

Understanding

Drama:

Written Exam

Section A

Name:

Overview of the exam

- ✓ **1 hour 45 minutes exam**
- ✓ Worth 40% of your overall GCSE
- ✓ **Section A:** multiple choice question (4 marks) – **5 minutes**
- ✓ **Section B:** four questions on a given extract from 'Blood Brothers' (44 marks)

4 marks- **5 minutes**

8marks- **10 minutes**

12 marks- **15 minutes**

20 marks- **25 minutes**

Total time on Section B: 55 minutes.

- ✓ Section C: one question (from a choice) on a live theatre production you have seen (32 marks)- **40 minutes**
- ✓ **5 minutes reading and checking time.**

Section A

This section of the paper will test your knowledge, understanding and appropriate use of the theatre terminology relating to:

- Stage positioning
- Staging configuration
- Theatre roles and responsibilities

Stage positioning

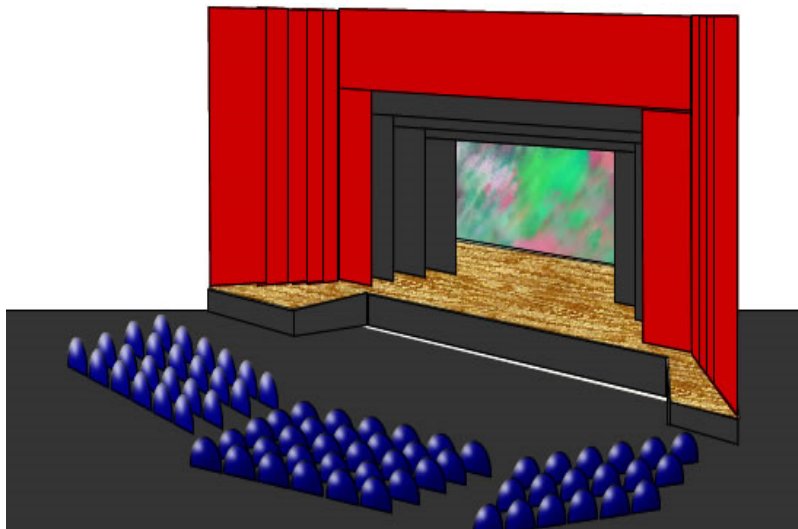
USR - Upstage Right	USC - Upstage Centre	USL - Upstage Left
CR- Centre Right	CS - Centre Stage	CL - Centre Left
DSR - Downstage Right	DSC - Downstage Centre	DSL - Downstage Left
Audience	Audience	Audience

Staging Configuration

You need to know the following staging configurations:

- ✓ Proscenium/end on
- ✓ Thrust
- ✓ Traverse
- ✓ In the Round
- ✓ Promenade

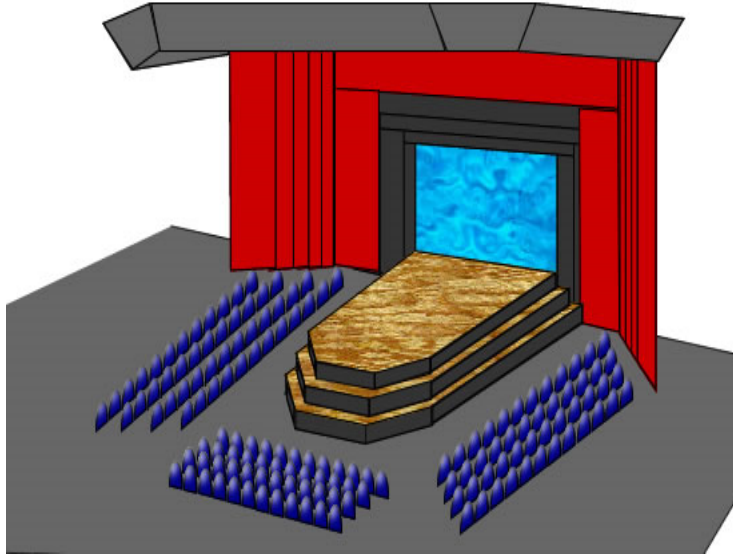
Proscenium stage/ end on stage



What you need to know:

- ✓ A stage where the audience sits on one side only is called a **proscenium** stage (you might know this as end-on staging).
- ✓ The audience faces one side of the stage directly, and normally sits at a lower height.
- ✓ It is easier for an actor to block out the audience and act naturalistically.
- ✓ In larger theatres, the audience can feel separated from the action.

