



Pearson  
Edexcel

# GCSE (9–1) Drama

Prescribed Text Guide

*100*, Diene Petterle, Neil  
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Issue 2 – August 2021  
update





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## Prescribed edition for Component 3

100, Diene Petterle, Neil Monaghan and Christopher Heimann – ISBN: 9781854597373 (Nick Hern Books).

## Summary

The characters find themselves trapped in a limbo state between life and death, forced by a mysterious character called the Guide to choose one memory to live and relive throughout all eternity. The action is split between scenes where all the characters try to make this choice in the void and moments of memory/flashback from each of the characters' lives.

The locations move between the places where characters' memories took place and the non-specific location of 'the Void', with lighting changes used to indicate scene changes and a camera flash used to show that a memory has met the Guide's requirements. Sound effects are also referenced throughout.

Notes on the production by Christopher Heimann at the end of the introduction to the recommended edition provide more detail of the approach to staging the production used by the original cast.

The play does not have defined acts or scenes, so page numbers are used in the detailed summary that follows.

### Page 9

The play opens in the Void, an apparently huge and empty place described as perhaps outside time and space. Ketu appears, followed by Sophie and Alex. The characters do not appear to know each other; they do not seem to know where they are or why they are here and all seem disorientated.

### Page 12

After Ketu has noted that the place has no smell, Alex states that something is wrong, prompting the appearance of the Guide, a character who appears to belong the place. The Guide who welcomes the characters to death and then explains that they are about to embark on a journey, as soon as they have selected a single memory.

### Page.14

The characters question the Guide about his identity, but he refuses to answer their questions, reminding the characters to concentrate and make their choice. Alex asks Sophie if she can remember how she died, as he doesn't know what happened to him. The Guide requests their memories once again, and tells them that if someone from their life was important to them, they must choose a memory with that person.

### Page 16

Alex's memory. He apparently remembers his experience of racing his arch-enemy Gomez while his girlfriend Nia watches in the stands. Halfway through the race Nia appears and



gets on the back of his bike. Just as Alex is about to win the race, Nia slides off the bike and speaks directly to Alex, telling him that this never happened.

### **Page 19**

Back in the Void, Nia has joined the characters and she tells Alex that this 'memory' was of a game that they used to play. Alex is horrified to realise that Nia is really here with him, and therefore dead. The Guide once again presses first Alex and then the whole group to make their choices.

### **Page 22**

Sophie's memory. She describes being twelve years old and making herself up in her mother's bedroom, before being told by her mother that she was lovely. She sees this as the moment when she realises that she was not beautiful. The memory ends with the camera failing to flash.

### **Page 23**

A lighting changes takes the action back to the Void. Sophie has not disappeared. She defends her choice of such a painful memory as being a time when she knew who she was. Alex and Nia remember that they died in a fire and Ketu reveals that he counts because it helps him to think. The Guide begins to count, saying that he is 'a little out of practice'.

### **Page 26**

Ketu's memory. Before he steps back into his past, Ketu describes this as being his great revelation. His memory takes place in his village in the rainforest. It begins with Ketu asking questions about his world and ends with his 'realisation' that the world is round – like an orange – and the sun rotates around it.

### **Page 28**

A lighting changes takes the action back to the Void. Sophie tells Ketu that in fact, the earth orbits the sun, while Alex confirms that they all believe that the earth is round. The Guide remains unimpressed with this memory and begins counting menacingly. Nia asks Alex if he is going to choose a memory of her and she has the idea of the day that they met as a shared memory. They agree to try it together.

### **Page 32**

Alex and Nia's memory. This takes place in a children's playpark where both Alex and Nia are looking after other people's children. They devise ways to show that they are each single and childless this and awkwardly wait for the other to 'make the first move'. The children interact forcing Alex and Nia to speak to each other. However, at Alex's realisation that Nia is 'the one', Nia says she knew that she was 'in for a wicked shag'.

