

DRAMA YEAR 8

BIG IDEAS – SKILLS AND KNOWLEDGE
ORGANISER

What are the Big Ideas for Drama?

1. Story Telling
2. Creating a Character
3. Performance Skills
4. Scripts – from page to stage
5. Styles and Concepts

Curriculum Plan for Year 8 and how they link to the 5 Big Ideas:

Autumn Term 1	Superheroes	Creating a Character
Autumn Term 2	Stephen Lawrence – The colour of Justice	Style and Concept
Spring Term 1	Murder Mystery - Cluedo	Story Telling
Spring Term 2	Commedia Delle Arte	Performance skills
Summer Term 1	Melting Clocks The Surrealists and Non-Naturalistic	Style and Concept
Summer Term 2	Blood Brothers	Scripts from Page to Stage

Big Idea:

Creating a Character

Superheroes

Key Knowledge:

Frantic Assembly was founded in 1994 by Scott Graham, Steven Hoggett and Vicki Middleton. They are an industry leading company who have worked on famous productions such as *The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-Time*. Frantic Assembly use building blocks in order to devise new and innovative theatre. Frantic Assembly's pieces are created step by step with the story being added last. The story is often interpreted by the audience.

In Year 8 they will explore what it's like to be a superhero. They will create their own hero deciding what super powers they have, and then create a back story as to how they came to be super!

An exploration of techniques created by an industry leading company to help create characters. Frantic Assembly tell stories using physicality and movement of the body. In year 8 students will learn how to lead a physical warm up, and use physical theatre as a technique to dramatically and creatively tell a story. In year 8 the actors create their own superheroes and consider how their 'superpowers' could be shown on stage.

Key Language:

Devising – plan or invent a new piece of theatre

Exploration - thorough examination of a subject or new technique

Facial Expression - one or more positions of the muscles beneath the skin of the face.

Gesture - a movement of the hand/arms or head to express an idea or meaning.

Innovative – featuring new methods; advanced and original.

Interpretation – the action of explaining the meaning of something

Physicality/body language - the physical features of a person, the conscious and unconscious movements and postures by which attitudes and feelings are communicated

Relaxation - the state of being free from tension.

Tension - the state of being stretched tight.

Key Skills:

- Analysis
- Collaboration
- Concentration
- Focus
- Imagination
- Physical Theatre



Big Idea: Style and concepts

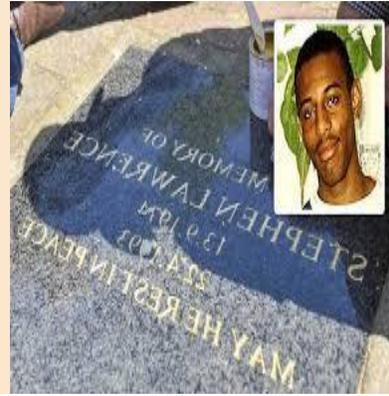
The colour of Justice – Stephen Lawrence

Key Knowledge:

Stephen Lawrence was a [black British](#) teenager from [south east London](#), who was murdered in a [racially motivated attack](#) while waiting for a bus on the evening of 22 April 1993.

After the initial investigation, five suspects were arrested but not charged. It was suggested that he was killed because he was black, and that the handling of the case by the police was affected by issues of race. A 1998 [public inquiry](#), examined the original investigation and concluded that the force was [institutionally racist](#). It also recommended that the double jeopardy rule should be repealed in murder cases to allow a retrial upon new and compelling evidence. The report has been called "one of the most important moments in the modern history of criminal justice in Britain".

Verbatim theatre is a form of documented theatre in which plays are constructed from the precise words spoken by people interviewed about a particular event or topic. In year 9 we use the real story of Stephen Lawrence, and the real words documented in his trial know as 'the colour of justice.' Year 9 actors will learn the technique of debating where they will be asked to respond to controversial topics and consider how this case changed the British justice system.



Key Language:

Alienation – It involves the use of techniques designed to distance the audience from emotional involvement in the play through jolting reminders of the artificiality of the theatrical performance.

Direct address - Speaking directly to the audience breaks the fourth wall and destroys any illusion of reality.

Narration - Remind the audience that what they're watching is a presentation of a story.

Placards – A sign or additional piece of written information presented onstage. Using placards might be as simple as holding up a card or banner. Multimedia or a PowerPoint slideshow can also be used for this effect.

Prejudice - Prejudice is an affective feeling towards a person or group member based often on that person's group membership. The word is often used to refer to preconceived feelings towards people or a person because of their political affiliation, sex, gender, beliefs, values, social class, age, disability, religion, sexuality or race/ethnicity.

