



Year 8 Devising – Murder Mystery

To understand the conventions of a Murder Mystery and devise their own pieces to reflect these conventions. To get the students to learn new non- naturalistic techniques and experiment with these techniques with an aim of creating tension and encouraging the audience to focus on solving the murder.

The Actor's Tool Kit

- Pitch
- Pace
- Tone
- Accent
- Volume
- Emphasis
- Facial Expressions
- Gestures
- Posture
- Mannerism
- Body Language



Conventions of a Murder Mystery

- ❖ Murderer
- ❖ Victim
- ❖ Detective
- ❖ Red herring
- ❖ Flashbacks
- ❖ Secrets and lies
- ❖ Spooky music
- ❖ Plot twists



Naturalistic

A style of drama that developed in the late 19th century as an attempt to represent real life on stage faithfully. Actions are realistic and driven by emotions or events. Audiences care about the characters and get upset when they do.

Non Naturalistic

Non-naturalistic theatre is the opposite of naturalism, it wants the audience to focus on the plays message.

Techniques include – talking to the audience, jumping in time and place and minimum scenery, props and token costumes.



Split stage

In drama and theatre the term is used to describe two or more scenes which are performed on stage at the same time. This makes it possible to juxtapose scenes or snippets of scenes that happen at different times or in different places, using separate areas of the performance space. The technique is used to highlight or contrast a particular theme or aspect of the story. Using different groupings, both scenes could happen at the same time, or one could be frozen while the other comes alive. This can have a similar effect to spotlighting particular areas of the stage or using a split-screen in a film.



Flashback

A scene in a play that is set in an earlier time than the main story.

Year 8 Glossary

Mime	The use of movements, gestures and facial expressions to communicate an idea without words
Posture	The position a character holds themselves in when sitting or standing
Gestures	A movement made by part of the body (e.g. arms, head) to convey a character's emotion
Mannerism	A repeated physical or vocal habit that contributes to characterisation
Pitch	How high or low an actor's voice is. This can be used as a feature of a character or to show a character's emotional state.
Pace	Pace is the speed that lines are delivered
Volume	How loud or quiet a vocal performance is. This could be a feature of a character or how a character's emotions
Intonation	This is the rise and fall of a voice that created a natural pattern of speech. This can be used to create meaning, by stressing a word for emphasis
Tone	How a line is delivered, adding emotional impact to spoken words
Accent	Can signal to the audience where a character is from, social class or status
Pauses	Pauses can be used to create tension, can shape the delivery of an actor's lines and/or can add to the realism of a scene

Unison	The process where actions or dialogue happen at the same time and in the same way
Canon	People moving or speaking in the same way one after the other
Thrust Stage	A stage that extends out into the audience, so that they are seated on three sides
Traverse	A long, narrow stage which runs between the audience, who face the stage on both sides
Proscenium Arch Stage	A box shaped stage which is set back from the audience so that the front end is open to them, framed by the arch itself
End on Stage	A stage which has the audience on one side of the stage, facing the action
In the Round	A style of staging where the audience is seated on all sides of the stage.
Chanting	A chant is a short, simple series of syllables or words that are spoken with the same tone. It is usually repetitive
Narration	A character who comments on the action and the plot to the audience, can be first- person (involved in the action) or third -person (set apart from the action)
Thought Tracking	When a character tells the audience their thoughts during a pause in the action
Devil and Angel	Technique where a character faces a dilemma and the audience can hear the voice of their conscience, the good angel to the right and bad angel to their left
Non-linear structure	When the events of the plot are not in chronological order.
Split Stage	When the stage is split into two different areas representing different places or times