

Drama & Theatre Studies at Samuel Whitbread Academy

Intent

At Samuel Whitbread, we aim to bring the study of theatre to life in lessons through practical and theoretical tasks. We also aim to enable students to identify how the skills that they use can cross over into many different areas for further study and career options. The study of Drama does not exclusively teach students to be actors, it encompasses all areas of live theatre, the study of influential texts and practitioners throughout history, to the modern day.

We aim to analyse all work through the historical, social and political contexts applicable to the subject matter so that students have a robust knowledge of the world and understand how what they are studying fits into this. Each country has its own traditions of storytelling and each one is a window into different time periods, cultures and popular movements of their time.

Implementation

A Level Drama and Theatre is split into three components; Devising, Text in Performance and Theatre Makers in Practice. This provides students with the opportunity to explore each component through practical and theory-based lessons and therefore our lessons are structured in a way that allows for both to complement each other. Students must be well prepared for practical tasks to be set in each lesson as their theoretical learning is further exemplified with practical assignments to aid in the understanding of key concepts.

Students are given prep time activities with allocated rooms within the department in order to complete the activities within a creative environment. We use Google Classroom for the setting of work and returning of marks. As part of the homework curriculum, we actively engage students on the watching of live theatre via a digital platform. This “reading” of live theatre helps to widen their knowledge and understanding of the creative choices that theatre practitioners make.

Implementation	Key Stage 5: Year 12	<p>The first year of Drama A Level will explore a selection of influential theatre practitioners throughout history, up to the modern day. Students begin their study of the two key texts studied for this A Level (<i>Equus</i> and <i>Woyzeck</i>) and look at how these texts can be approached by actors, directors and designers. We complete a visit to see a piece of live theatre that students will analyse in their final exam at the end of the course.</p> <p>Towards the end of Year 12, students will take their <u>Component 1: Devising</u> exam, which equates to 40% of their overall A Level grade, for this, they will be introduced to their stimulus, taken from a script, and complete a further practitioner study of one influential theatre maker. We examine the structure for writing in Drama and apply it to example exam style questions that relate to what they have studied so far, in preparation for the Y12 IPE.</p>
	Key Stage 5: Year 13	<p>During the second year, students will continue their study of the key texts and approaches to these as actors, directors and designers. There is a further, more in-depth, teaching of writing structures required for the written exam as the study of the key texts finishes and an exploration of all possible exam questions is completed to prepare students for their Y13 IPE.</p> <p>In the Spring term, students complete their <u>Component 2: Text in Performance</u> exam, which equates to 20% of their overall grade, this will involve students preparing and performing a scripted group piece and either a scripted monologue or duologue. All practical exams for this A Level can be taken as an actor or a designer.</p>

Impact

This course allows students the opportunity to study Drama and Theatre Studies at a University level, however this is not the only area that the course prepares students for. The analytical skills that students develop during the course lend themselves well to any area of further study – we have had students go on to study Law, Psychology, Travel and Tourism, English, History, Teaching and Education at university in recent years. Other routes that past students have taken are in Drama school, working abroad for Camp America and working within the field of customer services. Each year we look closely at the areas of further study/employment that students take in order to create a relevant database of the changing landscape of Drama. As this is made more available to students, we are able to track uptake in the subject and educate those that believe Drama is just for actors. We are gaining more students than ever before that have a desire to take the technical design route.

The collaborative nature of the group exam pieces prepares students for the future, allowing them to develop the essential skills of negotiation, cooperation, speaking & listening, idea development and problem solving. These skills are required in all areas of further study and are important life skills in order for students to be prepared for life after education, we also hope that the impact is witnessed in other subject areas where these skills may be required. We hope that the course ignites a passion for theatre and the performing arts as well as offering an in-depth understanding of the historical, cultural and political contexts that have helped to shape the modern day – as evidenced in each piece of theatre writing from across history. Students will develop a level of confidence that they can apply to all areas of their lives and the ability to appreciate all differences in life with empathy and understanding.