### **Page 35**

A lighting changes takes the action back to the Void. Alex is hurt that Nia has said she was only thinking about sex when they met. Nia challenges his romantic view that she was 'the one' and Ketu suggests that they saw the same situation differently; Alex's truth was not Nia's. He links this to his own experience prompting Sophie to select another memory.



### Page 36

Sophie's memory. She describes starting a new job and developing her career to become more successful in the company than her colleagues Phil. She remembers an incident at the office Christmas party where an important conversation with her boss, Mr Gray, presented her with opportunities for promotion. The memory ends at a conference where Sophie is awarded 'Manager of the Year'.

### Page 41

Sophie is disappointed to find that she is still in the Void. The Guide responds by asking her if she was happy. Sophie is defensive but eventually reveals that she became ill and could feel her mind rotting. Nia presses her to remember a special moment and Ketu tells her that she doesn't need to impress them.

### Page 45

Sophie's memory. Sophie reluctantly describes a week that began like any other, with a 'tube' train journey, an email joke at the office and voicemail messages which Sophie listens to before she tries to sleep. This was the night when 'London became the city which never sleeps', and insomnia gripped the city. As the memories of Sophie and her colleagues disappear, her world changes.

### Page 49

The end of the memory is marked by a camera flash and a blackout; when the lights come up, Sophie has disappeared from the Void. The Guide tells the remaining characters that Sophie has selected her memory, but Alex questions the reality of that memory. Nia suggests that the memory was a result of Sophie's illness and Ketu works out that the memory helped her make an important discovery about herself. He goes on to say that the most important thing is not truth but what we do with it.

### Page 51

Ketu's memory. This takes him and the audience back to his village and his arrest for stating truths that were frightening to others in the village. Ketu promises his wife that he will keep these truths to himself so that he can be released and the villagers celebrate that the 'bad spirits' have been 'banished from Ketu's mind'. However, Ketu feels more and more uncomfortable with this and decides to end his life rather than live a lie.

### Page 55

The end of the memory is marked by a camera flash and a blackout; when the lights come up, Ketu has disappeared from the Void. The Guide is delighted with his choice, but Nia wonders how they can compete with it. The Guide begins counting again after saying that it would be 'impractical' if the world were made up of geniuses. Nia begins to speculate about ordinary moments of happiness for her memory. The Guide urges them to hurry up 'and choose while it is still real' for them and Nia suggests her favourite Sunday

### Page 58

Nia's memory. This takes place in Nia's bedroom on a Sunday afternoon; she and Alex have been in bed all day. They plan to do nothing all day and have a perfect day. Alex tells Nia that he loves her 'so quietly... as if (Nia) wasn't meant to hear'. Nia replies that she loves Alex.



## Page 60

The end of the memory is marked by a camera flash and a blackout; when the lights come up, Nia has disappeared from the Void. Alex says that he wanted to go too, but that what he remembers are lot of good moments; the Guide replies that ‘good’ obviously isn’t ‘good enough’ for Alex.

The Guide asks him ‘Why do you think I’m still here?’ Alex realises that the Guide couldn’t choose either. The Guide says that without thoughts and memories, we are nothing. He shouts at Lex to choose and begins counting again. The final lines of the play are the Guide’s introduction, but Alex is now alone on stage.



## Characters

### Ketu

The only character not to come from a Western society, Ketu is a villager from the Amazon rainforest. He was in life a father and family man who questioned accepted beliefs within his village and is the first to appear in the Void. He is a man in his mid to late thirties who is described as having ‘something distinctly animal about his movements’ suggesting a character who is connected to nature. He chooses a memory of his death as his most significant moment, as he believes it represented a perfect moment of truth.

### Sophie

Sophie is the second character to appear on stage, a young woman in her late twenties/early thirties who during her life chose to focus on achievements in her working life, rather than relationships. While initially proud of these achievements, the failure of first memory she tries to choose causes her to look back at her life differently. She demonstrates envy of Alex and Nia’s relationship before finally choosing a memory where her knowledge of work had disappeared and all she was left with was people.