Key Skills:

Verbatim theatre
Forum theatre
Empathy
Thought tracking
Hot seating
Debating
Abstract techniques

Big Idea: Performance Skills

Murder Mysteries - Cluedo

Key Knowledge:

Developing performance skills will help to build confidence even the shyest of students will take just a few weeks to gently build up their self-esteem and before long they are confident to take a full and active part in lessons. Students will also be encouraged to listen to each other's ideas and thoughts and to take turns. This will allow students to recognise the value of concentration; a skill that is vital in the world outside of drama. They are encouraged to express themselves both verbally and through facial expression and body language; the key to making them better communicators, by exploring Stereotypes within theatre. The use of performance skills will enable students to view things in new ways and from different perspectives exploring a variety of performance roles. Then enabling them to think on their feet and generate new ideas and encourages the development of creativity when creating characters and applying performance skills to devised pieces of theatre.

As an actor you will need to be able to apply a range of physical skills and techniques eg movement, body language, posture, gesture, gait, co-ordination, stillness, timing, control; facial expression; eye contact, listening, expression of mood; spatial awareness; interaction with other performers; dance and choral movement. Implementing performance skills to a performance and the rehearsal process encourages students to build inquiry skills and explore their imagination for understanding.

Key Language:

Creating Stereotypes – A very typical example of a certain person or thing. For example a hag, superhero etc.

Hot-seating -A technique used to find out more about a character.

Cross – cutting - Two scenes happening on stage at once.

Devising – A group collaboration in response to a stimulus leading to the creation of an original performance.

Rehearsal - A practice or trial performance of a play or other work for later public performance.

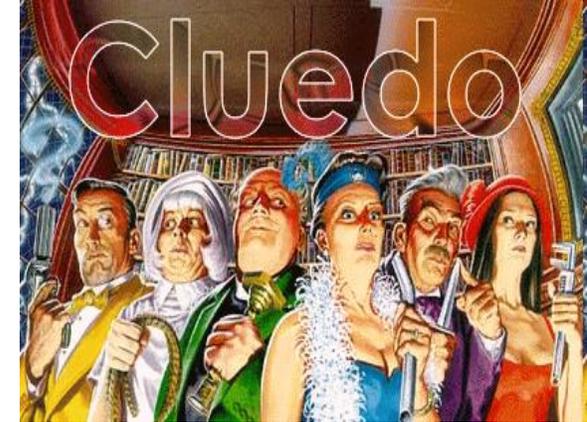
Movement - an act of moving in a non naturalistic way

Non-Verbal - not involving or using words or speech

Perform - present (a form of entertainment) to an audience.

Key Skills and dramatic techniques:

- Body Language
- Communication
- Movement
- Teamwork
- Status
- Physicality
- Tension
- Style
- Facial expression
- Stillness
- Control
- Timing
- Co-ordination



The Big Idea: Performance Skills

Commedia Dell Arte

Key Knowledge:

Comedy of the Arts was developed in Italy in the 16th Century. It's roots are in traditional clowning, Story-telling and travelling Minstrels.

Companies toured from town to town with performances taking place outside in the market squares.

The performances were loud, colourful and gestures were exaggerated so that everyone could clearly see. This is where slap-stick comedy originates from. It's called 'slapstick' comedy, as they used two pieces of wood strapped together to make a slapping sound when it was hit.

Commedia dell'Arte (which translates as “theatre of the professional”) **began** in Italy in the early 16th Century and quickly spread throughout Europe, creating a lasting influence on Shakespeare, Molière, opera, vaudeville, contemporary musical theatre, sit-coms, and improvisational comedy. All actors learn Commedia, as the stock characters appear in every modern play in different guises. In year 8 students will explore the 6 main characters from commedia including Il Capitano, Il Dottore and the Zanni.

Key Language:

Exaggeration – Over the top gestures or facial expressions

Harlequin and **Columbina**-Servants of higher status

Il Capitano - the Captain, boastful, braggart but cowardly

Il Dottore - the Doctor, windbag.

Innuendo-an allusive remark typically suggestive or disparaging.

Pantalone-old, rich man, miser

Physicality – A characters stance and body language

Status – Refers to a characters place in society in the world that they live in.

Stock-characters - stereotypical fictional characters who audiences recognise from their frequent recurrences.

The Lovers-Isabella and Flavio infatuated with each other.

Zanni - servants/clowns of various status.

Key Skills and techniques:

- Audience participation
- Comic timing
- Exaggerated gestures and physicality
- Loud confident characterisation
- Use of slap-stick comedy and clowning
- Status
- Using masks
- Tragedy
- Comedy
- Satire



The Big idea:

Styles and Concepts

Melting Clocks

Abstract is a genre description for many art forms. In music, film and painting, abstract usually refers to a form of expression that deliberately subverts the established rules of presentation. Within the theatre, these rules usually relate directly to the relationship between the actors and the audience. There are a number of theatre practitioners that relate to abstract theatre including Antonin Artaud. In year 8 actors will explore the paintings of Salvador Dali and consider what is the meaning behind the painting. They will experiment with Abstract techniques and learn to think 'outside of the box.'

