

Welcome to Drama

We hope you will enjoy meeting staff and students and today and take away a clear picture about the course and the ways we work.

What's so good about studying Drama here?

We asked past students this question and they said:

- Lessons are active and fun, I really look forward to coming
- Teachers are really knowledgeable and help you reach high standards
- It's friendly here, everyone counts
- You feel supported -teachers give up time to help you after lessons
- The studio facilities are great and the technician helps you with some really professional lighting and sound effects
- There's is a sense of belonging – like a family atmosphere. You get to know other students in your class fast, as well students from the year above
- Lots of trips to see really inspirational shows
- The written work gets easier because the teachers show you how to make the jump from GCSE

What are lessons like?

We hope to give you a 'taster' of a typical lesson today. Most lessons involve the following:

Acting *Directing* *Analysing* *Reading*
Performing *Researching* *Discussing*
Writing *Watching DVDs* *Presenting Power-Points*
Evaluating yourself and others

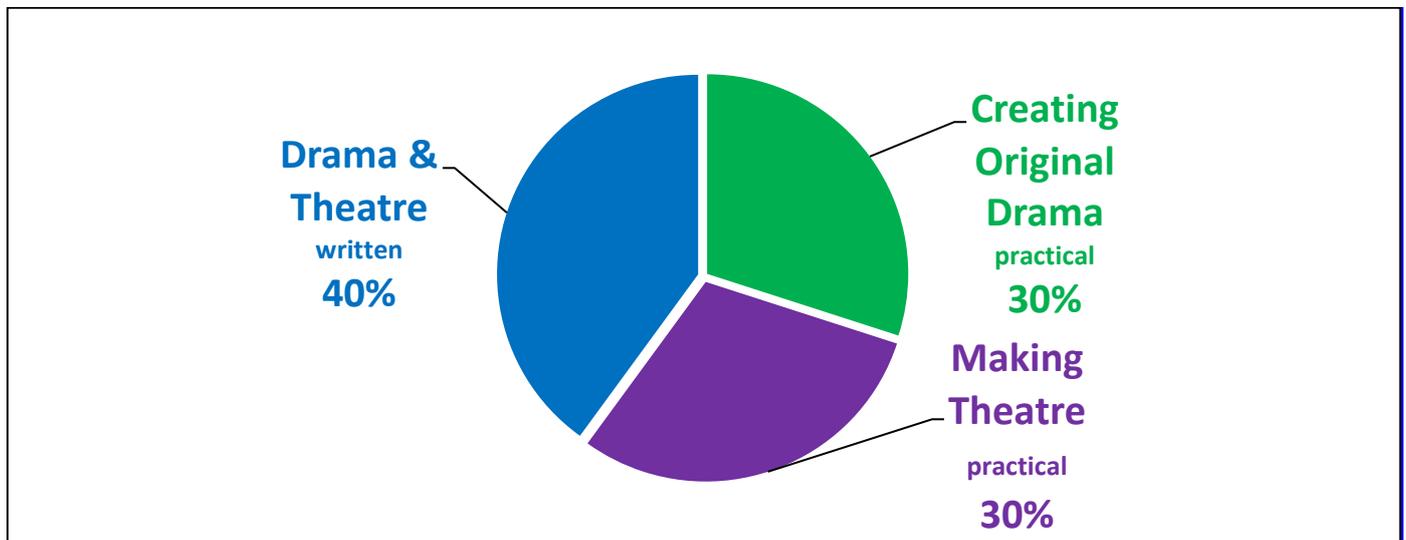
Group work is central to the way we work. It is a very enjoyable way of learning in collaboration with others but carries with it commitment and responsibilities to others, often in the way of rehearsals beyond the college day.

Written and Practical work is integrated. The qualification is intended to prepare you for progression to University in Drama or any other field so the literacy part is important and we will help you to improve your analytical and written skills.

Theatre Trips are also key to your learning. These are compulsory for the written exam but are also a direct way of absorbing the language of contemporary theatre practice. Our students particularly enjoy the visits although most involve late returns to college.

There are **THREE** units:

- 1: **Drama & Theatre** written exam (40%)
- 2: **Creating Original Drama** practical Exam (30%)
- 3: **Making Theatre** practical coursework (30%)



Unit 1: Drama & Theatre (40%) 3 hour Written Exam

What's assessed?

- Knowledge and understanding of drama and theatre
- Study of two set plays, one chosen from List A, one chosen from List B
- Analysis and evaluation of the work of live theatre makers

How?

- Written exam: 3 hours
- 'Open book' – unmarked copies of the set plays to refer to in the exam
- 80 marks, 40% of the A-level

Section A: one question (from a choice of two on **a classical set play** (25 marks)

Section B: Three compulsory questions (Acting, Directing & Designing) on an extract from **a modern set play** (25 marks)

Section C: one question (from four) on a selected **Live Theatre production** (30 marks)

Unit 2: Creating Original Drama (30%) Practical & Written

What's assessed?

- Process of creating devised drama
- Performance of devised drama (students may contribute as performer, designer or director)
- Devised piece must be influenced by the work and methodologies of one prescribed practitioner

How?

