












Warlingham  
Sixth Form College

Year 11 > Year 12 Transition  
Summer Term  
A Level Drama & Theatre



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# COURSE OVERVIEW

At Warlingham Sixth Form College, we currently do the Pearson Edexcel A Level in Drama and Theatre. The A Level course builds on some of the knowledge and skills you will have acquired at GCSE. The structure of the course is quite similar to the GCSE, involving the creation and performance of devised work from a stimulus, the performance of scripted extracts and the study and evaluation of play scripts and live theatre performances for the written exam.

The A Level Drama and Theatre consists of two non-examination assessment components and one externally examined paper.

## Assessment Objectives

These are the areas that you will be being marked and assessed on throughout the A Level course.

### % of A Level

AO1	Create and develop ideas to communicate meaning as part of the theatre-making process, making connections between dramatic theory and practice	20%
AO2	Apply theatrical skills to realise artistic intentions in live performance	30%
AO3	Demonstrate knowledge and understanding of how drama and theatre is developed and performed	30%
AO4	Analyse and evaluate their own work and the work of others	20%

TOTAL- 100%

The 3 assessed components of the course are:

### Component 1: Devising

**Non-examination assessment, 40% of the qualification, 80 marks**

Devise an original performance piece.

- Use one key extract from a performance text and a theatre practitioner as stimuli.
- Centre choice of text and practitioner.
- Performer or designer routes available.

AO1, AO2 and AO4 are assessed.

In other words:

- You will need to **create and perform** (or be a designer/ technician for) a **devised performance**. This is as you will have done at GCSE.
- The piece will be based on a stimulus of a play extract and under the influence of, or in the style, of a key theatre practitioner.
- You will create a **portfolio of your rehearsal/ creative process**.
- Your practical work (the actual performance) will count for 10% of the qualification grade.
- Your Theory portfolio will make up the other 30% of this component.
- The portfolio will be similar to the one you will have done when devising at GCSE except it will be 2500-3000 words long and must include reference to, and knowledge of your practitioner and their influence on your work.

Your work will be marked and assessed by your teachers then externally moderated.



# COURSE OVERVIEW

## Component 2: Text in Performance

### Non-examination assessment, 20% of the qualification, 60 marks

- A group performance/design realisation of one key extract from a performance text.
- A monologue or duologue performance/design realisation from one key extract from a different performance text.
- Centre choice of performance texts.

AO2 is assessed.

For this component you will do:

- A performance of a monologue or duologue from a published play, very much as you will have done at GCSE. Or a design skill for a performance. (24/60 marks for this component)
- A performance of a group scripted piece from a different play to your monologue or duologue. Or a design skill for the performance. (36/60 marks for this component)

Your work will be marked and assessed by an external examiner.

## Component 3: Theatre Makers in Practice

### Written examination: 2 hours 30 minutes, 40% of the qualification, 80 marks

- Live theatre evaluation – choice of performance.
- Practical exploration and study of a complete performance text – focusing on how this can be realised for performance.
- Practical exploration and interpretation of another complete performance text, in light of a chosen theatre practitioner – focusing on how this text could be reimagined for a contemporary audience.

In other words you will:

Answer a written exam on a performance that you have seen and plays that you will have studied and explored practically in class. In answering the written paper, you will write:

- Section A - Answer 1 question on the live theatre review of a performance that you have seen (as at GCSE)
- Section B - Answer two questions on the script "*Equus*" by Peter Shaffer, one as an actor, one as a designer. Writing about a specific extract.
- Section C - Answer 1 question on the script "*Hedda Gabler*" by Henrik Ibsen as if you were director of a production, writing about a specific extract, working in the style of the theatre practitioner Stanislavski.

The written paper will be two and a half hours long and will be externally marked.



# OUR EXPECTATIONS

## College Expectations for Academic Success

The College will work closely with all students and parents to create a purposeful, creative and stimulating environment in which students are encouraged to fully develop - both academically and personally.

