

DEAR LOVELY NEW YEAR 12 THEATRE STUDIES STUDENTS,
Please complete the tasks below for our first lessons together, to let us know a bit more about you and your experiences of the subject so far, as well as developing your subject specific terminology and making a start on one of our first units of the A-level course.
Have a lovely Summer and we look forward to seeing you all in September,
Mrs Lawrence and Miss Russell ☺

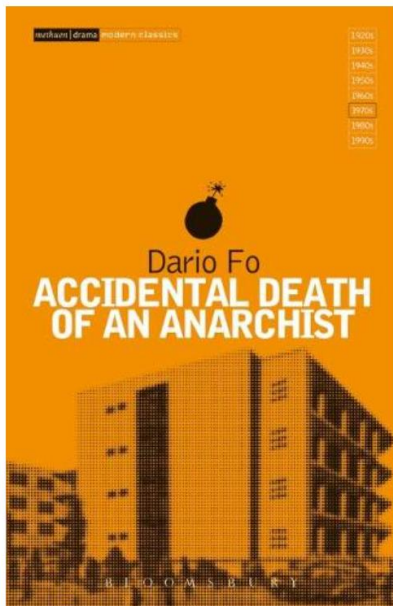


1. Write a side of A4 on '**Why Theatre Studies is for Me**'
 - *Include your experiences and inspirations so far: any productions that you have seen that have inspired you; any performances you have been in; any actors that you admire (and why); any memorable experiences involving Drama; any plays read that you have really enjoyed; what appeals to you about studying the subject further; your strengths and weaknesses in the subject at this stage; what you hope to get out of the course; what you are looking forward to learning more about etc.*
Hand into KAL in your first lesson
2. Research the playwright and practitioner **Dario Fo** (the playwright of your first A-Level set text for the written exam). Notes can be handwritten or typed but should not be simply copied and pasted; use your own words and make sure you fully understand everything you have included in your notes. Try to cover the prompts below but include anything else interesting you find out.
 - *Who was he? What was he famous for?*
 - *Personal life, how he became a writer, relationships and partnerships.*
 - *His notable work and plays; accolades and awards.*
 - *The style of his plays and his intentions as a playwright: Why did he write? What did he want to achieve? Who were his target audiences? What theatre traditions did he draw upon? What social/political messages did he convey through his work?*
Hand into ECR in your first lesson
3. Research the origins and background of **Commedia d'ell arte**:
 - *History of this form of theatre*
 - *Genre conventions*
 - *Narrative outlines*
 - *Key characters*
 - *Costumes and masks*

Hand into **ECR** in your first lesson

***** IMPORTANT NOTE *****

You will be issued with a copy of *Accidental Death of an Anarchist* upon your arrival in September. If you wish to buy your own copy in advance, please ensure it is the correct edition, as per the details below – they are very different! This green cover is the new version of the orange one, but they are exactly the same inside.



<https://www.waterstones.com/book/accidental-death-of-an-anarchist/dario-fo/stuart-hood/9780413156105>

[Accidental Death of an Anarchist \(Modern Classics\): Amazon.co.uk: Dario Fo, Gavin Richards, Stuart Hood, Gillian Hanna, Simon Nye: 9780413156105: Books](https://www.amazon.co.uk/dp/B000APR004)

4. Revise and learn key subject specific terminology associated with theatre and performance. We will have some quizzes during the first few weeks of term!
 - *Glossary attached as separate document.*
5. If you have not studied GCSE Drama, or you feel you need to do some revision to get back up to speed with the subject, then please complete these Bitesize modules to ensure you have the basics covered before joining the course:
 - *Understanding Drama and Theatre:* <https://www.bbc.co.uk/bitesize/topics/z4cphbk>
 - *Performing Characters:* <https://www.bbc.co.uk/bitesize/topics/zk9snrd>
 - *Theatre Design:* <https://www.bbc.co.uk/bitesize/topics/zd8yf4j>

Optional Extension Tasks

- Go to the theatre or stream a production online and write a review of the production you have seen.
 - [Digital Theatre :: Home](#)
 - [National Theatre at Home \(ntathome.com\)](#)
 - [The Overcoat | Full Show | Gecko \(youtube.com\)](#)
 - [Our Productions - Original Theatre](#)
 - [Watch RSC shows online | Royal Shakespeare Company](#)
- Read some plays: experiment with different genres, eras, settings and styles. Develop your wider subject knowledge and give yourself more choice for practical pieces later down the line.
- Start to read and collect some published reviews of recent productions – to help with the Live Theatre component of the exam.
*Hand into **KAL** in your first lesson*

GLOSSARY

Acoustics: The sound quality of a given space, including how the size and shape of the theatre affects the warmth or clarity of sound.