### Alex

Alex enters the space at a run and is described as a child-like young man who is self-assured, brash and likeable. He is the character who finds it hardest to make a choice of memory, first choosing a memory which didn’t actually happen and then trying to choose a shared memory with Nia. He is upset to find that his memory of this moment is different from Nia’s. Ultimately he is unable to choose a significant memory as ‘nothing is good enough’ and apparently takes the place of the Guide in the final moments of the play.

### The Guide

A character who is by turn authoritative, dismissive, mysterious, and foolish but is ultimately no different from the characters he guides. He presents himself initially as a kind of tour guide or leader but in the climax to the play shows that he was once a newly dead soul who, like Alex, could not choose a memory to relive.

The character is described as ‘something of a chameleon... able to change his physical and vocal characteristics with remarkable speed’ reflecting his statement in the final scene that ‘without thoughts and recollections to ... help you know yourself, you’re nothing’.

### Nia

Nia is first introduced as part of Alex’s first memory of the race and then appears as the final character to enter the Void. She seems both more decisive and perhaps more honest than her boyfriend Alex, prompting him to recognize that his first memory wasn’t real and questioning his choices. Her memory is of her favourite Sunday; a day spent doing ‘absolutely nothing’ with Alex, where ‘suddenly it was all there’.



## Context to *100*

The original performance took place in 2002 at the Edinburgh Fringe Festival and at the Soho Theatre in 2003.

Students are required to refer to the context **in which the text was created and first performed** as part of their response to sub-question (b)(i). This could be the social, political, context and/or the context to the **first performance**, which for this text **took place in London, in 2003**. Contextual information relating to this time period may also be covered in sub-question b(ii) and (c). The following contextual information may be of support to students when preparing for these questions.

*100* was created very early in the 21st century, but the ideas of what happens to humanity after death has been explored for thousands of years. 21c society has arguably a stronger focus on happiness and personal fulfilment than previous eras. Social media sites such as friendster (created in 2002) heralded the importance of sharing information that has become a key aspect of the 21c and the play's focus on the characters choosing one memory perhaps combines both of these aspects of the time when the play was first performed and created.

The idea of creating a magical experience for the audience using minimal set and props was key for The Imaginary Body, the company who created *100*. The play was originally performed as part of the Edinburgh Fringe Festival. In the introduction to the recommended version, Christopher Heimann discusses his intention of creating a 'flow of the transformation of objects, characters and the space by the simplest means' Work in progress on the piece was shared at the Arcola theatre and the company went on to develop the dialogue and structure more fully to present at the Edinburgh Fringe later that year.

This play was then reworked slightly to create the published version of the text, which was performed at the Soho theatre, London in 2003. The production was a strongly physical production where the only props were bamboo sticks and a single orange. In terms of design, this was kept very simple, with lighting effects used to support the performers who were costumed in the characters' underwear, suggesting a hasty and unplanned exit from reality.



## Themes in 100

One key theme within the play is exploring the idea of **life after death** or more precisely, what might happen to us when we die, and how we might look back on our lives once they are over. The play takes place in a limbo-like location named the Void with flashbacks to each character's earthly life and experiences, and it is made clear early on that this is a post-death location but ideally not a permanent one. No developed explanation of the afterlife or what will happen to them is offered to the characters beyond the need to choose a significant moment from their lives – and this forces the audience to consider what their own ideas of life after death might be,

Two other significant themes are that of **memory and truth**. The characters recall a selection of memories as part of their afterlife experience and are forced to consider the truth and reality of these memories, thinking about the way they perceived these at the time and also how they were perceived by others, for example, the differences in Alex and Lia's perceptions of each other their first meeting force the audience to question how truthful we are to ourselves as well as to others,

The idea of **what makes life meaningful** is at the heart of the play, as each character struggles to find the one single key memory, a moment which intimately connects with them and will therefore stay with them throughout the afterlife, allowing them to move forward onto rather than being stuck in the Void as the next Guide. By correctly identifying and choosing this memory, each character is able to access the freedom of the afterlife rather than being left with the characterless sterility of the Void, suggesting a lesson for the audience in how to make their lives meaningful, by appreciating the truly important moments while they are alive rather than waiting till after death,



## Resources for *100*

There are a wealth of resources available on the Pearson Edexcel website and these are being added to and updated regularly. These resources, including the [Sample Assessment Materials](#), and [specimen paper and mark scheme](#), are free to download.