We will expect you to take responsibility for your own behaviour and learning. The current College Committee along with the student body have discussed and agreed that students should commit to:

- Ensuring academic success through regular attendance and punctuality at all required registrations, lessons, supervised study lessons and Inspire Periods. Attendance which drops below 95% reduces Key Stage 5 performance by at least one grade, so it is taken very seriously.
- Completing all set tasks on time to the best of your ability, making full use of study periods and homework to enable you to meet all deadlines.
- Using study time effectively by bringing all required equipment and resources with you and making full and regular use of the College study rooms and LRC, respecting the need for silent studying conditions.
- Working closely with all your teachers to develop an effective working relationship based on mutual respect and discussing your work with them on a regular basis and meeting targets set.
- Developing your skills as an independent, self-evaluative learner and work closely with your tutor in monitoring and discussing your academic progress. As an independent learner, if you miss a lesson, it is your own responsibility to find the teacher and catch up with the work missed.
- Organising your work efficiently and effectively into folders for each subject, making full use of individual subject expectations and using Cornell Notes daily to ensure work in your folders is relevant and meaningful.
- Keeping mobile phones out-of-sight in all classrooms and during assemblies so that lessons are not disturbed and/or important information is missed.
- Attending all parents' evenings and arrange appointments with your teachers to discuss your progress and work.



# OUR EXPECTATIONS

As part of the A Level Drama course, we expect you to participate fully in all aspects of the course. Drama is a subject which is dependant on trust and support. You will be working collaboratively with other students and you need to be able to work together in a positive, respectful and co-operative way, supporting and encouraging each other.

We expect you to:

- Work with any member of the class co-operatively.
- Participate actively in both practical and theory lessons.
- Complete all practical work with enthusiasm and focus.
- Submit written work completed to best of your ability and to deadline.
- Attend extra curricular rehearsals and performances.
- Ask questions if there is something you don't understand.
- Be supportive and encouraging of each others work in class.

A Level Drama is a course which you will be suited to if you:

- Took and enjoyed GCSE Drama.
- Would like to develop your confidence and acting skills.
- Have a general interest in the performing arts.
- Are interested in the technical and design areas of drama.
- Are interested in doing a subject which is practical and creative.
- Enjoy acting, performance and creative group work.
- Have an appreciation of, and enjoy watching, the performing arts and theatre.
- Want to pursue further study or a career in performance or in technical theatre.

As part of the course, you will explore a range of different dramatic styles, techniques and play texts. We will explore the work of various theatre practitioners, and look at how you can incorporate their ideas and approaches into your own performance work. You will study and perform a range of play texts and have the opportunity to develop and perform your own original work. You will have the opportunity to develop your knowledge, understanding and skills of the work of different Theatre Makers (Actors, Writers, Directors, Technicians, Designers) and to develop your critical faculties as an audience member of a range of drama performances.

Although a GCSE in drama is not essential for A Level Drama, a keen interest in drama and the theatre is, as is a willingness to commit to extra-curricular time rehearsals and performances.