Actor-musicians: Performers who play musical instruments as part of their acting roles.

Aesthetic: An approach to design or art with clear ideas as to what is correct or beautiful.

Ambience: The quality, character, feeling or nature of a place, such as a bustling city or an isolated farm.

Amphitheatre: A circular stage, with the audience in curved seating on a steep slope around the front portion of the circle. Amphitheatres are often outdoor theatres, like those of ancient Greece, but some large indoor spaces have been based on their design.

Anachronistic: Inappropriate for a time period being portrayed, for example from a much earlier or, more commonly, later period, such as a laptop in the 17th century.

Aperture: An opening, hole or gap.

Apron: An area at the front of proscenium stages which is still visible to the audience when the curtains are closed.

Artistic intention: The choices made by theatre makers about what they want to communicate to an audience and how they will do it.

Audience interaction: Involving the audience in the play, for example by giving them props, using **direct address** or bringing them on stage.

Aural: What is heard.

Backdrop: A large painted cloth hung, usually at the back of the stage, as part of the scenery.

Backlighting: Lighting projected from a source upstage. It highlights the outline of actors or scenery and separates them from the background.

Blackout: When all stage lights are turned off. This can be sudden or gradual.

Blocking: The actors' movements. These are usually set during rehearsals in collaboration with the director.

Box set: A setting of a complete room, often naturalistic, with three walls and a 'missing' fourth wall facing the audience.

Candelabra: A large candlestick with curved arms that can hold several candles.

Characterisation: How an actor creates a role through their understanding of the character's background, motivations and importance in the play.

Climax: The most intense section of the play, often when the narrative reaches its most important point.

Colour-coding: Using certain colours to convey specific meanings, such as social class or membership of a group.

Colour palette: The range of colours used, such as muted tones, autumn tones, primary colours, black and white; complementary or clashing.

Composer: Someone who writes music. Some productions have a composer to create original music.

Concept: A unifying idea about the production, such as how it will be interpreted or performed.

Configuration: The type of stage and audience arrangement, for example end on, thrust, in the round and so on.

Contemporary: Of the present day, modern.

Context: The circumstances of the setting of a play, such as the location, period of time or conventions. These might be historical, geographical and cultural.

Contrapuntal: Working as a counterpoint or contrast to, such as sad music with a happy image.

Conventions: Theatrical techniques used in and associated with particular types of performance, such as speaking directly to the audience or miming the use of props.

Couture: Expensive, specially made fashionable designer clothing.

Crescendo: Increasing in loudness or the loudest point, often of music.

Cross-fade: When one area of lighting slowly dims while another area fades up.

Cue timing: The time it takes for a lighting change, for example the counts until a blackout occurs or how long a cross-fade takes.

Curtain call: When the actors take their bows at the end of the performance.

Curtain-call music: Music played during the curtain call. Sometimes the curtain call is choreographed to a song.

Cyclorama: A large semi-circular stretched curtain or screen, usually positioned upstage. This is often used to depict a background, such as the sky.

Diagonals: Lights projected down at roughly a 45-degree angle.

Direct address: When a character speaks directly to the audience.

Discordant: Unpleasant, inharmonious, harsh or clashing.

Documentary: Pictures, films, recordings or other materials from interviews or reports of real events.

Double-take: A comic technique, when a character looks at something twice, because they didn't believe or grasp what they saw the first time.

Douse: Extinguish a light.

Downlight or top-light: Light from directly overhead.

Drapes: Curtains or other hanging fabric.

Empire line: The shape of a high-waisted dress, often with a low neckline.

End on: A staging configuration in which the audience sits along one end of the stage directly facing it.

Episodic: A structure involving a series of scenes, or 'episodes', which are often short and might take place in several locations.

Expressionistic: Non-realistic; based more on emotions, impressions and themes.

Fade: Gradually turn sound or lights up or down.