- Working notebook (40 marks)
- Devised performance (20 marks)
- 60 marks in total 30% of A-level
- Marked by the Teacher and moderated by AQA.

Unit 3: Making Theatre (30%) Practical & Written

What's assessed?

- Practical exploration and interpretation of three extracts (Extract 1, 2 and 3) from different plays
- Methods of a prescribed practitioner must be applied to Extract 3
- Extract 3 is to be performed as a final assessed piece
- Students contribute as performer, designer or director
- A reflective report which analyses and evaluates the theatrical interpretation of all three extracts

How?

- Examined by the AQA.
- Performance of Extract 3 (40 marks) and a Reflective report (20 marks)
- The three plays chosen must each have been professionally commissioned or professionally produced, be different plays from those set plays studied by the student for Component 1 and not be similar to each other in terms of their social, cultural and historical context.

The Set Plays

Pre-twentieth Century:

Antigone by Sophocles – Greek Tragedy

(ISBN 978-0-413-77604-4 - Methuen Student edition)

Modern:

Our Country's Good by Timberlake Wertenbaker – Historicisation

(ISBN 978-0-413-692306 - Methuen Student edition)

Please note you will need to buy these copies over the summer so you have them to work with and make notes in at the very start of the course. It is important that you buy the particular student editions above.

The logo for 'aspire' is displayed in a lowercase, sans-serif font. Each letter is a different color: 'a' is blue, 's' is green, 'p' is yellow, 'i' is orange, 'r' is red, and 'e' is purple.

We want you to do your very best with us and reach your goals as well as realise potential far beyond what you may have seen yourself as capable of before. For this reason we will set and review targets frequently for written and practical work. We will also suggest extra avenues to explore that will increase your success in Drama, as well as your chances of progressing to University and Drama School.

TASTER ACTIVITY

The way you will be working today is a 'taste' of the active way we explore texts here at SFC Solihull. You will **analyse** and **discuss**, **act** and **direct** others, giving and receiving **feedback**. All this is with the aim of raising your understanding and skills.

The script extract you will be working on is taken from **Charlotte Keatley's 'My Mother Said I Never Should'**, a late twentieth century play that examines the relationships between mothers and daughters and the ways that our parents can influence the way we cope in the world, passing on 'emotional inheritance'. There are four female roles in the play who are linked together as mothers, daughters and grans (see the script for full details).

The play has a strange jumbled chronology that spans 1920s-1980s in a seemingly random order that enables comparison to be made between the eras and overall following the connected lives of four generations of women from the same family. Some scenes take place in a strange mystical place that Keatley calls '**The Wasteground**' and defines as 'a place where only girls can go'. It is a place that transcends time and where the four characters, regardless of the eras they belong to, meet as 5-7 year olds and can play together. The play examines what it is to be a woman in the 20th (and 21st) Century with the changing opportunities, expectations and pressures.

You are going to experiment with one of the wasteground scenes from the play, in much the same way we would in creating an effective scene for the **Component 3: 'Making Theatre' extracts exam**. We will focus, as we may do in an early rehearsal on getting the some key aspects of the scene just right. The exam board requires aims and methods to be consciously linked – very often they demand that you state your personal **Dramatic Intentions** and use these when weighing up your success and awarding you marks and a grade.

For your work today, I would like you all to focus on the following Dramatic Intentions:-

- Capture the changing dynamics between the characters and their fluctuating '**dramatic status**' in the scene.
- Emphasise significant points to convey the playwright's message and themes.
- Create moments of **comedy** to amuse the audience.

SUMMER HOLIDAY TASK

We would like you to translate your ideas into written form, as you might in addressing a question in the written paper, to show us how well you can explain and justify your practical decisions as an actor performing the extract. Your essay is to be 1- 1½ sides of A4 and handed in when you start in September.

*As an actor, explain how you would perform **one** of the roles in the scene at specific moments* in order to communicate your interpretation of the role and to create your desired audience response(s).*

(* You should use quotes from the script to enable you to pinpoint moments)

Some useful reminders:

Stage Positions

USR	USC	USL
CSR	CS	CSL
DSR	DSC	DSL
Audience		

Remember that 'stage left' and 'stage right' is the actor's left and right facing the audience.

<i>Some useful specialist terms</i>		
<i>VOCAL</i>	<i>PHYSICAL</i>	<i>Subtext</i>
<i>Pace</i>	<i>Gesture</i>	<i>Motivation/Objective</i>
<i>Pause</i>	<i>Posture / Stance</i>	<i>Given Circumstances</i>
<i>Pause</i>	<i>Movement/Gait</i>	<i>Tempo</i>
<i>Pitch</i>	<i>Facial expression</i>	<i>Mood</i>
<i>Power</i>	<i>Eye contact</i>	<i>Downstage (DS)</i>
<i>Pressure</i>	<i>Physical contact</i>	<i>Upstage (US)</i>
<i>Tone</i>	<i>Proximity</i>	<i>Centre stage (CS)</i>
<i>Accent</i>	<i>Comic business</i>	<i>.....Stage Right (...SR)</i>
<i>Timing</i>	<i>Costume</i>	<i>.....Stage Left (...SL)</i>
<i>Dialogue</i>		