

GCSE Drama 5DR02 Exploring Play Texts: Off Text Information

This statement clarifies GCSE Drama Unit 2 – Exploring Play Texts, specifically queries relating to off text work and exploring the play text itself.

Centres may carry out various activities as part of the Programme of Study, however, not all these activities may contribute to the 6 hour assessment period.

GCSE Drama Unit 2 requires students to meet the requirements of page 23 of the specification, with particular reference to the first bullet point under the **six hour** workshop which reads, *"the use of at least four of the explorative strategies listed in the Programme of Study in response to sections of the play"* and the first bullet point under documentary response which reads, *"reference to the connection of the explored extracts of the play to the whole play."* It is the centre's responsibility to select appropriate play texts, strategies, mediums and elements of study to support students in meeting the requirements. Centres are urged to strongly consider the purpose of tasks in aiding exploration of the play text itself. If there is no purpose in terms of exploring the play text, your tasks will not meet the requirements.

Off text work

In this unit centres **are** allowed to use off text work. Off text work refers to practical activities that do not use the words of the text itself but which are used to **explore the text**. Off text work always needs to explore the actual text itself and must not add in extra characters, scenes or alternate endings.

The sentence from the communication posted on the Edexcel website (www.edexcel.com/gcsedrama) stated that *"devised work using the play text as a stimulus does not comply with specification requirements"* which means that centres cannot take themes from the play and create devised work (plays of their own) with them. For example, if using *Romeo and Juliet* centres may not take the theme 'Gang Warfare' and use this theme to devise their own play. However, devised work using the play text itself is valid.

Some examples of "off text" work are as follows:

- Narration (a narrator speaking about what is happening in that particular scene without using specific lines from the play)
- Hot seating (questioning a character of the play about his or her background, behaviour and motivation)
- Cross cutting (where two scenes are intercut to establish continuity, can be either off text or on, or a mixture of the two. If any element of it is off text, it must explore the actual scene or situation in the text. The aim must be to enhance understanding of the text)
- Forum Theatre (Can be about interpretation of a scene, e.g. vocal delivery, gesture, movement etc. Aspects of medium & elements could be explored with discussion and focus on alternative uses of gestures, vocal delivery, space, climax etc. It must not be about changing a situation that occurs in the play text. Nor must it be about introducing other characters who do not appear in the specified scene. You must not change the outcome of the script. The usual interpretation of Forum Theatre work, where situations and outcomes ARE changed should not occur in Unit 2)
- Still Images and Freeze Frames
- Thought Tracking (speaking a character's thoughts aloud)

Please find attached two examples of work which are in line and not in line with the specification requirements. These may be used to guide you. **Please note these examples are not recommendations, they should be used for guidance purposes only.**

Woman in Black

Examples of work in line with specification requirements

- Exploring any scene from the play focusing on movement and gestures
- Exploring any scene from the play focusing on use of space and lighting
- Exploring any scene from the play focusing on vocal delivery and climax
- Hot seating of Kipps when he sees the nursery is destroyed
- Hot seating of Jerome when Kipps mentions he has seen a woman dressed in black during the funeral
- Hot seating of the actor when he realises he had seen the Woman in Black at the end of the play
- Working out a series of 10 freezes of important moments in the play
- Questions to students in freezes
- Still image (moulding) improving freezes
- Thought tracking characters in freezes
- Narration and mime -Jennet killing Kipps' son in the park
- Narration and mime -Scene where Spider nearly drowns
- Kipps seeing Woman in Black in rocking chair -thought tracking and marking the moment
- Showing the crash involving Nathaniel (the Woman in Black's son) -using slow motion
- Showing the crash involving Kipps' son (Joseph) -caused by Jennet -using series of freezes
- Conscience alley –Kipps' fear as he realises he has seen the Woman in Black and what that means for any future child he has
- Lines from the script –Daily telling Kipps about Jennet. mime of action (P46-47 – Samuel French edition)
- Freezes of villagers –in Gifford Arms –hearing Drablow's name mentioned by Kipps
- Kipps' nightmare sequence (P49 –Samuel French edition) –using words from the play text work out nightmare sequence using space and levels

All of the above focus on exploration of the play text

Woman in Black

Examples of work NOT in line with specification requirements

- A scene with Jennet and Alice at aged 6
- Devise a play about a ghost.
- Devise an alternative ending to the play text.
- Devise a scene where the townsfolk rebel against Jennet and confront her.
- Devise a scene where Jennet is made to realise how cruel she is and she promises to turn over a new leaf and invites all the children of the village to a tea party.
- Devise a scene where Jennet has an abortion and she goes back to Crythin Gifford and is welcomed back by her family.
- Devise a scene explaining the exact circumstances of Jennet getting pregnant.
- Forum Theatre –working on changes of situation from that occurring in the play text -adding new characters to the scenes
- Work out an alternative ending to the play.

Any of the above could be undertaken in preparation for the unit 2 assessment, but do not explore the play text so should not be included in the 6 hour assessed session.

Romeo and Juliet

Examples of work in line with specification requirements

- Exploring any scene from the play focusing on sound, pace and vocal delivery
- Exploring any scene from the play focusing on costume and gestures
- Working out a series of 10 freezes of important moments from the play text
 - (a) Questions to characters within any of the freezes
 - (b) Still image (moulding) to show importance of space and levels
- Hot seating of Romeo after Tybalt's death
- Hot seating of Romeo as he lays eyes on Juliet
- Hot seating of Juliet as she learns about the potion
- Hot seating Juliet when she realises Romeo is exiled
- Narration and Mime –Exploring any scene from the play text
- Example of narration of mime- Romeo killing himself because he thinks Juliet is dead
- Thought track characters in Tybalt's death scene
- Conscience alley –Juliet's thoughts just after being ordered to marry Paris by her father
- Still image (moulding) of parents of Juliet on seeing that she is dead

All of the above focus on exploration of the play text

Romeo and Juliet

Examples of work NOT in line with specification requirements

- Romeo and Juliet as 6 year olds. What are they like?
- Devise a scene about love.
- Devise a scene about loss of a loved one.
- Make up your ending to the play.
- Devise a scene where a magic potion is found for Romeo so he does not die at the end of the play.
- Devise a scene where the Friar talks to Romeo and Tries to stop him having the fight with Tybalt.
- Imagine Romeo and Juliet did not die. Devise a scene where they might be 30 years later.
- Forum Theatre –change of situation from that in play text/adding of new characters

Any of the above could be undertaken in preparation for the unit 2 assessment, but do not explore the play text so should not be included in the 6 hour assessed session.