Your notes

GCSE Drama: revision notes

Drama and theatre terminology

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Vocal and physical terms

- Vocal: pitch (high or low), pace (speed), pause, volume, tone (emotion in the voice), accent, emphasis and inflection.
- Physical: gesture, facial expression, posture, gait (way of walking), movement, and eye contact.
- Space: **proxemics** (the distance between characters, showing their relationship) and levels (height differences, showing status).

Drama techniques

- **Freeze frame** (tableau): a still picture made with bodies.
- **Thought-tracking**: a character speaks their thoughts aloud, often from a **freeze frame**.
- Hot-seating: a performer answers questions in character to develop the role.
- Cross-cutting: moving between two or more scenes. Flashback and flash-forward move in time.
- Monologue: a long speech by one character. **Soliloquy**: a character speaking their thoughts alone. **Aside**: a comment to the audience that other characters don't hear.
- Narration, direct address, split scene, and marking the moment.

Styles and practitioners

- **Naturalism** aims to be realistic; Stanislavski developed methods such as emotion memory and given circumstances.
- **Epic theatre** (Brecht) reminds the audience they are watching a play so they think critically: **breaking the fourth wall**, placards, multi-role and narration (the "alienation" or distancing effect).
- Physical theatre uses movement to tell the story, as in the work of Frantic Assembly.

- Genres include comedy, tragedy, melodrama and farce.

Key terms

Proxemics	The use of space between characters to show their relationship.
Freeze frame	A still picture created by performers.
Thought-tracking	A character speaking their thoughts aloud.
Aside	A comment made to the audience that other characters don't hear.
Soliloquy	A character speaking their thoughts alone on stage.
Naturalism	A style that aims to be realistic.
Epic theatre	Brecht's style that makes the audience think critically.
Breaking the fourth wall	Speaking directly to the audience.

Quick questions

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

1. What is proxemics?
2. What is an aside?
3. What is a soliloquy?
4. What is hot-seating?
5. Which practitioner is linked to epic theatre?
6. Which practitioner is linked to naturalism?
7. What is pace?
8. What does breaking the fourth wall mean?

Answers

1. The use of space between characters to show their relationship
2. A comment to the audience that other characters don't hear
3. A character speaking their thoughts alone on stage
4. Answering questions in character to develop a role
5. Brecht
6. Stanislavski
7. The speed of speech or movement
8. Speaking directly to the audience

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

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