

Set Text Guide: Blue Stockings



GCSE (9-1) Drama

Pearson Edexcel Level 1/Level 2 GCSE (9-1) in Drama (1DR0)

GCSE Drama 2016: Blue Stockings

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Summary

Act One

Prologue

Cambridge, September 1896. First day of term.

We open on the hustle and bustle of Cambridge, as students make their way from the railway station to their colleges. Among all the male students, we see four women: TESS, CELIA, CAROLYN and MAEVE. They are looking out over Girton College – the audience.

The stage directions for this opening section indicate a busy stage, with many possibilities for movement to create the scene, as well as sound and lights for the train, music and hubbub.

We then go to blackout, from which Dr MAUDSLEY and Mrs WELSH emerge. They appear to be in different spaces, as he addresses the male students, and she the female ones. It might be that non-naturalistic lighting is used, for example, to signify that they are not in the same place.

Dr MAUDSLEY sets out his belief that women should not be in higher education and receive degrees, while Mrs WELSH puts the opposite argument. This prologue establishes the key argument that drives the narrative of the play.

Scene 1 – The Laws of Motion

Outside on the forecourt of Girton College

TESS and MAEVE arrive, wearing bloomers and stockings as makeshift cycling outfits. At the time, women did not ride bicycles, and they clearly feel uncomfortable dressed as they are. TESS tries to reach out to MAEVE, who is quite withdrawn. CELIA and CAROLYN arrive, similarly dressed. In their opening exchanges, we learn about the girls' differing personalities.

Mr BANKS, their science lecturer, appears. He is impressive in his interactions with them, firing all kinds of questions at them. He exits briefly and returns with a bicycle. The girls are impressed, though a little concerned he may be about to ask them to get on. He invites TESS. She hesitantly does so, asking Mr BANKS to turn around for dignity's sake.

Once she is on board, he supports her as she rides around, and relates riding a bicycle to physics. Eventually she is off riding alone, and they watch her as she cycles off into the distance, before crashing.

Scene 2 – Sightseeing

Not far from Scene 1

HOLMES, LLOYD, EDWARDS and WILL BENNETT are in disbelief as EDWARDS and RALPH have seen a girl (TESS) riding a bicycle. We learn that women are not allowed to ride bicycles.

Scene 3 – The Happiness Equation

Miss Blake's classroom

Miss BLAKE invites the girls to consider what happiness is. They enjoy her sharp wit. CAROLYN professes that happiness is what you have and who you are. This stirs a response from the mysterious MAEVE, who argues that knowledge is happiness. Miss BLAKE explains that Mrs WELSH is campaigning to persuade the senate to vote for women to be granted the right to graduate.

Scene 4 – The Wandering Womb

A large public lecture hall

The MEN are taking their seats, discussing the new technology of X-rays. (The playwright uses examples of the new technology and discoveries of the day throughout to remind the audience of the time period.)

The WOMEN arrive with their chaperone, Miss BOTT. The MEN are not used to this female presence in their lectures. They encourage EDWARDS to make an advance to CELIA. He fumbles around the situation, eventually apologising to Miss BOTT and retreating.

Mr BANKS enters and announces their special visitor, Dr MAUDSLEY, who begins his lecture on hysteria. He only addresses the men. After a while, TESS stands and questions his theory, causing great consternation. Dr MAUDSLEY throws her out of the lecture.

Scene 5 – Out Without Hats

The street outside

A distraught TESS is comforted by the other girls. The MEN pass, and TESS recognises WILL and calls to him. He initially denies knowing her, but TESS explains that they are friends from home.

The MEN explain to WILL what just happened in the lecture. Miss BOTT escorts the WOMEN away. LLOYD and HOLMES mock WILL for being a 'friend of a bluestocking' and leave.

Scene 6 – Fragments of the World

Mrs WELSH's office

Mrs WELSH accosts TESS for disturbing the peace in Dr MAUDSLEY's lecture. She asks TESS why she wants an education. She instructs her that they must employ patience and stealth in order to achieve their ultimate goals.