Fantasy: Something which cannot occur in the real world, or a design which creates an unrealistic world, such as fairy tales, myths, the supernatural and science fiction.

Farce: A broad type of comedy which often employs stereotypical characters, unlikely coincidences and extreme situations.

Filter or gel: A coloured piece of plastic inserted into a case on a lantern to alter the colour of the light.

Flat: A piece of scenery, often painted, mounted on a tall frame.

Flies: The space above the stage, usually out of view of the audience, used to store items or lower ('fly') items onto the stage.

Floor coverings: Any covering of the stage floor, such as a wooden effect to appear like floorboards, or linoleum for a kitchen floor.

Floor lighting: Lanterns placed on low stands, often used to cast shadows.

Fly system: A means of raising and lowering scenery or other items onto the stage using a system of ropes and pulleys. To raise or lower scenery from this area is to 'fly a set in'.

Follow-spot: A lamp that produces a bright beam, which can be used to 'follow' a performance.

Footlights: Low lights placed on the downstage edge. Popular in Victorian theatres and sometimes now used to create period lighting effects.

Fourth wall: An imaginary barrier between the audience and the stage. A performer might 'break the fourth wall' and speak directly to, or otherwise interact with, the audience.

Furnishings: Furniture on the set, such as chairs, cushions and tables.

Gait: How a character walks, such as stiffly, or limps, stomps, shuffles and so on.

Gauze: Curtains that might hang loose or be mounted on a frame, which, if lit a certain way, are transparent.

Gel: See **Filter**.

Genre: A category or type of drama such as comedy, tragedy or musical theatre, usually with its own conventions.

Gesture: A movement of a part of a body, often hand, arms or head, such as waving, nodding or reaching out.

Gobo: A metal, glass or plastic cut-out attached to a lantern to project patterns, such as leaves, stars, swirls or waves.

Hosiery: Tights, stockings or socks; plain or patterned; skin-tone or coloured.

House lights: The lights in the auditorium that are usually on while the audience is being seated and then dimmed when the performance is about to begin.

Hybrid: A mixture of two or more things or types.

Immersive: A production in which the audience is made to feel part of the world of the play.

Intensity: How bright, powerful or forceful something is.

Intonation: The rise and fall of pitch in the voice; the musicality of speech.

Jacobean revenge tragedy: A dramatic genre of plays popular in the late 16th and early 17th centuries. The plays involve a character seeking revenge on others with violent results.

Lantern: A lamp and reflector in a box which produces lighting. There are different types of lantern, such as profile, fresnel and flood.

LED lights: Powerful and colourful lights that don't require gels and are energy efficient.

GLOSSARY

Lighting plot: Like an architectural plan to show where the lights will hang. It will indicate the position, type of lighting fixture and colours of gels.

Lighting rig: The structure that holds the lighting equipment in the theatre.

Live sound: Sound created by the stage management, technicians or actors during the performance.

Melodrama: A highly dramatic piece designed to provoke emotions in the audience, usually associated with stereotypical characters and extreme situations.

Microphone: A device for converting and amplifying sound.

Mimicry: Imitation; copying someone's speech and mannerisms, possibly in a mocking way.

Modern dress: Costumes from the time in which the play is being performed rather than when it is set, for example 21st-century costumes in a play originally set in the 17th century.

Montage: A collection or composite of different images, words or music.

Motif: A recurring design; in music, it is a short musical phrase which might be repeated.

Motivated sound: Sound required by a script, such as telephone ringing or a doorbell.

Motivation: What compels a character to do something, such as their desires or needs.

Moving light: Either a lighting fixture manually moved by an operator or a computer-operated fixture which is moved remotely.

Multimedia: Consisting of a variety of media formats, such as photographs, slides, animation, audio and film.

Multi-roling: One actor playing more than one character.

Musical instruments: Drums, guitars, violins and so on, which might be played by a band, orchestra or actors.

Music hall: Popular variety entertainment, associated with theatres of the Victorian age and the early 20th century.

Naturalistic: Lifelike, believable, realistic, based in the 'real' world.

Non-linear: Not in actual event order; non-chronological.

Overheads: Microphones hung above the stage to boost the overall sound.

Parchment: An old material for writing on; a stiff thin light-brown/beige or off-white paper.

