# Y8 Drama Knowledge Organiser

## Building Tension...

Tension is important for creating suspense and hooking your audience! Try using the techniques below to create tension in your performances.

**1. Pause -** Adding a pause or moment of stillness creates tension, as the audience are kept waiting to see what will happen next.

**2. Proxemics -** Moving closer to another actor suggests that something is about to happen, which builds tension.

**3. Eye contact -** Making direct eye contact with another actor or the audience engages them or shows them who you are communicating with.

**4. Body Language -** Your body language is a vital tool for communicating your emotions towards another character.

**5. Status -** Showing your status is crucial in performance. Your status is the amount of power/control your character has in any given moment. This can change throughout your performance, depending on what happens to your character or who they are on stage with.

## Script Terminology...

| | |
|---|---|
| Plot | The main events of the play (the storyline) |
| Character | The people in the play and who they are (age, name, personality) |
| Context | The 5 W's: Who, What, Where, When, Why? Context of a play can also refer to what was happening at the time the play was written (social, cultural, historical) |
| Themes | The recurring ideas in the play. For example, themes in Harry Potter would include: witchcraft/wizardry, magic, friendships |
| Genre | The type of drama: comedy, tragedy, political, romance |
| Style | The way it is presented: naturalistic, non-naturalistic, physical theatre, surrealism |
| Stage Directions | Usually written in italics or inside brackets, this information tells the actor where to go or what to do. |
| Structure | The way the play is set out: Chronological, cyclical, episodic |

## Vocal Skills:

| | |
|---|---|
| 1. Projection | Ensuring your voice is loud and clear for the audience to hear. |
| 2. Volume | How loudly or quietly you say something. (Shouting, whispering) |
| 3. Tone | The way you say something in order to communicate your emotions. (E.g. Angry, worried, shocked tone of voice) |
| 4. Pace | The speed of what you say. |
| 5. Pause | Moments of pause can create tension, or show that you are thinking. |
| 6. Accent | Use of an accent tells the audience where your character is from. |
| 7. Pitch | How high or low your voice is. |
| 8. Emphasis | Changing the way a word or part of a sentence is said, in order to emphasise it. (Make it stand out.) Try emphasising the words in capital letters and see how it changes the meaning: "How could YOU do that?" "How could you do THAT?" |

## Physical Skills:

| | |
|---|---|
| 1. Body Language | How an actor uses their body to communicate meaning. For example, crossing your arms could mean you are fed up. |
| 2. Posture | The position an actor holds their body when sitting or standing. For example, an upright posture. |
| 3. Gait | The way an actor walks. |
| 4. Facial Expressions | A form of non-verbal communication that expresses the way you are feeling, using the face. |
| 5. Gestures | A movement of part of the body, especially a hand or the head, to express an idea or meaning. |
| 6. Stance | The way you position yourself when standing to communicate your role. An elderly person would have a different stance to a child! |

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## Giving verbal feedback to other groups:

**1** Give a **specific** example of what acting skills were used – paint a picture of this moment using words!

**2** **Explain** the effect of this moment on the audience – why were these acting skills used?
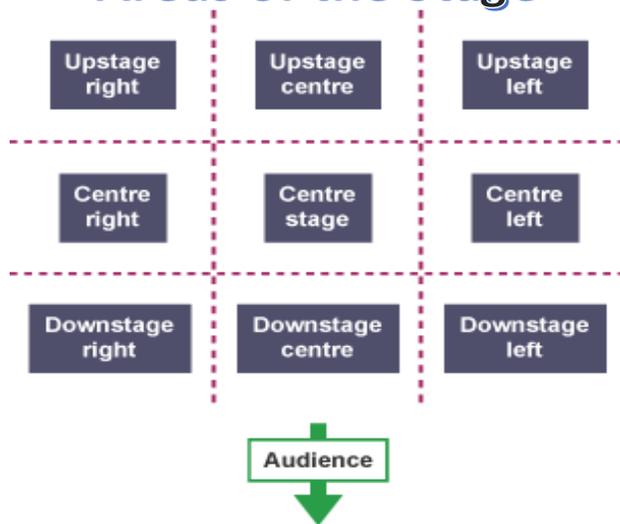
**3** Now **evaluate** – was this moment effective? Why/why not?

**4** **Link** it back to the original point and draw the paragraph to a conclusion – how **successful** was the moment?

## TOP TIPS FOR CREATING:

- ✓ Be co-operative! (Take part and follow the instructions of your team members)
- ✓ Listen respectfully to others' ideas
- ✓ Share your own ideas and make contributions
- ✓ Stay in your working space
- ✓ Plan your time effectively and structure your rehearsal
- ✓ Think about where your audience will be and rehearse with this in mind
- ✓ Make sure everyone knows what they are doing
- ✓ Practice your transitions (the moments between a scene change

## TOP TIPS FOR PERFORMING:

- ✓ Perform with confidence – do not be embarrassed!
- ✓ Stay in role at ALL times, even if something goes a bit wrong!
- ✓ Make eye contact with the audience to engage them
- ✓ Project your voice loudly and clearly
- ✓ Use a range of vocal and physical skills to show strong and convincing characterisation!
- ✓ Make sure you are facing the audience, so they can see your facial expressions
- ✓ Don't shuffle about – move with purpose!

## Roles in the Theatre

**Set Designer**: A set designer is in charge of designing and creating the sets that appear in films, on television programmes as well as in the theatre.

**Costume Designer**: The costume designer is in charge of designing and selecting the costumes the actors will wear, in order to reflect who the characters are.

**Lighting Designer**: Designs the lighting in order to create atmosphere, and reflect the time of day for the production in response to the text, while keeping in mind issues of visibility, safety, and cost.

## Areas of the Stage

| Upstage right | Upstage centre | Upstage left |
|---|---|---|
| Centre right | Centre stage | Centre left |
| Downstage right | Downstage centre | Downstage left |

↓ Audience

**Remember:** The stage is always from the **actor's** point of view, as they are the ones standing on the stage.
Demonstrate good **spatial awareness** by using all areas of the stage, where appropriate.