There is also an informative introduction and production notes written by Christopher Heimann included in the prescribed edition to the text.

### Further reading

*One Hundred Years of Solitude*, Gabriel Garcia Marquez

This novel inspired some of the memories within the play and the writer's use of magic realism was also influential to the devising company.

### Online resources

[The Imaginary Body](#) (including downloadable images).

[British Theatre Guide review](#) of the Soho Theatre production (2003):

[Review from the Edinburgh Fringe](#) (2013):

[Audio interview](#) with Heimann and Petterle from 2006:

There are a number of online sites dedicated to Greek mythology which may clarify the role of the Guide who can be compared with the character of Charon the ferryman who took the newly dead on their journey to the underworld.

YouTube is a useful resource and teachers and students may find theatrical versions of the play useful, some full length, while others are extracts. These can be used to suggest ideas for staging and the ways in which the characters can be portrayed. Past production/rehearsal photos can also be found online and these may offer ideas for performers, directors and designers



## Practical activities to help prepare for Component 3

The following suggested exercises may help students practically explore some of the key characters, themes and ideas that are central to *100*, and to have some practical experience of bringing the text to life.

Students must respond to the text as performers, directors and designers, so practical experience of all of these roles will be useful. However, the questions are grouped into 2 areas:

- activities for performers and for directors of performers
- activities for designers and for directors of production elements.

### 1. Performers and Directors of Performers: Questions (a)(i), (a)(ii) and (b)(ii)

There are a number of performance elements which will come up across these three questions:

- vocal skills/voice
- physical skills/movement
- non-verbal communication
- stage space and stage directions.

Best practice would therefore be to ensure that all students have an understanding of each performance element and how it could be used to enhance the play in performance, as well as a grasp of how to use these elements as a performer and as a director.

Off-text improvisation is a useful explorative technique to consider the 'before and after' life of the play. Students might explore moments from the play that the audience does not explicitly see.

For example:

- Phil discussing Sophie with some of their other colleagues
- Ketu's family reacting to his death
- the argument Nia reminds of Alex about on page 56
- The Guide being unable to make his decision.

This kind of activity might be particularly useful as students are first exploring the play.

Hot-seating is a valuable and exciting method to develop characterisation and to explore motive/objective. It would also help students to consider the journey of the character in the context of the complete text. This would work well to develop understanding of



improvisation work early on in the process, but would also be an excellent practical revision technique for students

Exploring voice and vocal skills such as volume, pitch, tone, pace, pause, emphasis, accent and dialect can also help performers and directors of performers to consider character choices. How might vocal choices help the audience understand where characters come from? How might they show an understanding of the character at that moment within the play?

Still image and mime are often highly effective in exploring the use of physical skills and non-verbal communication and the use of space. Students could be given the opportunity to look at relationships and emotions within a given moment from the text by creating either a short sequence of mime or a series of still images. Using facial expression, movement, gesture, posture and their proxemics (or position within the performance space) will enhance their understanding of how these characters might be feeling at this moment, or what they might want to achieve.

Following practical activities, evaluating the ways in which performance skills have been used and asking students to offer reasons for their performance choices verbally after sharing work, will also help students become more confident with the relevant vocabulary.

Staging and rehearsing a key scene with a particular focus is also a helpful activity for students. This focus might be the kind of statement to be found in Q(b)(ii) for example, '*Alex is choosing his most important memory*'. Assigning the role of director to one student within each the group and asking the director to verbally justify or give reasons for the choices made when staging the scene, similarly, will help all students to grasp the role of the director and to feel more confident about responding on paper to question (b)(ii).

