

You must include as part of your supporting evidence a brief statement on the context of your performance. This must include information about the role (e.g. an old man); time (e.g. present day, evening); place (e.g. kitchen in family home); situation (e.g. making a cup of tea); and action (e.g. old man can't remember where he put the teabags).

You must include an annotated script as part of your evidence. The annotated script is to include character motivation (e.g. old man wants to show he can cope with living alone); stage directions (e.g. old man looks for teabags in the following places in the following order: pantry, plate cupboard, pot cupboard, fridge); and drama techniques used (e.g. old man has slow steps and holds on to bench top to show he is frail). For more information about annotating scripts, see Chapter 5.

Creating a character

Creating a character at this level involves you, the actor, going through a number of processes so that you can perform in an effective way. You want the audience to be engaged in your performance – the following techniques are essential for success.

Drama techniques

Movement

- Controlling movement and stillness.
- Travelling through space.
- Timing – speed and when you move.
- Direction – where you are going.
- Ensemble awareness – moving with others in a unified, contrasting or complementary way.
- Audience awareness.
- Energy – the way you move.
- Mirroring, shadowing and use of repetition.

Voice

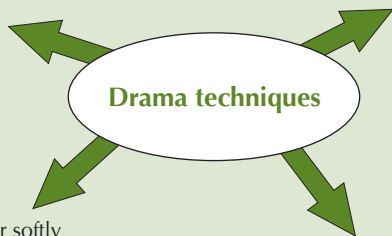
- Volume – how loudly or softly the words are spoken.
- Tone – shows feeling or emotion in voice.
- Pace – how fast, slow words are spoken.
- Pitch – the highness or lowness of a sound.
- Projection – so audience can hear voice.
- Pausing and silence – stopping sound and for how long.
- Breathing – to show control.
- Accent – particular to country or region or culture.
- Articulation – speaking clearly.
- Listening – interacting and responding to others.
- Cueing – picking up signals of when to speak.
- Inflection – rise and fall of voice.
- Emphasis – putting stress on some words.

Body

- Body language – use of whole body.
- Posture – how you hold yourself.
- Facial expression – to communicate message, intention or role.
- Eye contact – to show relationships and mood between actors and audience.
- Body awareness – to select appropriate use of body.
- Gesture – movement of certain part of body to indicate something.
- Positioning – facing audience, other actors.

Space

- Levels.
- Audience awareness.
- General.
- Personal.
- Groupings.
- Positioning.
- Interaction.
- Focus.
- Proximity to other actors.
- Using exits and entrances.





The character kneeling stage right in the group of three characters is physically threatening the sitting (central) boy. The way that the character is towering over the sitting boy indicates that character is in control and his facial expressions show that he is really angry. The other main character is bent over and looks as though he is egging on the kneeling character to hit the sitting character. The facial expression of the standing character shows that the situation is urgent and he probably wants to hurry up and 'get out of there'.

Activity 4B: Using levels

Ans p. 188

Look at the following photo of students rehearsing for a Shakespeare play.



Write down your responses in your journal.

1. What can you read from the different levels used?
2. Which character has more status?

3.



Look at the photo and create an external narration to support the action, or choose one of the characters to use audience address or spoken thoughts.

Chorus

When the term *chorus* is mentioned, the association often has to do with singing and dance. **Dramatic chorus** needn't include singing or dancing. It is a group, or even a pair, who move and/or speak at the same time. It may be literal (e.g., a crowd watching a football match who all stand and cheer at the same time), or it may be abstract (e.g., the voices in a character's head move around her, chanting and taunting).

Ancient Greeks used the chorus in all their plays. The chorus reflected on what was happening in the play, informing the audience about things that would happen and often giving advice to the actors.

How do I use chorus?

Chorus is often used to punch home a point.

Examples

Sally is the same size as most of her friends, even a bit smaller, but she has a distorted image of herself, seeing herself as fat.

The chorus represents the voices in Sally's head. She is standing looking in the mirror. The chorus becomes her image, exaggerating what she sees physically and repeating the word "Fat" quietly at first, and then louder and louder.



Devising the drama

NCEA Level 1 Drama material covered in this chapter includes material for Achievement Standard 90997 (Drama 1.2) 'Devise and and perform a drama', through:

- devising a drama.