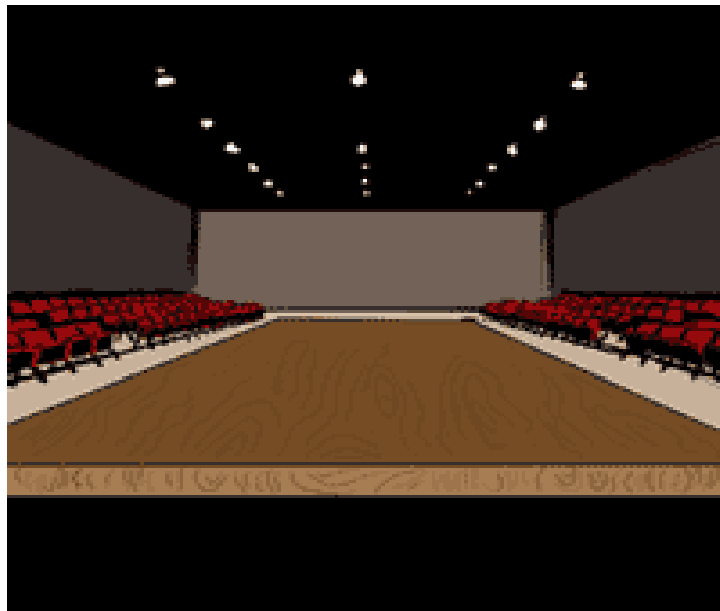
Thrust stage



What you need to know:

- ✓ A stage where the audience sits on three sides is a thrust stage.
- ✓ A thrust stage can create more intimacy between the performers and the audience than end on, while still having the use of the backstage area.

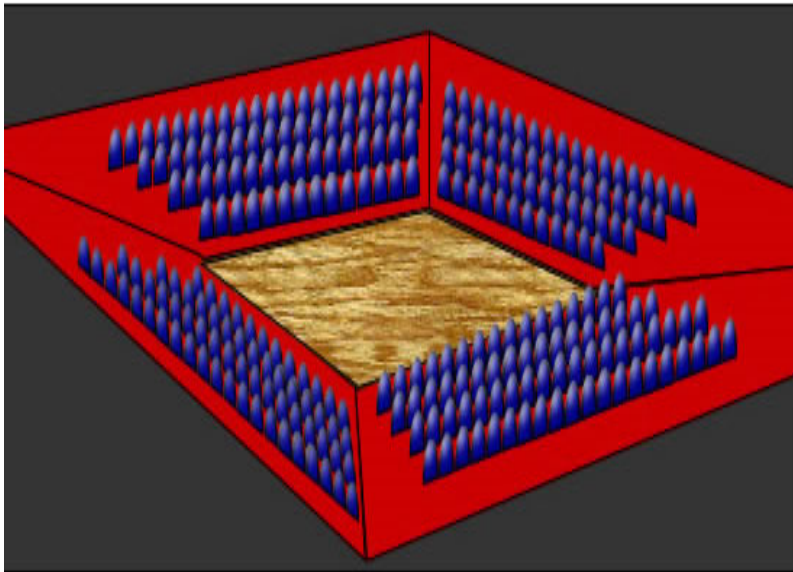
Traverse stage



What you need to know:

- ✓ A stage where the audience sits on two sides is called a **traverse** stage.
- ✓ Again, this type of stage is good for creating an intimate atmosphere.
- ✓ Actors should not keep their back to the same section of the audience for too long.
- ✓ The two ends of the stage are commanding positions where the actors can face the whole audience.

