Your notes

GCSE Drama: revision notes

Stage configurations and staging

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Types of stage

- **Proscenium arch**: the audience sits on one side, looking through a frame (the arch). Good for big scenery and a "fourth wall", but the audience can feel distant.
- End on: the audience faces the stage from one end, like a proscenium without the arch.
- Thrust: the stage juts into the audience, who sit on three sides. It is more intimate, but some views are blocked.
- Traverse: the audience sits on two opposite sides, with the stage between. It suits catwalk-style action; performers must play to both sides.
- **Theatre in the round**: the audience surrounds the stage. It is very intimate, but tall scenery blocks views and actors always have their backs to someone.
- **Promenade**: the audience moves around with the action.

Stage positions

- Stage directions are given from the actor's view facing the audience: stage left is the actor's left.
- **Downstage** is nearest the audience; **upstage** is furthest away. Centre stage is the middle.
- The stage is often divided into nine areas, such as **downstage** right and **upstage** centre.

Choosing a configuration

- Think about intimacy, **sight lines**, the scenery needed, entrances and exits, and the relationship between the audience and the action.

Key terms

Proscenium arch	A stage framed by an arch, with the audience on one side.

Thrust stage	A stage with the audience on three sides.
Traverse stage	A stage with the audience on two opposite sides.
Theatre in the round	A stage with the audience on all sides.
Promenade	Staging where the audience moves with the action.
Downstage	The part of the stage nearest the audience.
Upstage	The part of the stage furthest from the audience.
Sight lines	The lines of view from the audience to the stage.

Your notes

Quick questions

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

1. Which stage has the audience on all sides?
2. Which stage has the audience on three sides?
3. Which stage has the audience on two opposite sides?
4. In promenade staging, what does the audience do?
5. Which part of the stage is nearest the audience?
6. From whose point of view are stage left and right given?
7. What is a disadvantage of theatre in the round?
8. What frames the stage in a proscenium arch theatre?

Answers

1. Theatre in the round
2. Thrust
3. Traverse
4. Moves around with the action
5. Downstage
6. The actor's, facing the audience
7. Tall scenery blocks views
8. An arch

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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