Your notes

GCSE Drama: revision notes

Theatre makers and their roles

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Theatre makers

- **Playwright**: writes the script. Performer: acts, sings or dances in the production. **Understudy**: learns a role so they can step in if a performer is ill.
- **Director**: has the overall vision, casts the actors and leads rehearsals, deciding how the play will be staged.
- Designers: set designer (the scenery and stage space), costume designer (clothing, hair and make-up), lighting designer and sound designer, and sometimes a puppet designer.
- **Technician**: operates lighting, sound or stage machinery during the show.
- **Stage manager**: runs the production backstage, organises rehearsals and "calls" the cues during performances.
- **Theatre manager**: runs the building and front of house, including tickets, staff and audience safety.

How they work together

- Designers meet the **director** to agree a concept, then create designs and models.
- In technical and dress rehearsals, the cues for lighting, sound and scene changes are set and practised.
- During the show, the **stage manager** tells **technicians** when to operate each cue.

In the exam

- (AQA) Section A of the Understanding drama paper has multiple-choice questions on these roles and on theatre terminology.
- (Eduqas) In Component 3, Interpreting theatre, you answer questions on your set text as an actor, a designer and a **director**, so you need to know what each of them does.

Key terms

Playwright	The person who writes the script.
Director	The person with the overall vision who leads rehearsals.
Understudy	A performer who learns a role in case the main performer can't perform.
Stage manager	The person who runs the production backstage and calls the cues.
Technician	A person who operates lighting, sound or stage machinery.
Cue	A signal for a lighting, sound or scene change.
Theatre manager	The person who runs the building and front of house.

Quick questions

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

1. Who writes the script of a play?
2. Who has the overall vision for a production?
3. What is an understudy?
4. Who calls the cues during a performance?
5. What does a theatre manager do?
6. Who operates the lighting board during the show?
7. What is a cue?
8. Who designs the scenery?

Answers

1. The playwright
2. The director
3. A performer who learns a role in case the main performer can't perform
4. The stage manager
5. Runs the building and front of house
6. A technician
7. A signal for a lighting, sound or scene change
8. The set designer

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

Free revision for GCSE and KS3 at lycolearn.co.uk. Some notes are for one exam board only, and say so in brackets.

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