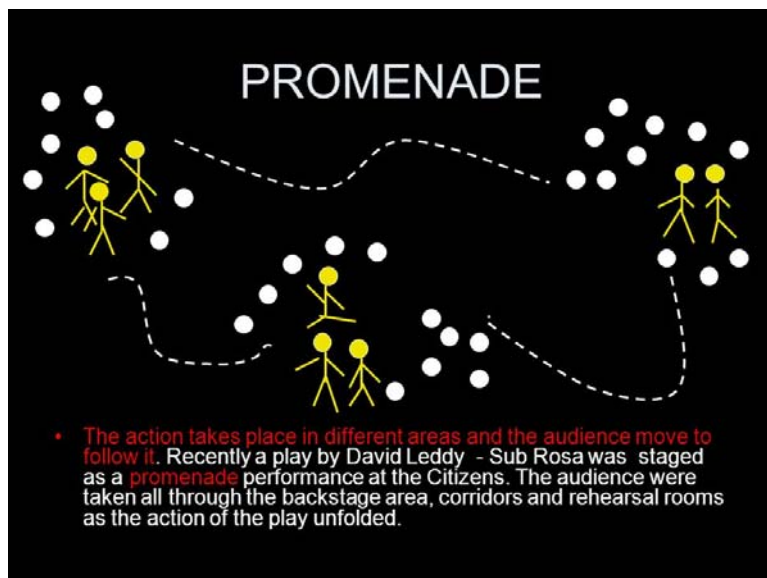
In-the-round stage



What you need to know:

- ✓ An **in-the-round** stage is positioned at the centre of the audience - ie there is audience around the whole stage.
- ✓ This type of stage creates quite an intimate atmosphere, and is good for drama that needs audience involvement.

Promenade stage



What you need to know:

- ✓ In **promenade theatre** there is no formal stage, both the audience and the actors are placed in the same space.

The roles and responsibilities of theatre makers

You must learn the following:

Theatre Maker	Role and responsibilities
<i>Playwright</i>	This is the name given to the person who writes the play.
<i>Performer</i>	A performer is an actor or entertainer who realises a role or performance in front of an audience.
<i>Understudy</i>	An actor who studies another's role so that they can take over when needed.
<i>Lighting designer</i>	The lighting designer is responsible for designing the lighting states and, if required, special lighting effects for a performance. The final design will result in a lighting plot which is a list of the lighting states and their cues.
<i>Sound designer</i>	The sound designer is responsible for designing the sound required for a performance. This may include underscoring, intro and outro music as well as specific effects. The final design will result in a sound plot which is a list of the sounds required and their cues.
<i>Set designer</i>	The set designer is responsible for the design of the set for a performance. They will work closely with the director and other designers so that there is unity between all the designs and the needs of the performance.
<i>Costume designer</i>	The person who designs the costumes for a performance. The costume department of a theatre is often called the wardrobe.

<i>Puppet designer</i>	The person who designs the puppets for a performance.
<i>Technician</i>	A person who works backstage either setting up technical equipment such as microphones or rigging lights before a production or operating technical equipment during a performance.
<i>Director</i>	A director is in charge of the artistic elements of a production. A director will often have the initial creative idea ('concept') for a production, will work with the actors in rehearsal, and will collaborate with designers and the technical team to realise this idea in performance.
<i>Stage manager</i>	The Stage Manager is in charge of all aspects of backstage, including the backstage crew. They will oversee everything that happens backstage before, during and after a performance. During the rehearsal period, the Stage Manager and their team will make sure that all props are found or made, scene changes are rehearsed and smooth, and all other aspects of backstage are prepared. They are also in charge of the rehearsal schedule.
<i>Theatre manager</i>	This is the person who is responsible for and manages the front-of-house team who deal with the audience during the production (for example, the

