

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?

Year 1: In preparation for the written exam, you will study a set text Hedda Gabler by Ibsen, set in 19th Century. As a class you will explore the play through workshops and staging scenes to bring the world of the play to life. You will be assessed through practice exam essays. You will also evaluate theatre productions and write analytical theatre reviews.

For the practical units, you will work in a pair to perform a duologue from a published play. You also get the opportunity to be a playwright and devise a piece of original theatre as a group, which you will then perform. 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.

Both of the practical units include coursework, which is a written analysis of your research, skill development and evaluation of your performance and piece.

Year 2: You will revise Hedda Gabler and theatre review whilst exploring an additional set text Our Country's Good, set in the 18th Century all of which will be assessed through a written examination. The written exam is designed to allow you to demonstrate your creativity and imagination as you interpret a set text and explain how you would stage a scene drawing upon the historical context.

You will perform two extracts from different plays and apply the techniques and style of a selected practitioner, such as Max Stafford-Clark. Your final performance will be assessed by a visiting examiner. The coursework covers all three scripted extracts explored over the two years.

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?

With regard to progression, this course does not guarantee a career in the theatre, but 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 industry, 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 GCSE Drama (significant acting experience is essential if GCSE Drama has not been studied)

A grade 4 in English Literature is not essential but may be helpful. 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?

Production (where we work to put on a show); Theatre Workshop; Audition Workshop-monologue preparation for auditions.

A lunch time course of exam preparation sessions is run in the autumn term to support you as Year 1 students, with the jump from GCSE to A Level. The focus is on helping you to write analytical essays with subject specific terminology. There will also be sessions to support you with revision. You will be 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 Extended Certificate in 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 plus straight acting. Whereas, the Performing Arts BTEC course involves music, dance with acting 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 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.