Scene 7 – The Dictionary

The library

The WOMEN are studying. RALPH catches the eye of TESS and asks to borrow the book she is reading, before slipping a note inside for her. TESS gets up, claiming to be fetching a dictionary, but is actually in secret conversation with RALPH.

This is a light and humorous scene, as we see that despite the stifling nature of the time and place, young romance still blooms.

Scene 8 – The Great Escape

Tess's room

MINNIE, the housemaid, informs TESS that a young man has come to see her. Assuming this will be RALPH, she quickly applies large amounts of cologne. It is WILL, who is here to apologise for not standing up for her in the street. He tries to persuade her to keep her head down or risk ruining her reputation, declaring that he promised her father he would look after her, and has written a letter to him. He has not sent the letter yet. His doubt in her and in the cause prompts her to send him away.

She is devastated. She goes back to read the note from RALPH again and decides to go out and meet him. As she is about to leave, CAROLYN enters. She is appalled by the cologne TESS has on, and offers to get her some of her own. She invites TESS to spend Christmas with her family in Paris. MAEVE also enters and is invited too. Neither of them has the spontaneity needed to say yes. CAROLYN goes to get the cologne, informing CELIA that TESS is going out.

This is a comedic moment, as CAROLYN knows that the strait-laced CELIA will not be happy about this news. MINNIE enters with a coal scuttle, and discovers TESS ready to leave. To their surprise, she offers to help TESS escape through the kitchen. They sneak past Miss BOTT, who is apparently asleep at the end of the corridor.

Once they have left, she declares 'they must think [she] was born yesterday'. Here we see an example of two women who have greater authority than the students, but aid them as a show of solidarity for their womanhood.

Scene 9 – The Garden of Eden

The Orchard

RALPH and TESS meet under an apple tree. They exchange initial pleasantries, before RALPH reads her a poem. He comically does not know what it means, but TESS appears

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suitably impressed, and allows him to kiss her hand. He gives her the poem, and they part. She is elated.

Scene 10 – The Merits of Moral Science

Moral science class

Miss BLAKE encourages the WOMEN to consider the importance and values of science and art. MAEVE, in an unusual outburst, argues that one cannot exist without the other, and that we need both. When asked which philosopher's thoughts she was quoting, she replies that they were her own. Miss BLAKE concludes the value of her class: she has been proved right by her student.

Scene 11 – An Arrival

The foyer

MAEVE's brother BILLY arrives. He tells her that their mother has died and that she is needed to take care of the family. She says she can't come home. He leaves, furious. To MAEVE's shock and dismay, Mrs WELSH tells her that she must pack her bags and leave in the morning. The WOMEN are incredulous, but Mrs WELSH has made up her mind. TESS begins to write, and continues to do so under the following scene. Miss BLAKE confronts Mrs WELSH about her decision, arguing that MAEVE is their brightest student. We see that Mrs WELSH's reasoning is that she does not want to cause any political stir while she is campaigning for women to be given degrees. She warns Miss BLAKE that there is to be no more talk of suffrage in class.

Scene 12 – Science of the Heart

Mr BANKS' class

Mr BANKS is handing back the MEN's essays. He encourages them to dig deeper, discussing what passion is with them. He considers his talk to be quite risqué, but he enjoys it. All the while TESS has been on stage writing. She finishes and folds her paper at the precise same time as Mr BANKS unfolds one. This should be a clear theatrical device to demonstrate that it is the same essay. He hands it to the MEN to read. When he tells them it was written by a student from Girton, they are stunned into silence.

Scene 13 – An Education

Mrs WELSH is addressing the senate; the WOMEN are at the top of the stairs.

During her appeal for the senate to vote in favour of allowing the women to graduate, Mrs WELSH reads from TESS's essay. It is a brilliant piece of scientific writing, proffering a physical explanation for the bright star that led the way to Bethlehem in the bible.