Drama Dictionary

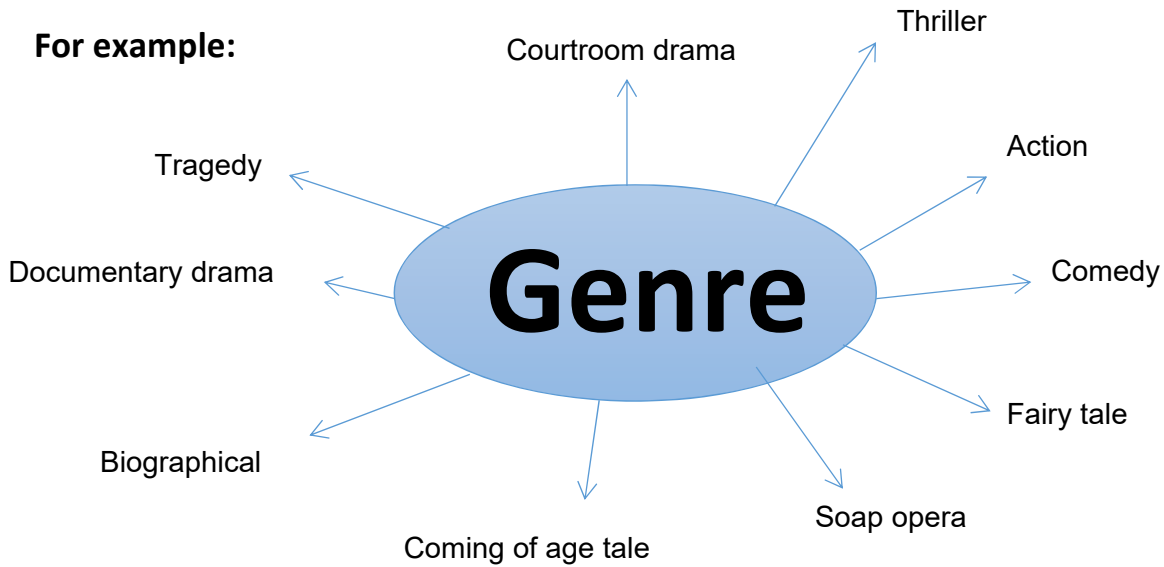
- ✓ **Accent** – the way a person speaks that tells you where they are from, e.g. Geordie, Cockney, Scottish, etc.
- ✓ **Articulate** – to speak clearly so every letter/word can be heard
- ✓ **Collaboration** – when artists work together; a performance is an artistic collaboration because it relies on the work of a team of people.
- ✓ **Comic relief** – a break in the tension of a tragedy provided by a comic character, a comic episode, or even a comic line
- ✓ **Contrast** – dynamic use of opposites, such as movement/stillness, sound/silence, and light/darkness.
- ✓ **Cue** – a signal that prompts action from an actor or technician
- ✓ **Dialogue** – the spoken language in a performance between two or more people
- ✓ **Diction** – selection and pronunciation of words; clarity of speech.
- ✓ **Dramatic irony** – the audience know something important but the characters in the performance are not aware of it
- ✓ **Empathy** – understanding someone's feelings
- ✓ **Evaluation** – discussing how effective/successful or significant something was
- ✓ **Freeze-Frame**: A still image or 'tableau' of a scene which shows key moment, heightened awareness of character and proxemics.
- ✓ **Genre** – identifiable characteristics, e.g. comedy, tragedy, thriller
- ✓ **Heighten** – to increase/strengthen
- ✓ **Improvisation** – the spontaneous use of movement and speech to create a character or object in a particular situation; acting done without a script
- ✓ **Inflection** – raising or lowering the tone or pitch of the voice, e.g. downwards inflection at the ends of sentences
- ✓ **Irony** – an implied discrepancy between what is said and what is meant
- ✓ **Interaction** – the action or relationship among two or more characters.
- ✓ **Interpretation** – an explanation of the meaning of another's artistic or creative work; to bring out the meaning, or one's understanding of it
- ✓ **Mannerism** – a peculiarity of speech or behaviour
- ✓ **Melodrama** – a style of play, which originated in the 19th century, relying heavily on sensationalism and sentimentality. Melodramas tend to feature action more than motivation, stock characters, and a strict view of morality in which good triumphs over evil.
- ✓ **Mime** – acting without words.
- ✓ **Monologue** – a lengthy speech performed by an actor, revealing feelings or commenting on events