Now that you are familiar with some of the elements and conventions available to you, you can begin the process of devising, structuring and ultimately performing your drama. Your teacher may give you an idea to begin the process. It could be a story, a photo, an image, a piece of written text, a poem or newspaper article, a piece of a script, a song or piece of music.

In order to create an exciting piece of theatre, it is a good idea to choose a topic that is interesting and that can be researched. It is a good idea to avoid personal stories, as these may not allow for depth and can be very self-indulgent.

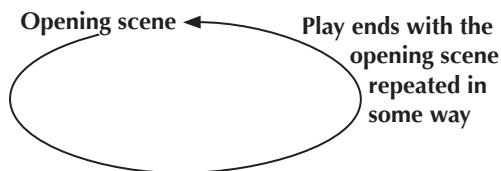
Keep notes to use as supporting evidence as you explore the idea to show what elements and conventions you are using, and why.

You need to structure your piece of drama. A simple structure would have a beginning, middle and an end, with a climax or high point in the drama. Using some of the conventions of the previous chapters, you can play around with time and so structure your play in a linear or cyclical fashion.

Linear play structure

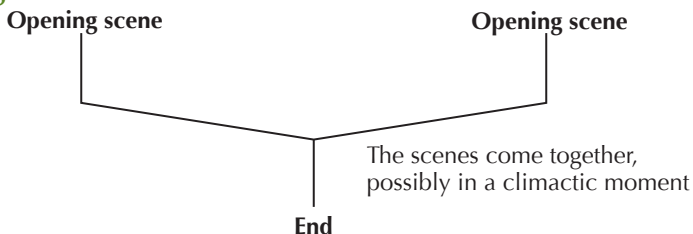


Cyclical play structure



Different points of view can be shown using a split stage.

Split stage



Drama/theatre forms

NCEA Level 1 Drama material covered in this chapter relates to Achievement Standard 90998 (Drama 1.3) 'Demonstrate understanding of features of a drama/theatre form' by introducing:

- drama/theatre forms
- features of drama/theatre forms

Drama/theatre forms

The following diagram shows *some* of the drama/theatre forms you could study.



Features of the form

In the examination, you will need to show understanding and knowledge about the features of a drama/theatre form. These features are the things that make it clear what type or style of drama your chosen form is. You need to be able to give descriptions of the features and provide examples. These could include but are not limited to:

Feature	Example
Performance space.	Medieval use of pageant wagons.
Acting styles.	The extravagant gestures on Commedia dell'arte.
Themes or ideas.	The Elizabethan wheel of fortune.

- The innocent and long-suffering **heroine**.
- The comic servant / lovable rogue.



- The aged parent.



- The romantic gypsy.



Melodrama plots

Storylines were very predictable and good always triumphed over evil. There were sudden changes in the fortunes of the characters. The hero often left the heroine for some reason and they got into trouble, usually involving a villain. Humour came from the actions and the plot. There was also a moral to the story. A moral relates to the principles of right and wrong during this period.

Clown types

The whiteface clown



The whiteface clown is probably the clown that most people think of when they hear the word ‘clown’. Associated with the **circus**, the whiteface clown is the most ‘intelligent’ of the clowns, and is typically at the top of the pecking order. The whiteface clown will often be the ringleader, who will order around the other clowns – his ‘clownishness’ is often revealed by his own ineptness. The whiteface clown isn’t, however, constrained by this – like any other clown, he can be any personality (slow, fast, quick-witted, dull, quickly angered, coming to a slow burn, etc.) that is funny.

Whiteface clowns use “clown white” make-up to cover their entire face and neck, with none of the underlying flesh colour showing. Features are then usually painted on in either red or black.

Whiteface clowns are traditionally costumed far more extravagantly than other clown types. They often wear the ruffled collar and pointed hat which typify the average person’s idea of a “clown suit”.

The auguste clown



The auguste clown is the typical clown shown in storybooks and circus posters. Features are usually exaggerated and the mouth is thickly accented with white. Clothes are too large or small and often mismatched.

They are in a class of their own – the least intelligent of the clowns but also perhaps the most beloved. With the most exaggerated make-up and movements, this is the zaniest of the clowns. The augustes are the clowns who get pies in the face, are squirted with water, knocked down on their backside, sit in wet paint, or have their pants ripped off.