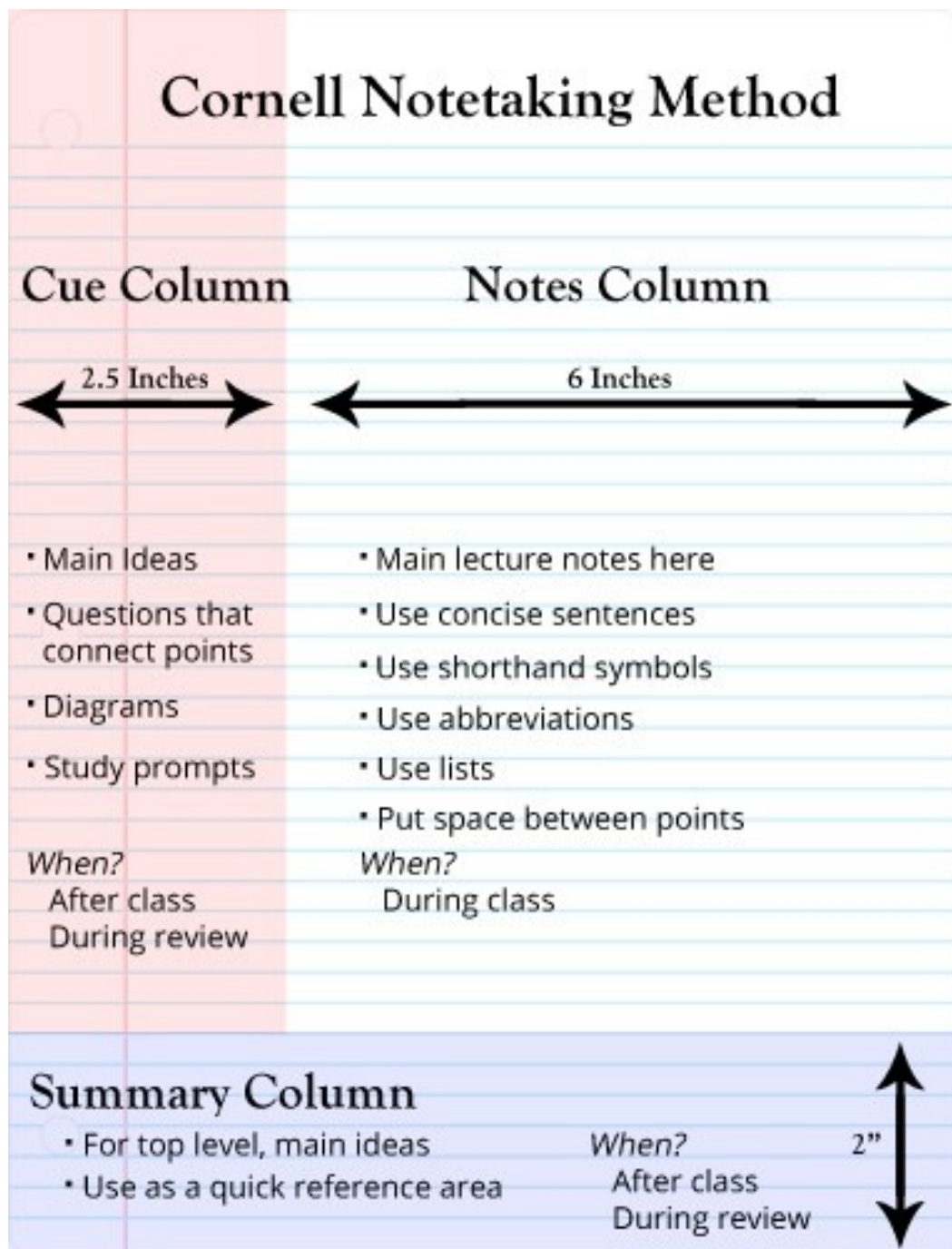


# USING CORNELL NOTES

The Cornell Notes system is a note-taking system devised by Walter Pauk, an education professor at Cornell University. It is a proven method that establishes a more effective learning process.

It is designed to help the user think and reflect upon the notes they have made as well as making them more useful for revision purposes.

Please [click here](#) to watch a video that explains how to take Cornell Notes properly.





## REVIEW / REVISE

There are some areas you will have covered during the GCSE drama course that would be a good idea for you to review and look back over if you feel you are not totally clear on them.

- Staging - the different types of stage formation, what they are called and why you might choose to use them.
- Lighting - What different sorts of lights are called, what each type of light does and how you might use it to enhance your performance. The ways Theatre Technicians use lighting effects to create place, mood and atmosphere. The use of colour, focus and intensity.
- Set Design – The appropriate terminology for how you would create and design a performance space. How can the stage space be created to create a range of looks, places, locations and atmospheres.
- Costume Design – Different styles of costume, colour, fabric and items used. How the costume designer has to think about creation of character through costume choices, appropriate to time period, ease of use and practicality for the actor as well as budgetary constraints.
- Sound effects – the use of sound to enhance scenes and create mood or atmosphere, pre recorded sound effects, use of music to underscore the action of a scene, live sound created by the performers on stage, use of microphones to amplify or distort sound at specific moments.
- Live Theatre Evaluation – Read back over any notes you have on live theatre performances that you have seen.