Meanwhile, the WOMEN are watching MAEVE leave. Mrs WELSH mentions in her speech that she has just sent a talented student home, using MAEVE as a political pawn and evidence that she is not looking to completely upset the status quo.

Act Two

Scene 1 – An Offer

Trinity staffroom

Mr BANKS is greeted by RADLEIGH, ANDERSON and COLLINS, who offer him a fellowship. He is initially delighted, but this soon dissipates as he learns that it will mean giving up his role teaching the women of Girton. He is met with scorn and disapproval when he refers to the vote for women graduating as 'our' vote. The men are disappointed in him, and leave. He is reeling and has missed his chance. We see Mr BANKS' integrity here, as he will not forgo his principles for personal gain. There is tragic comedy as the MAID enters at the end of the scene with champagne and four glasses, only to discover Mr BANKS alone.

Scene 2 – The Telescope

The drawing room

TESS and CAROLYN are teaching CELIA how to dance the cancan, having seen it in Paris over Christmas. Miss BLAKE enters with Miss BOTT and WILL. Seeing a man, CELIA

panics and falls, twisting her ankle. Miss BLAKE informs them that they have got the vote, which is met with much jubilation. However, none of the women will be able to vote, only men from the university. She goes against Mrs WELSH's orders and tells the girls about a suffrage rally taking place on Sunday. Miss BOTT helps the injured CELIA to go and get her ankle seen to. CAROLYN promises to stay with WILL and TESS so they are not left alone together, then as soon as Miss BOTT has left, she leaves them.

WILL has brought TESS a telescope as a Christmas present. He slips into the conversation that he may have fallen in love with her. She tells him there is someone else, leaving him crushed. Mrs WELSH enters, breaking the tension and admonishing TESS both for injuring CELIA with a risqué dance and for being alone with a boy.

Scene 3 – Time Travellers

A Hilltop

RALPH and TESS are stargazing, discussing astronomy. They appear completely lost in each other, and the scene may culminate in a kiss.

Scene 4 – Bread and Circuses

By the exit of Girton

Mr BANKS is smuggling CAROLYN out to a suffrage rally. She is dressed in his clothes with a suspicious-looking beard. Mrs WELSH is not fooled and their escape is foiled. She discovers the leaflet about the rally, and finds that it was given to her by Miss BLAKE, who now enters. They have a renewed argument about suffrage; Mrs WELSH refuses to be swayed.

Scene 5 – Outcasts

Night-time

CELIA arrives looking for TESS, wanting to know if she has finished some notes on Cuvier. She hasn't, and is writing a love poem. They argue about the sacrifices they must make to have an education. TESS offends her by insinuating that CELIA is not interested in being a mother.

Scene 6 – Raising the Banner

Mrs Lindley's Haberdashery

CAROLYN and TESS are buying fabric for a banner when LLOYD and EDWARDS enter. LLOYD asks whether they think the banner will help. TESS and CAROLYN make to leave, but LLOYD will not drop the topic, pressing them before suddenly exploding into a tirade about how they are not as educated as the men.

He finally exclaims that the only man that would let her touch his body would be someone who was paying her 'like a common whore', at which the WOMEN leave. LLOYD then demands a pair of blue stockings. Mrs LINDLEY refuses at first, though her hand is forced when LLOYD proclaims his father owns the shop.

Scene 7 – An Emergency Summit

A Tea Parlour

Miss BLAKE and Mr BANKS hold a conspiratorial meeting about the vote. He tells her that he has been fired from Trinity because of his stance. We also learn that the conclusion of Act 2 Scene 4 was that Miss BLAKE has resigned. Here we see the sacrifices they are all willing to make for the cause. The scene ends with a woman overhearing them and telling them they should be ashamed of themselves. This serves as a reminder to the audience of the general view of society at this time, including women.