- ✓ **Montage** –used in TV and films and by Brecht; the putting together of short sections or scenes that are dissimilar
- ✓ **Mood** – the tone or feeling of the play, often engendered by the music, setting, or lighting.
- ✓ **Motivation** – the reason or reasons for a character’s behaviour; an incentive or inducement for further action for a character.
- ✓ **Narrating** – telling a story, sometimes through the drama, sometimes through a specified narrator who addresses the audience.
- ✓ **Naturalistic** – shows characters behaving in natural ways (how you would expect)
- ✓ **Pace** – is the speed at which you speak
- ✓ **Pause** – refers to short breaks and stops in your speech to create effects
- ✓ **Physical theatre** – using the body to represent inanimate objects, e.g. kettle, toaster etc.
- ✓ **Pitch** – is the high or low level of the voice
- ✓ **Protagonist** – the main character or hero in a play or other literary work.
- ✓ **Proxemics** – showing the relationship between people through the physical distance
- ✓ **Rapport** – the relationship of a group; how well they communicate and work together
- ✓ **Satire** – a play in which sarcasm, irony, and ridicule are used to expose or attack folly or pretension in society.
- ✓ **Scenario** – an outline of a hypothesized or projected chain of events or plot for a dramatic or literary work.
- ✓ **Scene** – a small section or portion of a play.
- ✓ **Set** – the physical surroundings, visible to the audience, in which the action of the play takes place.
- ✓ **Setting** – when and where the action of a play takes place.
- ✓ **Situation** – a combination of circumstances at a given moment.
- ✓ **Soliloquy** –when an actor speaks directly to an audience as if revealing thoughts; usually alone on stage/isolated from other characters
- ✓ **Spectator** – a person who is watching; member of an audience
- ✓ **Spotlight** –light focused on a single place on the stage
- ✓ **Stereotyping** – a shallow idea about a person or place, e.g. boys liking football and girls liking shopping
- ✓ **Stimulus/stimuli** – something you gain ideas from
- ✓ **Stylised** –does not attempt to look ‘real’
- ✓ **Symbolic** – something represents something else, e.g. white =innocence, purity
- ✓ **Themes** – a generalised topic, e.g. heroes, body image, domestic abuse
- ✓ **Tone** – is the quality of the sound of your voice.

Genre

Genre reflects the content of your drama...

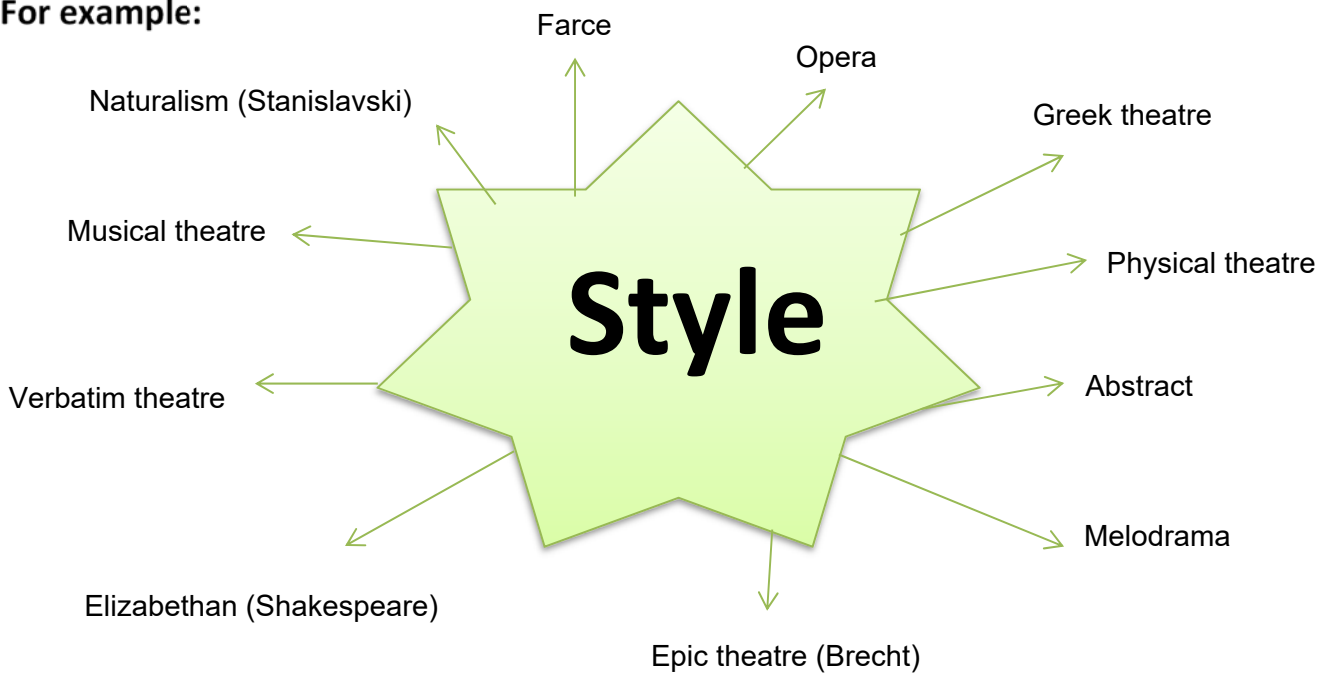
For example:



Style

Style reflects the way your drama will look on stage...

For example:



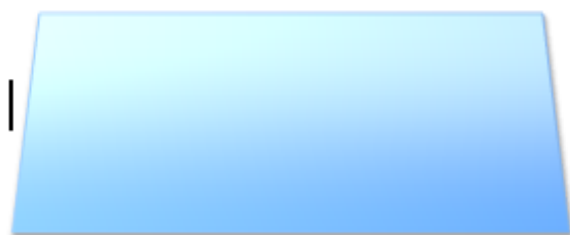
Section A: Revision

Activities

Draw a stick man to show where you think the stage direction is!
E.g.: CS = Centre Stage

Stage Directions

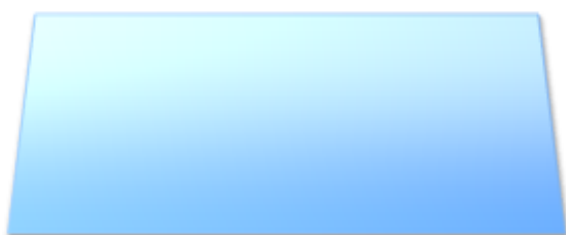
CS



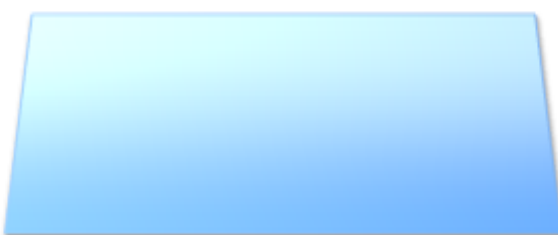
US



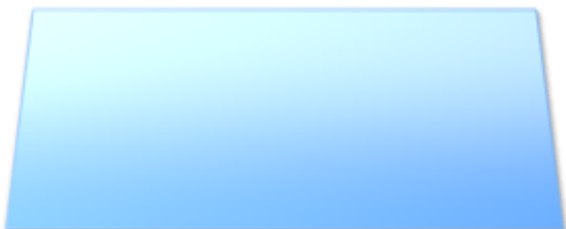
DSR



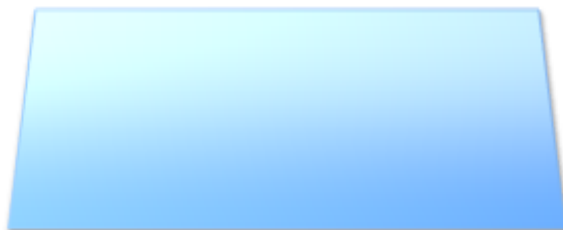
SL



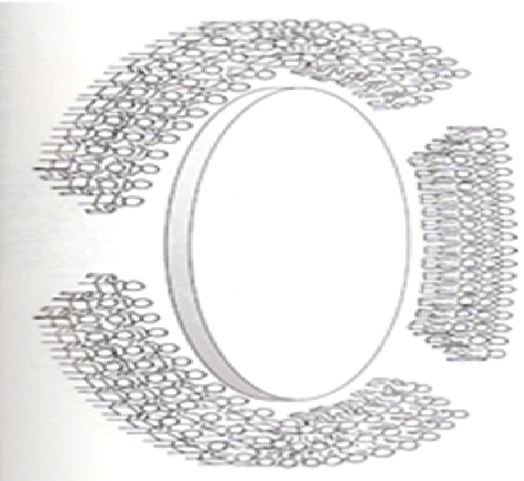
SR



USL



Types of Staging



1. _____

Name the different types of staging...