Key Knowledge:

The **Theatre of Cruelty** is a form of theatre generally associated with [Antonin Artaud](#). Artaud, who was briefly a member of the surrealist movement, outlined his theories in [The Theatre and its Double](#). The Theatre of Cruelty can be seen as a break from traditional theatre and a means by which artists 'assault the senses' of the audience. Artaud's works have been highly influential on artists including Salvador Dali.

Key Language:

Activist - a person who campaigns to bring about political or social change

Audience - the assembled spectators or listeners at a public event such as a play, film, concert, or meeting.

Participation - the action of taking part in something.

Practitioner - a person actively engaged in an art, discipline, or profession

Social - relating to society

Spect-Actor - a spectator who is often encouraged to be a part of the drama in order to spark change

Theorist - a person concerned with the theoretical aspects of a subject; a theoretician

Key Skills and dramatic techniques:

- Forum theatre
- Theatre of Cruelty
- Public speaking
- Rational thinking
- Discipline
- Empathy
- Improvisation
- Debating
- Surrealism
- Abstract theatre



The Big Idea: Scripts from page to stage:

Blood Brothers

Key Knowledge:

The play Blood Brothers is a musical with book, lyrics, and music by Willy Russell. The story is a contemporary nature versus nurture plot, revolving around fraternal twins Mickey and Eddie, who were separated at birth, one subsequently being raised in a wealthy family, the other in a poor family.

Originally titled The Divine Tragedies, Blood Brothers is based on the true crime story of Nathan Leopold and Richard Loeb, two wealthy students attending the University of Chicago who thought their superior intelligence would allow them to get away with the perfect murder.

Class and Money. Throughout the musical Blood Brothers, the theme of class and money plays a dominant role, controlling characters' actions and determining their lives:

- Nature vs. Nurture
- Superstition and Fate
- Coming of Age
- The Power of the Past
- Violence.

There are many things to consider when taking a piece of drama from page to stage. Choices you make about the way to play the scene are called the **interpretation**. 'Staging' doesn't just mean the set or stage itself; it's everything you do onstage to bring the drama to life. In year 8 the actors will explore a modern play text 'Blood Brothers' By Willy Russell.

Key Language:

Multi-narrative- a story told from the perspective of many different characters.

Narrative - a story.

Perspective- a point of view

Interpretation of the script – the way the actor/director understands the written words.

Blocking – Staging the

Creative intension – what is the point or message of the play.

Stage directions – the voice of the playwright giving directions.

Epic theatre - To encourage the audience to adopt a more critical attitude to what was happening on stage, Brecht developed his '*Verfremdungs-effect*' techniques to remind the spectators that they are in a theatre watching an enactment of reality instead of reality itself.

Key Skills and techniques.

- Confidence
- Interpretation of a script
- Imagination
- Learning lines
- Precision of voice and movement
- Spatial awareness
- Taking direction
- Exploring themes
- Identifying characters intentions
- Understanding the directions intentions



Big Idea: Story Telling

Macbeth

An actors voice is arguably the most valuable tool they own. It is vital that they know how to care for and develop this tool to be successful in the modern theatre. The workshops and techniques that the actors participate in during this unit are ones that professionals will use throughout their whole career. Without breath there is no voice. In year 8 students will learn how to lead a vocal warm up, and consider the vocal skills needed to be a successful storyteller and performer. They will develop breath control and discover how the voice can be used to create atmosphere and hold an audience. They will explore the text **Macbeth** and learn to deliver famous scenes considering their breath control, delivery and how to re-tell the most famous tragedy story from history.

Key Knowledge:

Words are how humans communicate. This communication could not be possible without sounds; these sounds are known as a voice. The human voice is composed of air being pushed through a, complex, anatomical structure. Year 8 actors will learn to warm their voices up safely to enable them to speak clearly with good articulation and with controlled breath.

We explore the story of Macbeth practically and consider how narration can be used.

Macbeth is a [tragedy by Shakespeare](#) about a brave Scottish general named Macbeth receives a prophecy from a trio of witches that one day he will become King of Scotland. Consumed by ambition and spurred to action by his wife, Macbeth murders King Duncan and takes the Scottish throne for himself. He is then wracked with guilt and paranoia.

Shakespeare's use of his poetic [dramatic structure](#) to heighten tension throughout the ambition drive tragedy for dramatic effect.

Key Language:

Articulation-words produced by the tongue ,soft-palate, teeth and lips.

Diaphragm-dome shaped muscular partition separating the thorax from the abdomen.

Diction- the choice and use of words.

Larynx-the voice box which contains the vocal folds/chords.

Lungs-each of the organs located in the rib cage into which air is drawn.

Pace-slow or fast.

Pause-a temporary stop in speech.

Pitch- high or low.

Rhythm- the combination of stressed and unstressed syllables.



Key Skills and techniques

- Breathing
- Control
- Pause
- Pitch
- Power
- Pace
- Projection
- Tone
- Articulation
- Intonation