Scene 8 – King of Hearts

Trinity College, evening

RALPH, HOLMES, LLOYD and EDWARDS are playing cards. WILL appears, looking for RALPH. He is invited to join their card game, which involves a lot of drinking. EDWARDS continually loses, and eventually forfeits and sings a song. To the other men's surprise, he sings beautifully. Eventually, RALPH begins to make a speech, declaring he has fallen in love. He describes her beauty, and produces a ring.

WILL – and the audience – think he is talking about TESS. However, he reveals that his love's name is Eliza. WILL is stunned. He reveals that he knows TESS, discovering that RALPH has not told her. When he asks how a girl from another college is any different, RALPH responds that Eliza's is not a radical college like Girton.

Scene 9 – Broken Hearts

A bench in the orchard

TESS is joined by WILL in the orchard, and they share some cocoa. He tells her that he has spoken with RALPH and about the other girl. She does not believe him at first. He apologises, and as CELIA arrives he is forced to leave as Miss BOTT is on the prowl. TESS tells CELIA that she must pack and leave. CELIA tries to persuade her to stay, telling her how lucky they are to have the opportunity to do something so ground-breaking, and that they can't give up now.

Scene 10 – The Viva

The following morning

COLLINS and RALEIGH enter with Mrs WELSH to give the WOMEN their vivas. CELIA and CAROLYN perform well, but TESS appears tired from the stress of the night before. She initially seems to be doing well, but then is asked a question about Cuvier. The dramatic irony here is that the audience knows from her exchange with CELIA in Act 2 Scene 5 that she hasn't properly studied Cuvier.

CELIA and CAROLYN pass, but TESS fails. Mrs WELSH asks her to pack and leave. TESS is devastated. However, Mrs WELSH appears to have been trying to teach her a lesson, and offers her a second chance as she invites her to come back in September and resit.

Even COLLINS cannot help but crack a smile at this redemption. The scene ends with music playing and the banner being hoisted up. The play kicks into its final phase here as we hurtle into voting day.

Scene 11 – Voting Day

The room is strung with banners. One reads 'Degrees for Women', the other 'Gowns for Girtonites'.

Mrs WELSH addresses the gathered WOMEN. She warns that if they lose the vote they must not be dispirited. WILL enters, flustered, with news that people are up in arms. He describes the scene outside, which sounds like a riot. He tries to stop Mrs WELSH from going out, telling her of an effigy they have made in blue stockings.

The audience may realise here that these were the stockings bought by LLOYD in Act 2 Scene 6. We hear more and more smashing of windows, and the sound of the protestors grows. Finally, the MEN enter the room, led by LLOYD and HOLMES. HOLMES, again, is more restrained and unsure, but LLOYD leads the men to pull down a banner.

MR BANKS and WILL try to persuade them to leave. They round on WILL, who is punched to the ground by LLOYD. Mrs WELSH re-enters and surveys the scene, exclaiming 'what on earth' and bringing a hush over the room. She calls them barbarians, and as she makes for LLOYD, is thrown to the ground. As she slowly rises to her feet, Mr PECK enters and informs them that they have lost the vote. EDWARDS asks TESS what they will do now, to which HOLMES explodes, livid at the way in which the WOMEN have been disrespected. TESS finally answers that they 'will carry on'.

Scene 12 – If You Had to Choose

The train platform

TESS catches up with WILL and hurriedly explains the dilemma between love and knowledge, professing that she must choose knowledge right now, but insinuating that she is in love with WILL. He is completely understanding, saying he will wait. They embrace. They sing 'Gaudeamus Igitur', while text reveals that they were eventually awarded the right to graduate, fifty years later.

Characters

Tess Moffat

A talented young woman with an inquisitive mind. She goes on a journey of discovery, battling with the sacrifice it took at the time for a woman to be in higher education, whilst still being buffeted by the rough winds of young love.

Celia Willbond

A strait-laced hard worker. She likes to play by the rules, though she is fiercely loyal to her friends.

Carolyn Addison

A bohemian, easy-going young woman. She is well travelled, and carries this accrued wisdom with her.