Is it

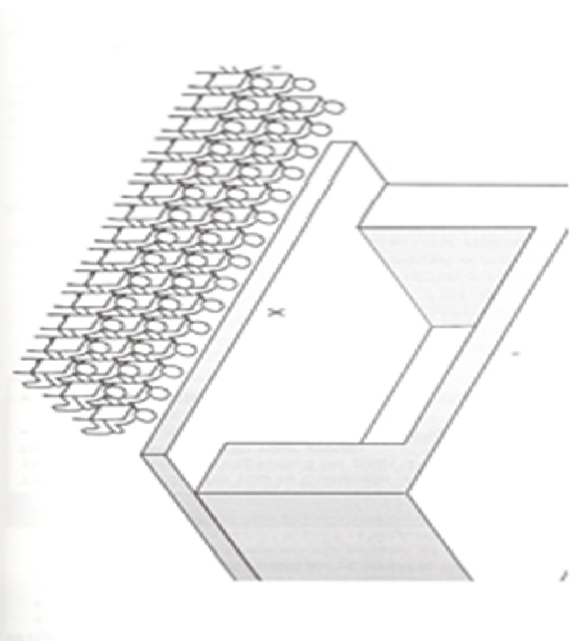
Traverse?

In-the-round?

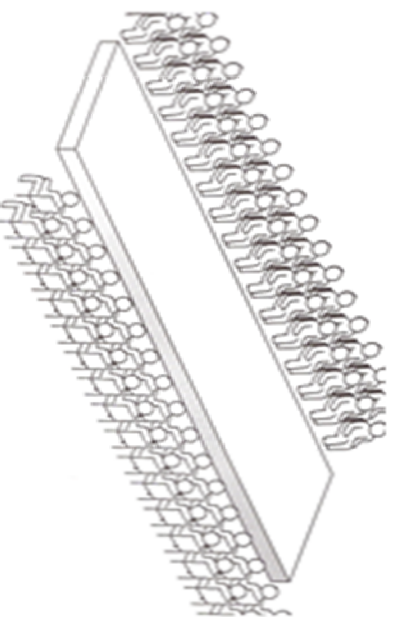
A Proscenium

Arch?

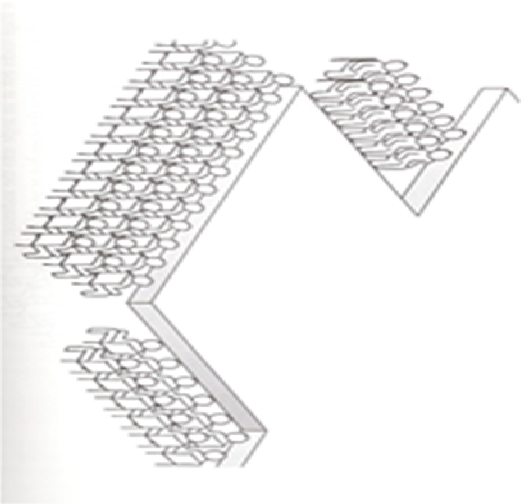
Thrust?



2. _____



3. _____



4. _____

Challenge

Challenge: Draw and name each stage type

Challenge +: Identify where the audience sit for each stage type

Challenge ++: Label where each stage direction would be e.g. CS, USL, USR etc.

1. _____



2. _____



3. _____

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4. _____

A large, empty rectangular box with a thin orange border, occupying the lower half of the page. It is intended for a student to draw or write a response to question 4.

5. _____



Match the theatre maker role to their responsibility!

This is the person who is responsible for and manages the front-of-house team.

This is the name given to the person who takes on a role in the performance.

This person is responsible for designing the sound required for a performance. This may include underscoring, intro and outro music as well as special effects. The final design will result in a sound plot, which is a list of sounds required and their cues.

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This person designs the puppets for a performance.

An actor who studies another's role so that they can take over when needed.

Playwright
Performer
Understudy
Lighting Designer
Sound Designer
Set Designer
Costume Designer
Puppet Designer
Technician
Director
Stage Manager
Theatre Manager