communicate messages is very relevant to the skills needed across all the components in the qualifications as well as in students' future careers in the industry.

Speaking of industry, **consider the professional roles** in theatre. A session where you map the professional roles included in producing a play and link to real life. Students access the qualification from the roles of performer or designer but also remember the roles in addition to these and how the skills they are focussing on at this stage can develop into wider opportunities. There is opportunity here to also find links to professional roles, practitioners and venues.

Stay connected

If you have any questions, suggestions or queries about delivering the Drama and Theatre qualifications, [please get in touch](#) or follow us on [@OCR_PerformArts](#).



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