

drama and theatre studies

A Level

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Exam board: AQA



What is this subject about?

Drama and Theatre is the academic study of theatre through the centuries and the practical exploration of different genre and style of performance. It is designed to deepen your understanding, appreciation and enjoyment of theatre and theatre visits are an integral and key part of the course.

Practical performance is a compulsory and examined element of the course, therefore a full commitment is required to group rehearsals, which take place after college and at lunchtimes

What will I study over the two years?

During the first year you will study a set text from a historical period; Ibsen's *Hedda Gabler*, and theatre practitioner Stanislavski. You will be assessed in examination practice essays, and practical workshops. You will also analyse live theatre productions and produce examination style essays.

You will perform a duologue of a play extract, working as a pair. You will then produce a piece of original theatre in a group, taking on all responsibilities for research, writing, directing, set design and acting. You will be using the style of practitioner *Kneehigh*. The performance will be filmed and will be moderated, along with a coursework folder.

In the second year, you will revise *Hedda Gabler*, and theatre review and an additional set text, *Our Country's Good*. All of which will be assessed through a written examination.

You will also study 2 different practitioners and perform a series of scenes from an extract in a duologue as well as performing a play extract as a group, for which you will prepare a written

coursework file for a visiting examiner. Written coursework covering the extracts studied over the two years and your performance will be assessed by the visiting examiner.

How is the course assessed?

Assessment is through practical work (30%), written coursework (30%) and a written examination (40%).

What skills will I need and develop in this course?

You will be encouraged to engage with a wide range of different kinds of theatre, developing skills of independent research, observation, critical analysis and personal reflection, as well as developing your creativity and practical skills, in both performance and essay writing.

What can the course lead to in terms of higher education and future careers?

With regards to progression, this course does not guarantee a career in the theatre, but many students do go on to read Drama or Theatre at university. It also provides a good analytical A Level which would support other subjects for university entry. Students who have studied either AS or A Level Drama and Theatre Studies have gone on to study a wide variety of subjects at university including Law, English, History and Psychology.

What are the formal entry requirements for this course?

Aside from the general entry criteria that the College requires, you will also need a minimum of:

- Grade 4 in GCSE English Language
- Grade 4 in GCSE Drama (significant acting experience is essential if GCSE Drama has not been studied)

What extra support/enrichment activities are on offer?

The department offers a varied programme of theatre visits. We also have visiting theatre companies who perform and offer workshops. We run complementary studies of a College Production- a play with music and dance; Theatre Workshop – a play; Audition Workshop- monologue preparation for auditions.

A lunch time course of exam 'clinics' is run in the autumn term to support Year 1 students with the jump from GCSE to A level, write analytical essays with specialist language. Clinics also support students with revision. Students are set 6 hours of homework per week with one essay a week on average, each week. Staffed rehearsals are run after college and at weekends.

Subject combination advice:

Drama and Theatre Studies is a subject that by its nature requires candidates to consider individual, moral, ethical, historical, social, cultural and contemporary issues. Therefore Theatre Studies combines well with any humanities subject, for example History, English, Politics and Sociology. It also combines well with Psychology, Film Studies and Media Studies. However, we advise against students combining Drama and Theatre Studies with BTEC Extended Certificate in Performing Arts as they are too closely related in terms of the skill set and rehearsal demands.

What is the difference between Drama and Theatre Studies and BTEC Performing Arts?

Drama and Theatre A Level is in some ways similar to English Literature, but with just theatre texts plus straight acting. Whereas, the Performing Arts BTEC course involves music, dance with acting and is more flexible so you can play to your strengths and can follow a Musical Theatre pathway. BTEC Performing Arts focuses on rehearsal and performance in order to train students for entry to Higher Education Level on a course which is aimed at a career in the industry. The Performing Arts BTEC course is assessed through 100% coursework. Whereas, Drama and Theatre is 30% acting, 30% coursework and 40% written exam. Drama and Theatre is not just an acting course, you also learn about design and directing.