Once students are more confident in working as a director, or with a student director, further explorative activities might be useful. For example, exploring the use of proxemics and stage space with the director. The director assigns roles and gives each character a double who feeds lines to the performer, allowing the performers to move around the space without needing to hold a script. The director gives clear suggestions for the use of space and movement to the performers. This could also be applied to vocal and/or physical skills.

## 2. Designers and Directors of Production Elements: Questions (b)(i) and (c)

There are six production/design elements which will come up across these two questions:

- staging
- set
- props and stage furniture
- costume
- lighting
- sound.



Three of these will be possible options on each question with all six appearing on the paper each year. Best practice would therefore be to ensure that all students have an understanding of each production/design element and how it could be used to enhance the play in performance. A grasp of how the differences in approaching these elements as a director and as a director will also be valuable.

It might be useful to set up a production meeting and pitch for your students. In this model, for example, a small group of five could consist of a director, set, costume, sound and lighting designers. The director then asks important questions to each member of the production team in order to develop a creative concept for a production of the play and then sells a potential 'theatrical' pitch to the teacher (producer or 'dragon' in order to secure funding).

The teacher should support students by ensuring that the students all have a good understanding of the text and of appropriate performance styles for this text. Each member of each production team must justify their ideas by referring to key moments from the play. This is a useful discussion exercise that also lends itself to research, images and presentations. It would also make an excellent 'active' revision session in time for the written examination.

The play is set in non-specific time and place but was generally contemporary to 2002 in the first production. Students may choose to adapt the setting, and time period, perhaps making the memories more specific to today. Students may well choose a time period and approach, which is in line with the first performance. Designers/directors will also need to think about how their chosen performance style will be supported through design and about how design elements will be used to time passing and the increase in tension throughout the play.

Exploring different music and sound effects for key moments is another effective way of considering how sound design can play an important role in the development of a key idea of theme. There are a number of sound cues within the text already and these could be created live or using recorded sound. Similarly, there are opportunities for music and sound to be used to create atmosphere and/or location, for example, in the rainforest, or when Sophie's memory is disappearing.

It is worth considering how lighting might be used to create atmosphere and the different locations within the play. There are a number of lighting changes and blackouts within the play text and these could be created using colour, intensity and specific lighting effects such as gobos. Different kinds of lamp could also be used to create shadows and suspense, for example in the final section of the play when Alex is trying to make his choice.

If access to lighting is limited, students might want to consider experimenting with torches, as well as researching previous productions and lighting designs to see how other theatre makers have used lighting to create impact. There are also computer programmes available that will help to create a virtual set and lighting grid for a production of the play.

Creating a model box or stage plan 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 or episode will be played in a potential space, and to choose a specific stage. By creating this visually they will be able to refer more easily to their ideas when writing about



set, stage furniture or staging in particular. *100* was originally staged with a deliberately minimalistic set but students may choose to create a more specific set, using levels, and/or simple stage furniture such as blocks or rostra, projection of images and/or scene titles to make the different locations and the differences between the time periods clearer for the audience.

Another useful exercise that helps to build the world of the play and develop ideas for performance is designing potential costumes and props. 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. Students could be asked to link their intentions verbally with the initial production, as they will need to do in question (b)(i) either because they are adopting a similar approach or because they are developing different ideas. Costume designers will also need to think about how the physical style of the play will be supported through the style of the costume for each character. The performance was devised for 5 performers, but students may choose to work with a larger cast rather than having the actors playing Alex, Nia, Ketu, Sophie and Guide also multi-rolling as the minor characters in each memory; this could have an impact on costume design. but students may choose to work with a larger cast rather than multi-rolling, which could have an impact on costume design.

While the majority of these activities will result in informal sharing within the class, using the set text as the basis for more formal performance work is also worth considering.

*100* is a prohibited text for Component 2 from 2020 onwards. However, students might complete a mock performance from text, perhaps in year 10, using extracts from their prescribed text. This will not only support performance and design skills; it will also help students to become confident with staging extracts from the play for an audience.