# WATCH

## See as much live theatre as possible (even if it's not actually "live")

During the course, we will hopefully (conditions allowing) go on a range of theatre trips. As a student of drama, seeing and experiencing as much live (and recorded if live performances are not available) theatre as possible will be hugely beneficial. You need to develop your understanding of how different theatre makers (actors, writers, directors, designers, technicians) work both independently and collaboratively to create theatre. Thankfully, at the moment there are a range of online platforms where you can watch recorded performances. These include:

National Theatre at Home

<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCUDq1XzCY0NIOYVJvEMQjqw>

What's On Stage Streamed Performances

<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCUDq1XzCY0NIOYVJvEMQjqw>

Time Out - Best Live Theatre to Stream

<https://www.timeout.com/newyork/theater/the-best-theater-to-watch-online-june-1-june-2>

London Theatre 1 – Watch Theatre Online

<https://www.londontheatre1.com/theatre-news/watch-theatre-online-or-at-home-musicals-plays-drama-opera-ballet/>

Alan Bennett's series of monologues for the BBC "Talking Heads" is also worth watching

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/iplayer/episodes/p08ftkx/alan-bennetts-talking-heads>

Any and as many theatre performances that you are able to see will be useful.

## Live Theatre Evaluation Task

Start a journal of plays you have seen. Try recording your thoughts and feelings about each piece of performance work you see. You should include the title of the play and playwright, where the play was staged (it should say this even if it's a recorded performance) and the names of the main cast. An outline of the plot and its themes, characters, setting, etc. Key moments in the performance which had an impact on you - what were they? The staging and technical / design features involved and what your response to the play was as an audience member.

This will get you into a good habit of being prepared for Section A of the written paper.



# READ

## Course Reading

Get ahead with reading the texts - we have included a link to them on Amazon and the ISBN number for each book. You will need to have got hold of a copy of all four of these scripts and read them by the time the course starts. Please ensure you get the correct edition of the play (the editions specified here) as some other versions / translations have varying content. You may be able to get hold of second-hand copies of some scripts, which is fine, however, it is important that you have your **own** copy as we will be working from them throughout the course.

## Essential Reading- Scripts

### Exam Texts

"Equus" by Peter Shaffer

[https://www.amazon.co.uk/Equus-Penguin-Modern-Classics-Shaffer/dp/0141188901/ref=tmm\\_pap\\_title\\_0?encoding=UTF8&qid=&sr=](https://www.amazon.co.uk/Equus-Penguin-Modern-Classics-Shaffer/dp/0141188901/ref=tmm_pap_title_0?encoding=UTF8&qid=&sr=)

**ISBN-10:** 0141188901



"Hedda Gabler" by Henrik Ibsen (adapted by Richard Eyre)

<https://www.amazon.co.uk/Hedda-Gabler-version-Richard-Eyre/dp/1854598422>

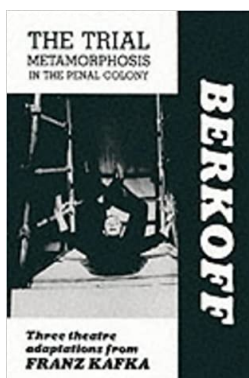
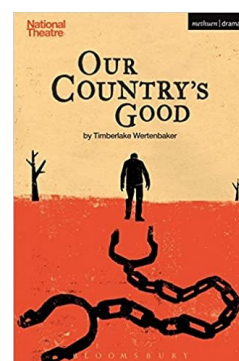
**ISBN-10:** 1854598422

## Performance Texts

"Our Country's Good" by Timberlake Wertenbaker

<https://www.amazon.co.uk/Our-Countrys-Good-Modern-Plays/dp/1474274447>

**ISBN-10:** 1474274447



"Metamorphosis" by Steven Berkoff

<https://www.amazon.co.uk/Trial-Metamorphosis-Penal-Colony-Adaptations/dp/090639984X>

**ISBN-10:** 9780906399842

(This script is in a collection of 3 play scripts, but it is only the play "Metamorphosis" that we will be looking at.)