Maeve Sullivan

A reclusive yet extremely bright young woman from a disadvantaged background. She must take the fall for the cause. A real tragedy of the play.

Ralph Mayhew

The love interest of Tess. Though he seems to be romantic and everything she would want at first, he ultimately betrays her, scared of facing the politics of the situation should he stay with her.

Lloyd

The archetypal bully. He is misogynistic, and expects the other men to follow his lead.

Holmes

Lloyd's right-hand man, though he questions whether his friend goes too far at times. He ultimately rejects Lloyd, rising to a higher moral standpoint.

Edwards

He is often the butt of the other men's jokes. Though he is not the strongest and may say things that are misguided, he does have redeeming qualities.

Will Bennett

An old family friend of Tess. He has promised her father that he will look after her, which he always looks to do, even if he does not fully understand her. He falls in love with her.

Elizabeth Welsh

Mistress of Girton College. She is determined to achieve the right for women to graduate. She forgoes any other rights for women, at least for the meantime, in order to achieve this one goal.

Dr Maudsley

A renowned psychiatrist. He does not believe that women should be educated, and as such represents the opposite of Mrs Welsh in the play.

Mr Banks

A brilliant lecturer who teaches at Trinity and Girton. He sticks to his principles to the last.

Miss Blake

A fantastic lecturer at Girton. She is progressive in her thinking and politics. She sympathises with the work of the suffragettes.

Professor Collins

A lecturer at Trinity. He shows he has a softer side, when he struggles to conceal a smile when Tess is given a second chance.

Professor Anderson

A lecturer at Trinity.

Professor Radleigh

A board member at Trinity and an important man. He is unsympathetic to the cause of degrees for women.

Minnie

The housemaid at Girton. She is friendly and helps the girls out, even if it means bending the rules.

Mr Peck

The gardener and maintenance man at Girton.

Miss Bott

Chaperone to the women of Girton. She is superficially strict, though there is evidence that she is more aware of the mischief than she lets on.

Billy Sullivan

Maeve's brother who comes to fetch her home.

Mrs Lindley

A saleswoman in the haberdashery.

Social, cultural and historical context

Jessica Swale is a writer and director, and the Artistic Director of Red Handed Theatre Company.

Blue Stockings was her first play, for which she was nominated Most Promising Playwright in the *Evening Standard* Awards 2013, the year it was first performed.

She has directed a number of award-winning productions and world premieres for Red Handed, which is dedicated to creating new work and rediscovering forgotten plays. She also worked as Max Stafford-Clark's associate director at Out of Joint.

In the mid-1800s, girls in England were lucky if they got an education at all. This began to change when Emily Davies successfully campaigned to incorporate serious subjects and examinations into women's education. In 1869 she set up Britain's first residential higher education college for women, in a farmhouse in Hitchin, 20 miles from Cambridge.

In 1896, the college had moved to Girton, two miles from central Cambridge. Though the women studied the same degrees as male students at the university, they were not allowed to graduate and went home empty-handed. Girton's new Mistress, Mrs Welsh, decided to campaign for the right for the girls to graduate. This is where the play begins.

It could be argued that the play has much relevance today, in fact the play text is dedicated to Malala Yousafzai.

Themes

The main theme of the play is **gender equality**. Because of where and when the play is set, the imbalance in gender equality is greater than it is today. The women in the play are the pioneers who paved the way for women's education.

Another theme is **knowledge vs love**. This is the dilemma faced by the play's protagonist, Tess. She chooses love in the first instance with Ralph, but it a case of once bitten, twice shy, as she makes it clear to Will at the end that she will put her education first this time and love must wait.

Another theme is **idealism vs realism**. The younger characters in the play tend to be more idealistic, for example wanting to go to the suffrage rally. Mr Banks and Miss Blake both lose their jobs fighting for what they believe in, whereas Mrs Welsh is driven towards a single political goal, and is realistic with her other expectations while she is trying to achieve it.

