

drama and theatre

A Level

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Exam board: AQA



What is this subject about?

Ever wondered what it would be like to be a director, performer, designer, playwright or theatre critic?

Our course inspires students to become independent theatre makers. You will learn through experience and understand theatre from the different perspectives above, as well as taking ownership over creating meaning for an audience.

Undertaking this course will encourage you to develop not only performance skills but a range of transferable and valuable skills for a variety of subjects at higher education and also for employment. Teamwork, problem solving and learning to think independently are just some of these.

A full commitment to both written and practical elements is needed to maximise success.

What will I study over the two years?

Component 1: Drama and Theatre (written exam)

The written exam is designed to allow you to demonstrate your creativity and imagination as you interpret the set texts and explain how you would stage an extract drawing upon the historical context. You will study these from the perspective of a director and performer. For set text 2 you will also cover design. As a class you will explore the set texts through practical workshops and stage scenes to bring the world of the play to life. You will practice exam essays throughout the course.

Set Text 1: Hedda Gabler by Henrik Ibsen, set in 19th Century.

Set Text 2: Our Country's Good by Timberlake Wertenbaker, set in 18th Century.

Theatre Review: You will see a range of productions to evaluate and write analytical reviews.

Component 2: Creating original drama (devised)

You have the opportunity to be a playwright and devise a piece of original theatre as a group. You will take responsibility for the research, writing, directing, set design and acting. This will be created in the style of a practitioner, such as Kneehigh. You will be assessed on your final piece. Alongside your practical, you will complete the Working Notebook coursework, which explains your creative process, influences and evaluation of your piece and individual performance.

Component 3: Making theatre (scripted work)

You will workshop and perform three extracts from different published plays. You will explore and apply the techniques and style of a selected practitioner, such as Max Stafford-Clark or Katie Mitchell. Your performance of your third extract will be assessed by a visiting examiner. The Reflective Report coursework covers all three scripted extracts explored over the two years and is an analysis of your research, skill development and evaluation of your performance.

How is the course assessed?

Assessment is through practical work (30%), written coursework (30%) and a written examination (40%). There is a strong emphasis on written assessment and invention/ creative thinking making it a notable step up from GCSE.

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, imagination and practical skills, in both performance and essay writing.

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

Whilst this course does not guarantee a career in the theatre, many students do go on to study 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 A Level Drama and Theatre have gone on to study a wide variety of subjects at university including Law, English, History and Psychology. Our students go on to a range of careers including: working in the theatre, film, media industries, teaching and journalism.

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

You will also be required to attend evening theatre trips and have a willingness to use private study time to rehearse with others.

What extra support/enrichment activities are on offer?

The department offers a varied programme of theatre visits as well as welcoming visiting theatre companies to the College, who perform and offer workshops. As part of the College's Complementary Studies programme we run College Production each year, where we work to put on a show including music and

movement; Theatre Workshop, which is focused on acting and developing performance skills and usually ends with a performance and Audition Workshop, where students prepare monologue for auditions. Our Drama alumni regularly visit the College and hold Q&A sessions on their experience of Drama at university, drama school or working as an actor. They have also coached students on monologues.

The department run a lunch time course of exam preparation sessions in the autumn term to support Year 1 students with the jump from GCSE to A Level, with the focus on helping students to write analytical essays with subject specific terminology. These extra sessions also support students with revision. Students are set homework tasks including: essays, research and rehearsals. Staffed rehearsals are run at lunchtimes and outside of the College hours.

Subject combination advice:

Drama and Theatre is a subject that by its nature requires students to consider individual, moral, ethical, historical, social, cultural and contemporary issues. Therefore, Drama and Theatre 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 usually advise against students combining Drama and Theatre with BTEC Performing Arts as they are closely related in terms of the skill set and rehearsal demands.

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

Drama and Theatre A Level is in some ways similar to English Literature, but with theatre texts and a focus on your creative staging ideas as a director or a performer. We work predominantly in a naturalistic acting style although there are opportunities to include song, movement or dance in the Devising unit. Whereas, the Performing Arts BTEC course involves music, dance and acting, more like a Musical Theatre pathway. Drama and Theatre is a creative course which also includes critical analysis and essay writing therefore provides a strong A Level for entry to Higher Education. BTEC Performing Arts focuses on rehearsal and performance to train students for entry to Higher Education on a course which is aimed at a career in the industry. Drama and Theatre is assessed by 30% acting, 30% coursework and 40% written exam. Whereas, Performing Arts is assessed through 100% coursework. Drama and Theatre is not just an acting course, you also learn about design and directing as well as reviewing professional productions.