Your notes

GCSE Drama: revision notes

Set, costume, lighting and sound

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Set design

- Set creates the location and period. Styles include naturalistic (realistic), minimalist (a few key items) and composite (several locations on stage at once).
- Elements: flats, backdrops and cycloramas, **rostra** (platforms for levels), trucks (scenery on wheels), revolves, trapdoors, projections and furniture.
- Colour, scale and materials create mood, such as grey, stark walls for an oppressive prison.

Costume

- Costume shows character, status, personality, period and location.
- Consider colour, fabric, fit, condition (smart or worn), accessories, hair, make-up and masks.
- Costumes must allow movement and quick changes where needed.

Lighting

- Lighting shows time, place and mood, and focuses attention.
- Colour comes from gels or LEDs: warm colours for comfort, cold blue for night or sadness, red for danger.
- Lanterns include spotlights, floodlights, fresnels (soft edges), profiles (sharp edges) and follow spots. A **gobo** projects a pattern, such as leaves or window bars.
- Changes include fades, snaps, cross-fades and **blackouts**. Angle and intensity affect the effect: backlighting creates silhouettes.

Sound

- Sound creates location, time, atmosphere and tension.

- Diegetic sound is heard by the characters (a phone ringing); non-diegetic sound is not (an underscore of music).
- Sound can be live or recorded; designers control volume, direction (speaker position), reverb and timing, and may build a **soundscape**.

Your notes

Key terms

Naturalistic set	A set that looks like a real place.
Minimalist set	A set with only a few key items.
Composite set	A set showing several locations at once.
Rostra	Platforms used to create levels.
Gel	A coloured filter placed in front of a lantern.
Gobo	A stencil placed in a lantern to project a pattern.
Soundscape	Layers of sound creating an atmosphere.
Blackout	All stage lights switched off at once.

Quick questions

Cover the answers and test yourself: remembering is what makes it stick.

1. What is a gobo?
2. What is a composite set?
3. What are rostra?
4. What does a gel do?
5. Which lantern gives a soft-edged beam?
6. What is diegetic sound?
7. What is a soundscape?
8. What can costume show about a character?

Answers

1. A stencil in a lantern that projects a pattern
2. A set showing several locations at once
3. Platforms used to create levels
4. Colours the light from a lantern
5. A fresnel
6. Sound the characters can hear
7. Layers of sound creating an atmosphere
8. Status, personality, period and location

What to do next

Practise 10 questions on this topic

Try 3 exam questions, with mark schemes

Read the lesson, one step at a time

Your notes