# READ

## Additional (Non Essential) Reading- Scripts

We have specified above the exam texts we will be looking at, however, it will not do you any harm to read any of the other exam texts, they are designed to give a range and breadth of dramatic experience. The more you read and experience, the broader your knowledge. Please do not feel you have to buy (as buying them all will be ludicrously expensive!) or get **all** of these, if you can get your hands on a copy to read (possibly borrowed, online or from a library) then great, if you are not able to, then please don't worry, you will not be in any way disadvantaged. (We have copies of most of these plays in the drama department!)

*"Accidental Death of an Anarchist"* by Dario Fo (adapted by Gavin Richards)

*"Colder Than Here"* by Laura Wade

*"Fences"* by August Wilson

*"Machinal"* by Sophie Treadwell

*"That Face"* by Polly Stenham

*"Antigone"* by Sophocles (adapted by Don Taylor)

*"Doctor Faustus"* by Christopher Marlowe

*"Lysistrata"* by Aristophanes (translated by Allan H Sommerstein)

*"The Maids"* by Jean Genet (translated by Bernard Frechtman)

*"The School for Scandal"* by Richard Brinsley Sheridan

*"The Tempest"* by William Shakespeare

*"Waiting For Godot"* by Samuel Beckett

*"Woyzeck"* by Georg Buchner (translated by John Mackendrick)



# RESEARCH

## Theatre Practitioner Work

Part of your work at A level will be based around your study of, learning about, and working in the style of a range of theatre practitioners. Applying their styles, theories and techniques to your own practical work.

The **key practitioners** we will be looking at studying and focusing on in detail through the course are:

- Constantin Stanislavski
- Bertolt Brecht
- Antonin Artaud
- Steven Berkoff.

In addition, it will be extremely useful for you to be familiar with the work of these theatre practitioners and companies:

- Jerzy Grotowski
- Augusto Boal
- Complicite
- Kneehigh
- Joan Littlewood
- Punchdrunk.

Above is a list of different practitioners. It is important that you know who they are, how they work (ed) and the ways that their style of theatre might be influential on you. (For example, Stanislavski wanted his actors to draw on their own life experiences to make their acting more believable and truthful). The first four key practitioners we will focus on quite a lot in class but the others are also important and useful for you to know about and be aware of.

## Theatre Practitioner Research Task

Choose one of the key practitioners **and** one of the additional practitioners.

1. Define what the term theatre practitioner means.
2. Describe and define what sort of work your two practitioners did (or do), when and where they were / are working, their styles and approaches.
3. Create a 10 minute presentation on each of the practitioners you are focusing on which explains who they are, the sort of work they do or did, their approaches and theories about theatre and performance, and why they are significant or important.



# COMPLETE

## 1. Reading Work

Having read the four key scripts (Equus, Hedda Gabler, Our Country's Good & Metamorphosis), write out a brief plot synopsis in your own words for each of these four plays. Try to include main features of the plot, key moments, characters, etc, as well as the style and structure of the play. And what you imagine the stage or performance space to look like and why.

Reading as many different and varied playscripts as you can, even ones other than on this list will be good for your knowledge and experience.

These lists might be a good starting point:

<https://www.timeout.com/newyork/theater/best-plays-of-all-time>

<https://markham.bibliocommons.com/list/share/204842963/258800437> (The National Theatres list of the most important plays of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century)

<https://actinginlondon.co.uk/most-important-plays-every-actor-should-read/#>

## 2. Watching Performance Work

Try to see as much “live” theatre as possible - this can include video recordings of live performances.

Start your Live Theatre Journal of performances that you have seen (refer to the “Watch” section of this document for details of what should be included).

## 3. Practitioner Research Work

Complete the theatre practitioner task detailed on the Research section. Choose two theatre practitioners to look at, one of the key ones and one from the other list.

You will need to prepare a presentation on your practitioners and their ideas and prepare a practical session you could lead with the class exploring their ideas!



## APPENDICES / RESOURCES

Edexcel A level Drama and Theatre Student Book

**Publisher:** Pearson

**Author:** John Davey, Phil Cleaves, John Johnson

**ISBN:** 9781292150628