The base colour for the auguste’s make-up is red or flesh tone. The eyes and the mouth are encircled in white and the features are highlighted, again traditionally, in red and black.

The auguste is usually costumed in baggy plaids accented with colourful polka dots or loud stripes with wide-collared shirts, long neckties, wild wigs and oversized noses and shoes.

The character clown

There is a lot of variation within this type. He may be a sad-faced hobo or a happy offbeat character with a crazy haircut and a big nose.

History of New Zealand theatre

Time	Characteristics
Mid 19 th to early 20 th century	Overseas companies, big melodramas, epic extravaganzas. Drama incorporated aspects of NZ landscape like the Pink and White Terraces and geothermal geysers; introduced Māori characters as stereotypes: warriors, beautiful maidens.
1920s and 1930s	Emergence of New Zealand Theatre. World War I reconnected Pākehā New Zealand with the “mother country” – rekindled interest in English literature and theatre. British plays were imported – New Zealand playwrights looked to British examples to model their writing on. Themes: sense of struggle in a land far from home. Māori did not feature in these plays – post-colonial society emerging.
1940s and 1950s	World War II brought change. New Zealand writers see themselves as different from British writers. Migration to cities meant Māori were more visible in society – playwrights started to explore this in plays, e.g. <i>The Pohutakawa Tree</i> .
1960s	Formation of Māori Trust. Theatre drew on Māori subject matter.
1970s	Increasing protest in society about social conditions for Māori. Māori writers bring this protest to stage.
1980s	A significant number of Māori involved in theatre. Some Pākehā began exploring cross-cultural relationships. Other writers, mostly Māori, described what it was like to live in New Zealand between two cultures.
1990s	Fall in the number of plays in the country coinciding with government cut-backs in arts funding. TakiRua emerges.
2000	Funding increases – new plays and playwrights emerging.

Now that you have a chart to show your audience, you need to discuss some of the points from the chart to show your understanding. As in the earlier example, choose an aspect from the chart e.g. ‘World War II brought about change’. You could highlight the point that New Zealand writers saw themselves as different from English writers. Māori were more visible in society than they had been (you could discuss the reasons for that, too) and playwrights started to explore this phenomenon. Now you could introduce *The Pohutakawa Tree* as a play exploring some of those issues.

Presentation Strategy 2

Another way to show your understanding of a significant play is to discuss the *ideas and concerns* evident in the play. You could present these as a series of bullet points, then discuss each point with your audience. You could write your bullet points on the whiteboard or use a data projector or computer, depending on the facilities available to you. It is probably more useful to prepare a handout so that your audience can read something at their own pace as well as listen to you.

Example

If your character is excited, they may jump up and down and laugh. If sad, they may hunch over and turn away from others. They may cry. Crying doesn't involve saying "Boo, hoo" – you can use your breath to make the audience believe your misery by breathing rapidly and using your chest instead of your stomach, wiping your eyes or nose, whilst keeping your head down.

If you haven't experienced the same emotions as your character, think about an emotion that may be similar – someone who is frightened, for example, can hold their body in the same way as someone who is cold.

Creating a stereotype

A stereotype is a general representation of a type of person.

Example

A stereotype of an old person may be a character who moves slowly, is bent over, deaf, and speaks with a croaky voice.

It is easy to create a stereotype and it can assist you in finding the physicality and voice of the character you are developing. However, it is more of a challenge to create a character who is emotionally and physically real.

Example

Imagine Alice in the **Example** in hotseating.

'Put on her shoes' and bring her to life. Make her larger and 'over the top'. Explore her voice, her movement, her use of gesture and space.

Now give her emotions that are real. Make her into a real person.

A good way to create a stereotype is to work in pairs – the partners tell each other when they 'believe in' the character being presented.

Bus-stop

Bus-stop involves working in groups of four. You all meet as different characters.



Stage properties (props)

Props are the objects carried by the actor (known as *personal props*) or the objects added to a set (known as *stage props*).