Resources

There is a wealth of resources available on the Pearson Edexcel website and these are being added to and updated regularly. Many of these, including Sample Assessment Materials, are free to download.

Recommended edition

Recommended edition: *Blue Stockings*, by Jessica Swale. Nick Hern Books. ISBN: 978-1-84842-329-9

Further reading

Sex in Mind and in Education, by Henry Maudsley. ISBN: 978-1149674949

Online resources

YouTube is a useful source of a range of productions of the play, some are full length, others are extracts or trailers. These can be used to stimulate ideas and discussion around the tone of a production, as well as the ways in which the characters can be portrayed. At the time of writing, there is a recording of a full production of the play as well as extracts and trailers.

<https://www.theguardian.com/stage/2013/aug/30/blue-stocking-review>

<http://www.independent.co.uk/arts-entertainment/theatre-dance/reviews/theatre-review-blue-stockings-shakespeares-globe-london-8791285.html>

<https://theoxfordculturereview.com/2015/09/23/review-blue-stockings>

<https://www.malala.org/malalas-story>

Useful soundtracks to use in the classroom

'Gaudeamus Igitur'

'The Last Rose of Summer', by Thomas Moore

Model Box resources

www.theatre-inabox.com

Practical exploration activities

Performers

The following exercises are designed to help theatre makers practically explore some of the key characters, themes and ideas that are central to *Blue Stockings*. Some of these exercises may help performers to consider how key roles might be communicated and realised from 'page to stage'.

Off-text improvisation is a useful explorative technique to consider the 'before and after' life of the play. You might explore moments from the play that are alluded to but not seen, for example:

- Tess and Will playing at home as children
- Mrs Welsh when she first set up the college
- Lloyd and the others making the effigy.

Hot-seating is a valuable and exciting method to develop characterisation. It helps performers to 'flesh out' their understanding of the characters. Using their imagination and the information provided in the given circumstances will allow the performers to consider the voice, attitude and physicality of the character they are exploring.

A more theatrical way to explore hot-seating might be to combine it with an off-text improvisation. For example, following on from the examples above, after we have watched a scene play out, we could immediately interview the character and ask them probing questions to discover thoughts the performers may not have considered.

Exploring accent and dialect can also help performers to consider character choices. Though the play is set in England, accents and dialects change over the course of centuries. It might be an idea to listen to some very old film, maybe Pathé news features from the early part of the 20th century, to get an idea of the clipped RP that might have been spoken at the time. Feature films made at the time were often very theatrical in tone and style.

Non-verbal communication is often a highly effective way to explore character, subtext, tension and silence. How does each character behave in moments of silence? For example, you might see how different characters behave when they are on their own. How does this differ, if it does, from how they behave when they are around other characters?

Another useful exercise to consider involves **staging and rehearsing a key scene with a particular focus and then trying it in an alternative style**. For example, the performers might explore status in conjunction with the director. The director calls out numbers from 1 to 20 for the performers in the space; 1 is the lowest status, that of a slug, if you will; 20 is the highest status, the king, perhaps. By playing this game we can begin to discover how bodies in space can signify status, and this might give a good indication of how to stage certain pivotal moments in the play, where status plays a crucial role. This is particularly useful for the relationships between men and women, and lecturers and students. You could explore where characters sit in this status hierarchy – does this change at all throughout the play?

Directors

The following exercises are designed to help theatre makers explore some of the key concepts, characters and themes that are central to *Blue Stockings*. Some of the suggestions may help directors to consider how key ideas in the play might be communicated and realised from 'page to stage'. This is not an exhaustive list; it is a guide.

It might be useful to set up a **production meeting** and pitch for your students – either as one group or in smaller groups, depending on numbers – as this will help them to consider the whole play and root their practical ideas in aims and intentions.