Period: The era or date in which something is set. A 'period production' refers to a production set at an earlier time.

Physical comedy: Comic skills, such as mime, pratfalls and physical stunts.

Platform: A raised area on the stage.

Promenade: A type of theatre where the audience are required to move around to follow the actors.

Posture: How a character stands, such as upright, hunched or slumped.

Practical lights: Working onstage lights that are used in the set, such as desk lamps, torches or candles.

Pratfall: A silly or embarrassing fall, often used in physical comedies.

Pre-show music: Music played as the audience enters and waits for the performance to begin.

Projection: A film or still image projected to form a theatrical backdrop.

Props: Moveable items on the stage, including hand props that the actors can carry, including books, cups and phones.

Proximity: The distance between characters or things; how near or far apart they are.

Pyrotechnics: Special effects that create dramatic features, such as fireworks, explosions or flashes.

Radio mics: Portable microphones, often worn, which allow actors and singers to be amplified with no visible means of connection.

Ramp: A sloped pathway which may be used for walking on or for wheeled transportation.

Recorded sound: Sound that has been recorded specially for playback during the performance or selected from sound effects archives.

Restoration comedy: A stylised comedy from the 17th century, which focused on society manners and intrigues.

Reveal: When something is unexpectedly shown to an audience. A reveal may be a plot twist or it could be a design feature.

Reverb: An echoing effect, sustaining the sound longer than usual.

Revolve: A large turntable device that can be turned to reveal a different setting.

Scaffolding: A large structure, usually of boards and metal poles, which creates different levels on a set.

Sconce: A candle-holder that can be attached to a wall.

Scrim: See **Gauze**.

Set dressings: Items on the set not used as props, but which create detail and interest, such as vases or framed paintings.

Sightline: The audience's view of the stage/performance.

Smoke, fog or haze machine: A piece of equipment which uses a gas to produce clouds or mists.

Snap: Turn sound suddenly off or on.

Sound effects: Special sounds created either live or recorded, such as slamming doors or alarm bells.

Speaker: A device for amplifying and projecting sound. The placement of speakers will influence how the audience experiences the sound.

Special effects: Unusual sounds, mechanical devices or visuals, such as explosions, trapdoors or storm sequences.

Spectacle: Something with visual impact; an event which is exciting to watch.

Spotlight: A lamp that projects a bright light onto an area of stage, usually focusing on a performer.

Stairs: Steps from one level of the set to another. In some productions, grand staircases are a design feature.

Stance: How a character stands, such as feet wide apart or turned in.

Stereotypical: Qualities commonly believed, but not necessarily true; overly-simplified, such as a stereotypical villain.

Storytelling: A type of non-realistic theatre which often focuses on techniques like narration, simple scenery and multi-roling to convey a story, often a fable or fairy tale, to an audience.

Strip light: A long, thin glass tube of light, often with a plastic cover.

Strobe: A lighting device that gives short, bright bursts of bright light.

Style: The identifiable features of the way in which something is created or performed.

Stylised: Non-realistic, heightened, exaggerated; done in a manner that perhaps emphasises one element.

Sweetheart neckline: The neck of a garment shaped like the top of a heart: low in the centre front and rounded on either side.

Symbolic: Using something to represent something else, such as a rose to symbolise love.

Synchronised: Done at the same time, in unison, such as synchronised movement or speaking.

Synopsis: A brief summary of a story's plot or key events.

Tableau: A still image of a scene. It might focus on the pictorial aspect of the grouping, including the relationship of the different figures and how they are costumed.

Top-light: See **Downlight**.

Train: A long section at the back of a garment which trails on the ground behind the wearer.

Transition: The change from one scene, location or mood to another.

Trapdoor: A door in the floor or ceiling of a stage allowing objects or performers to be dropped, lifted or lowered.

Trim: Additional decoration on a costume, typically on the edges and in a contrasting fabric or colour.

Truck: A platform on wheels upon which scenery can be mounted and moved.

Visual: What is seen.

Volume: How loud or soft a sound or voice is.

Wash: Light which covers the whole stage or large area of it.

Wind machine: Motorised theatrical equipment, usually positioned off stage, used to create the physical or aural effect of gusts of wind on stage.

Wings / Wing space: An area to the side of the stage from which actors can enter and from which props, furnishings or scenery can be moved onto the stage.