

Theatre Glossary

Acting techniques: specific skills, pedagogies, theories, or methods of investigation used by an actor to prepare for a theatrical performance

Believability: theatrical choices thought to be “true” based upon an understanding of any given fictional moment, interpretation of text, and/or human interaction

Blocking: patterns of movement in a scene or play including, for example, stage crosses, entrances, and exits which help to convey meaning

Character Traits: observable embodied actions that illustrate a character’s personality, values, beliefs, and history

Conflict: the problem, confrontation, or struggle in a scene or play; conflict may include a character against him or herself, a character in opposition to another character, a character against nature, a character against society, or a character against the supernatural

Creative Drama: a process-centered, non-exhibitional approach to drama intended to benefit the performers themselves; story drama and process drama are two types of creative drama

Creative Processes: the application of production and technical elements (see the definitions) to a theatrical production

Devised Drama: creation of an original performance piece by an ensemble

Dialogue: a conversation between two or more characters

Dramatic Play: make-believe where children naturally assign and accept roles, then act them out

Focus: commitment by a participant (an actor, technician, director) to remain in the scope of the project or to stay within the world of the play

Genre: relating to a specific kind or type of drama and theatre such as a tragedy, drama, melodrama, comedy, or farce

Gesture: an expressive and planned movement of the body or limbs

Given Circumstances: the underlying actions and events that have happened before the play, story, or devised piece begins

Guided Drama Experience: a leader guides participants during a process drama, story drama, or creative drama experience (see the definitions) through side-coaching, narration, and prompting; the action of the drama does not stop in order for the leader to support the students; facilitator may guide participants in or out of role

Imagined Worlds: an imaginary world created collectively by participants in a drama experience

Improvise: the spontaneous, intuitive, and immediate response of movement and speech; a distinction can be made between spontaneous improvisation, which is immediate and unrehearsed, and prepared improvisation, which is

shaped and rehearsed

Inner Thoughts: the underlying and implied meaning or intentions in the character's dialogue or actions (also known as subtext)

Motivation: reasons why a character behaves or reacts in a particular way in a scene or play

Objective: a goal or particular need or want that a character has within a scene or play

Plot: a narrative as revealed through the action and/or dialogue; traditionally, a plot has the elements of exposition, inciting incident, conflict, rising action, climax, and resolution or falling action

Process Drama: a non-linear, episodic, process-centered, improvised form of drama in which teacher and students are in-role exploring and reflecting on an issue, story, theme, problem, or idea in a non-exhibitional format that is intended to benefit the performers themselves

Production Elements: technical elements selected for use in a specific production, including sets, sound, costumes, lights, music, props, and make-up, as well as elements specific to the production such as puppets, masks, special effects, or other storytelling devices/concepts

Script Analysis: the study of a script to understand the underlying structure and themes of the play's story, and the motives and objectives of its characters

Scripted Drama: a piece of writing for the theatre that includes a description of the setting, a list of the characters, the dialogue, and the action of the characters

Story Drama: episodic, process-centered, improvised form of drama that uses existing literature as a starting point for drama exploration, the drama explores implied moments (before, after, or within) that may not exist in the story and is presented in a non-exhibitional format that is intended to benefit the performers themselves

Staging: the process of selecting, designing, adapting to, or modifying a performance space

Story Elements: characters, setting, dialogue, and plot that create a story

Style: the use of a specific set of characteristic or distinctive techniques such as realism, expressionism, epic theatre, documentary theatre, or classical drama; style may also refer to the unique artistic choices of a particular playwright, director, or actor

Tactic: the means by which a character seeks to achieve their objective, the selection of tactics are based on the obstacle presented; in acting and directing a tactic refers to a specific action verb

Technical Design Elements: the elements of spectacle such as sets, sound, costume, lights, music, props, and makeup used to create a unified and meaningful design for a theatrical production

Theatrical Conventions: practices and/or devices that the audience and actors accept in the world of the play even when it is not realistic, such as a narrator, flashback, or an aside

Theme: the aspect of the human condition under investigation in the drama; it can be drawn from unifying topics or questions across content areas

Visual Composition: the arrangement of actors and scenery on a stage for a theatrical production, sometimes known as *mise en scène*.