Props are used to support action and to give the audience more information about a character. They fall into three categories:

- Realistic props – these look like the real thing. They are often expensive and difficult to find. If you are using realism, then all your props should be realistic.
- Stylised props – these represent the real thing. They are often used in school productions because they are cheaper and because they are sometimes safer (e.g. plastic replica guns, knives and swords). In school productions, stylised props are unfortunately often unintentionally humorous as well.
- Mimed props – these are the cheapest ones to use! There is also no danger that someone will pick them up and put them somewhere else. Both professional and amateur theatre use mimed props, and if done well, the use of mimed props allows the audience to believe the objects exist. If you are miming, you must be aware of the imagined weight and size of the prop you are using. You must also be aware of where the imaginary prop is at all times.

Example

If you put a 'baby' down on the ground and then walk on the same spot, the audience will see you step on the 'baby'.

Activity 21C: Using props



In the photo, the actors are miming props. Name the props.

If no answer is given to an **Activity**, it is because either the **Activity** is a *practical exercise* or because the *answers are student-specific*.

Activity 1A: Using volume (page 5)

You want to show how angry you are, so you would shout at them in a loud voice, speaking very fast and pausing to give emphasis – e.g. ‘How could you?!’ You could also use repetition to highlight your disbelief at what they had done.

This could also be done using a quiet voice, almost a whisper, showing that you are so shocked and hurt that you can barely speak. The audience would read your expressions and body language.

Activity 1B: Using pace (page 6)

The pace needed to make this scene effective would be *fast*. Caryl Churchill uses an overlapping technique in her writing, in which the character starts their line before the last speaker has finished theirs. It makes the scene realistic and can be powerful to watch. In this scene, the characters have so much to say that has been held back for so long, they are ‘about ready to burst’.

Activity 1C: Using pitch and inflection (page 7)

1. The child would speak at a very fast pace to show their excitement – they can’t get the words out quickly enough. They could also speak at a high pitch to show how young they are and the words could also be a little jumbled to show how when you are excited about something, it’s sometimes hard to understand what you are saying.

Activity 1F: Using breathing (page 9)

2.
 - a. Excited. You could say the line very fast without stopping to breathe.
 - b. Tired. You could give a long sigh or say the words very slowly, adding more sighs or a yawn in between or after the line.

Activity 2B: Using gestures (page 14)

1. The student could keep their head down low, shrug their shoulders and refuse to make eye contact. The teacher could begin the scene by trying to encourage the student to talk, the teacher could look directly at the student and open their hands, indicating that they are waiting for the student to talk to them. The teacher could try to get closer to them or sit with them. As the scene develops, the student could get more closed off, ignoring the teacher by keeping their head down and sitting facing away from them. They could avoid eye contact and refuse to co-operate. The student could fiddle with something or fidget to show their lack of interest.

This would make the teacher’s gestures more exaggerated as they keep being ignored. The student could end up making a rude gesture and leaving. The teacher could be left alone, looking up to heaven, arms open and palms facing up as if they have ‘given up’.

INDEX

- acceleration **107**
- accent **10**
- acrobatic/physical skills **108**
- acting style **95**
- action **33**
- articulation **7**
- articulation **10**
- audience interaction **108**
- auguste **103**

- body **3, 155**
- body awareness **17**
- body language **13, 17**
- breathing **9**

- canon **24**
- character. **103**
- character development **141**
- characteristics **94**
- characters **95**
- chase **108**
- circus **104**
- clown **103**
- commedia dell'arte **106**
- conventions **47**
- costume **94, 108, 170**
- costumes **94**
- cues **11**

- dance **66**
- describe **178**
- development **138**
- drama techniques **158**
- dramatic chorus **53**

- effectively **138**
- emphasis **11**
- escalation **107**
- eye contact **17**

- facial expression **17**
- fastforward **61**

- flashback **61**
- flashforward **61**
- freeze frames **20**
- gesture **94**

- gesture **17, 108**

- hero **84**
- heroine **85**
- hobo **103**
- hotseating **142**

- impact **31**
- improvisation **48**
- insightful **122**
- interaction with the audience **51**
- interpret **27**

- knockabout act **108**

- lighting **175**
- listening and cueing **11**

- make-up **108, 174**
- mask **94**
- masks **94**
- melodrama **83**
- mime **65**
- movement **3, 19, 156**
- movements **94**

- narrator **51**

- overall production concept **159, 165**

- pace **6**
- pausing **8**
- personality **108**
- pitch **7**
- place **33**
- playfulness **108**
- positioning **17**