



# INTRODUCTION TO A LEVEL DRAMA

LHA ARA Brief 1

June 2017

## Learning Outcomes

The purpose of this series of lessons is to ensure that you have a realistic expectation of what A Level Drama will entail.

By end of taster session:

- 1) To recognise and apply stylistic conventions of Steven Berkoff
- 2) To give a fully controlled contribution to rehearsal and performance in the style of Berkoff

By September:

1. To have read the play Trojan Women in its entirety
2. To be able to outline the plot of Trojan Women and suggest some of the possible themes and issues
3. To have purchased a copy of 'A Dolls House' by Henrik Ibsen
4. To have completed a summary of the context of 'A Dolls House'

"This specification is designed to promote a **balance** between practical theatre making and the theoretical understanding of drama and theatre.

This stimulating and engaging course of study will encourage you to make connections between dramatic theory and your own practice.

*- Eduqas Specification*

## Assessment Objectives

AO1	Create and develop ideas to communicate meaning as part of the theatre making process, making connections between dramatic theory and practice
AO2	Apply theatrical skills to realise artistic intentions in live performance
AO3	Demonstrate knowledge and understanding of how drama and theatre is developed and performed
AO4	Analyse and evaluate your own work and the work of others.

## Steven Berkoff

<p>Physical theatre.</p> <p>Awareness of the senses.</p> <p>Environment allows physical performance.</p> <p>Classic in concept. e.g. Greek, Japanese.</p> <p>Visual aesthetic is important.</p>	<p><b>SET:</b> Practical and symbolic set designs that gave the actors enough room to move around the stage.</p>	<p><b>LIGHTING:</b> Use of extensive light and shadows in his productions – enhancing mime, stylized movement and tableau to create exciting alternative theatre.</p>	<p><b>SOUND:</b> Actors often make their own sound effects.</p> <p>Sound is dramatic, expressionistic.</p> <p>Music has remained an essential element of Berkoff's production style.</p> <p>He considers sound and music to be integral to his theatre.</p>	<p><b>COSTUME / MAKE-UP:</b> White-face masks.</p> <p>Theatrical costumes with the visual focus on the actor, serving to emphasize the performer and help to create environment and the characterization.</p>
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Scene (Page Numbers)	Characters in the scene (explain who they are or why they are there)	Brief Summary of the action	Themes: introduced/developed
<b>38 – 41</b> <b>Opening/ prologue</b>	<p>Poseidon – God of the Sea and supporter of the Trojan's</p> <p>Athena – Goddess of wisdom and supporter of the Greeks</p>	<p>Poseidon is nostalgic for Troy, he describes the fate of the country. Athena then enters and they discuss...</p>	<p>War and conflict</p>

A full version of this table is available as a word document on the shared drive; or you can create your own version. If you prefer to hand write your notes that is fine too as long as you cover all the areas. You will probably need to look up some of the characters and situations to make sense of the story,

# Homework Tasks

Date Set	Description	Date completed
Tuesday 27th June	Purchase a copy of <i>A Dolls House</i> by Henrik Ibsen (this can be any edition)	
Tuesday 27th June	Use the guidance on the next page to research into the context of <i>A Dolls House</i> . Summarise your findings into a 1 page document	
Tuesday 27th June	Purchase a copy of <i>The Trojan Women</i> , Euripides (OUP ISBN 978-0-19-53881-) You will need <i>Trojan women</i> for the start of the course – it must be the version with the ISBN number above as this is the exam board approved version.	
Tuesday 27th June	Complete a reading log for each section of the play <i>Trojan Women</i> . You should complete a table with the headings given opposite.	

## Challenge tasks for suggested further study

For every sequence of lessons we will always issue a list of extra activities that you can complete in your study periods that will help you to make better progress on the course. These will deepen your knowledge and understanding of the practitioners, characters and context.

By completing additional tasks alongside classwork and homework you can build your confidence, explore different ideas and approaches.

The extra work you complete will not always be marked - but its impact will be seen in the grades you receive for your assessed work.

You do not have to complete all (or any) of the challenge tasks but we urge you to have a go at some over the course of Y12 in the areas you feel weakest.

⇒ Read *A Dolls House* and complete a log for your notes

⇒ Find a diagram of a traditional Greek amphitheatre and research how each part of the space would be used during a performance

⇒ Find 2 past productions that are contrasting in their approach for *Trojan Women* or *A Dolls House* Create a 1 side of A4 for each outlining set/staging approach, directors concept, costume, audience reaction

Written by Henrik Ibsen in 1879, *A Doll's House* shocked and divided critics across Europe with its depiction of a woman struggling to survive in a man's world, and Nora's rejection of the 'ideal' family life. After the first stage production in Copenhagen in 1879, the opinions of audiences were also divided. The play caused an immediate sensation, sparking debate and controversy. So much so, that invitations to social gatherings at the time would often include the note: "*You are requested not to mention Ibsen's Doll's House!*". **Find out what about the play made it shocking? Who was Ibsen? How many plays had he written? What did his contemporaries think about his work? What inspired him in theatre? What was the political system and climate like in 1800's Norway?**

The position of women was an especially volatile issue because the patriarchal ideology underlay the entire social, political, and economic structure. If women were to have autonomy, then the whole structure of society would have to be re-imagined and the world would have to be remade.

**Sum up what life was like for women in the 1800's. How different was the role of women in society then to today?**

Up until the mid 19th century the predominant style of theatre in Europe was that of melodrama. This consisted of large flamboyant characters, with equally flamboyant gestures and patterns of speech. Plots were dramatic - generally either falling into the category of high comedy or high tragedy - and always entertaining. Both realism and naturalism in the theatre developed as a reaction against this. Although realism is often confused with naturalism, there are some key differences between the two.

**Explain what realism is and why Ibsen was concerned with realism and how it differs from naturalism.**

## What is context?

The circumstances that a play or work of literature was written in. By knowing these circumstances you can understand the work better.

You will be able to understand the purpose of the text, what inspired it and what the playwright was experiencing as they wrote it.

The more you know about the context the deeper you will be able to understand the play and its themes.

**Use these prompts to guide your research into *A Doll's House*.**

**Once you have carried out your research summarise your knowledge into 1 side of A4 notes covering all 3 areas**