Remember that audience impact is key, and that setting up small groups of potential theatre makers might help your students to consider the text in a holistic way. In this model, for example, a small group of five could consist of a director, set, costume, sound and lighting designers. The director puts important questions to each member of the production team in order to develop a creative concept for a production of the play, then sells a potential 'theatrical' pitch to the teacher (producer or 'dragon') in order to secure funding. It is important that the director has an overall vision for the play in performance, and the design team should question the director on their overall approach and theatrical intention.

This is a useful discussion exercise that also lends itself to research, images and presentations. It can work at the start of a scheme of work to initiate ideas and contextualise themes and key moments or, probably more effectively, at the end of a scheme of work as a way of ensuring all aspects of production are considered. It is important with this activity that each member of each production team should justify their ideas with key moments from the play.

Another useful exercise for a director to consider involves **staging and rehearsing a key scene or moment** from the production with a particular focus and then trying it in an alternative style. For example, it might be useful to explore the moment when Will arrives in Act 1, scene 8. It would be interesting to explore the dynamic of the moment and then to imagine how things might have been different if he had not appeared at that point, particularly as Tess is expecting Ralph. As a director, you would be encouraging performers to think about appropriate interpretations of characters within the context of the whole play, and looking at Swale's structuring of relationships.

A director may **explore the structure of the play** and look at other ways into it. For example, by starting with the exchange between Tess and Will in Act 2, scene 12, then flashing back or rewinding the story to the beginning from this point and taking the narrative through until the end.

Designers

The following exercises and ideas are designed to help theatre makers explore some of the opportunities, themes and ideas that are central to *Blue Stockings*. Some of the suggestions may help designers to consider how key aspects of the play might be communicated and realised and from 'page to stage'.

Setting up a **production meeting and pitch** for your student designers will help them to consider the play as a whole and root their practical ideas in aims and intentions.

Remember that audience impact is key, and that setting up small groups of potential theatre makers might help students to consider the text in a holistic way. For example, a group could consist of a set, costume, sound and lighting designer. Smaller groups simply take on more than one area of responsibility. It is important that each designer questions the aims and intentions of the others, so that each member of the team is able to think in a holistic and collaborative way. The design 'pitch' could then be offered to the teacher (producer). This is a useful discussion exercise that also lends itself to research, images and presentations. It can work at the start of a scheme of work to initiate ideas/contextualise themes and key moments, or at the end of a scheme of work as a way of ensuring all aspects of production are considered. It would also make an excellent 'active' revision session in time for the exam. TIP – each member of the production team should justify their ideas with key moments from the play.

Creating a model box of a potential set design is a useful exercise and can be as simple or as elaborate as required. It is often useful for students to see how each scene will be played in a potential space, and by creating a model box they will be able to refer more easily to their ideas in a specific space. *Blue Stockings* has numerous scene locations, so given a probably tight budget, how might a designer create multiple spaces within a limited set?

Don't forget that this play premiered at the Globe, and therefore would have relied more on the performers' relationships to each other in the space than elaborate scenery. It is

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worth looking at images of productions of the play to see how others have staged it in different spaces.

Exploring different music and sound effects for key scenes is another effective way of considering how design can play an important role in the development of a key idea or theme. How might sound be used towards the climax of the play to show the rioting masses outside the college?

How can lighting help to create shadow and suspense? **Look at previous productions and lighting designs** to see how other theatre makers have used lighting to create impact. If you don't have access to lighting, you might want to consider the effect of torches or candles. (Safety first!) Again, because the play is set in a number of locations, consider how light might change the space, both literally in terms of location and of the time of day, but also metaphorically as the climax of the play approaches.

Another useful exercise that helps to build the world of the play and develop ideas for performance is **sourcing and designing potential costumes**. Research is key, and will help students who are initially daunted about the thought of 'designing'. They don't have to be great artists to create great designs. The main thing is that they approach the design of the production in a holistic way. Is their costume design expressionistic, representational, or more naturalistic? What is their aim and intention? Does their costume design root the production and performance in a particular time period or style?

Obviously in this case it would be hard to avoid blue stockings, but the beauty is that there are no rules set in stone!

