

DRAMA



TERMINOLOGY



NAME: CLASS:

CONTENTS

- 1. OVERVIEW OF BOOKLET**
- 2. GENERAL TERMS**
- 3. FORM**
- 4. GENRE**
- 5. STRUCTURE**
- 6. STYLE**
- 7. CONVENTIONS**
- 8. CHARACTERISATION AND REHEARSAL TECHNIQUES**
- 9. VOICE**
- 10. MOVEMENT**
- 11. STAGING AND AREAS OF THE STAGE**
- 12. PRODUCTION AREAS (Acting, Directing, Set, Sound, Lighting, Costume, Hair/Make Up and Props)**

BOOKLET OVERVIEW



What is this Booklet?

This booklet provides you with a list of Drama terms, which are provided by the SQA for Higher Drama candidates.



What should I use the Booklet for?

You should use the booklet to help you learn and use Drama terminology in your work, especially in your exam essays. You will be expected to demonstrate an understanding of Drama Terminology through the use of your language in all written exercises.

GENERAL DRAMA TERMS

Below is a list of General Drama terms, which you should become familiar with and use to help you to describe and detail points in your essays:

GENERAL TERMS

TERM	WHAT IT MEANS
Acting Style	The style in which you are acting in, for instance; naturalistic, stylized etc.
Actor-audience relationship	The relationship created between the actor and the audience.
Atmosphere	The feeling and emotion that is created.
Blocking	The moves of the actors on stage.
Central character/complex character/improtant character/ main character/pivotal character	The most important character in the drama or a character key to the drama.
Minor character	A character who is less important to the plot and themes.
Characterisation	The investigation and portrayal of a character .
Character behaviour/ interaction/relationship	The way a character acts and responds to others.
Climax	The most dramatic point in the play.
Context: dramatic context/ social context / political context / cultural context	The world in which the play is happening in. What is happening in society and culture the characters are living in.
Design Concepts	Ideas for the design of the production; for instance, lighting, costume, set etc.
Dialogue	The spoken word between characters.
Drama Media	Projections, video footage, sound scapes etc.
Drama Process	The steps taken from responding to stimulus or text, to the performance day.
Dramatic Features	These are key areas in a production, such as, Plot and plot twists, themes and issues, dramatic tension, dramatic irony, character motivation, character relationships, key moments, genre, form, purpose, setting, period, style, target audience, mood and atmosphere.
Dramatic tension / points of tension / moments of tension	Tense and exciting moments in the play.
TERM	WHAT IT MEANS

Dramatic Irony	Actions or remarks whose significance is not realised by all the characters.
Duologues	A conversaiton between two characters.
Eposodic Structure	Series of scenes or stories linking together by a comon theme, character or setting etc. It does not need to link to the same storyline.
Focus	Key moment, scene, character, relationship or event in a drama.
Given Circumstances	Textual information given to an actor about a character or moment (this cannot be altered). This will help them to play the character and situation true to the text.
Ground Plans	A drawing or image that gives a birds eye view of the set, acting area and audeince position.
Key Scene	One of the most important scenes in the drama.
Key Moment	A moment in the drama which is integral to the plot.
Language	The words used by the characters during the play. This can determine class, personality, feelings etc.
Message	The overall point to be communicated.
Mood	The feeling or emotion of a moment or peice.
Original production / original staging / stage configurations	Orignial production - The first performance of something like Antigone in Greek times. Original Staging – Unique use of staging. Stage Configurations – Audience are in relation to action.
Performance Analysis	The analysation and critique on a performance you have seen.
Performance Concepts	Ideas and techniques you have used as an actor when developing your character; voice, movement, bloking etc
Pre-show	A part of the production which adds depth to the plot like the dancing in the woods in the Cruicable for instance.
Plot	The Storyline/Scenario
Plot Twists	Sections of he storyline that are unpredictable and take the plot on a different track.
Protagonist and Antagonist	Protagonist: Main character in the drama. Antagonist: The enemy or the competitor.
Purpose	The point of the drama, what the aim of the produciton is. This could also link to the purpose of your character in the piece.
Stage Proxemics	The positioning and distance of characters on stage to give dramatic impact.
TERM	WHAT IT MEANS

Rehearsal Activities	Exercises carried out during rehearsals to aid characterisation and plot development.
Set	Objects, flats and furniture we see on stage to help create the setting.
Setting	The location the drama takes place, for instance, a house, a park etc.
Site Specific Theatre	A piece of theatre created about/for a specific location and is then performed there to add impact.
Special effects	Effects to help create illusions in the theatre; strobe lighting, glitterballs, smoke machines, pyrotechnics etc.
Textual evidence	Information drawn from the text to support decisions or opinions.
Traditional theatre	A piece of theatre that is original from a country or culture.
Stage Imagery	Visual ideas brought to life on stage which represent an message/emotion/ idea.
Status	Importance relative to other characters.
Stimulus	A starting point for a Drama (photo, script, word, prop, setting etc.)
Subtext	The underlying meaning of the spoken word or movements.
Symbols and imagery	A representation of another meaning.
Target Audience	The audience who are most suited for the production.
Tension	A build up of excitement.
Textual analysis	Analysing the words of a text to create a meaning.
Theatrical Background	The experience a person has in theatre or the background/history of a play.
Themes and Issues	The main topics and points of the play.
Time period / passage of time / shifts in time	When the drama is happening in relation to date.
Positioning	Placement on the stage.
Use of levels	Contrast of height used in positioning, this could be with actors or set.
Venue	The theatre or place the drama takes place in.

FORMS

A Drama Form is the mould that you use to help the Drama take shape.

FORM	WHAT IT IS
Dance Drama	A drama story which is told through dance.
Forum Theatre	A drama where the audience suggest changes to the drama to improve the outcome.
Mime	A non-naturalistic abstract style of drama with minimal props and no dialogue.
Movement	A drama told through movement.
Musical	A drama which has song and music to help support the telling of the story.
Pantomime	Usually a Christmas drama which will recreate a famous fairytale.
A Play Scripted	A drama which has a script.
A Play Improvised	A drama which has been devised/improvised by the actors and directors.
Physical Theatre	A theatrical drama which is told many through physical movement.

GENRE

Genre is the type of Drama you are creating.

GENRE	WHAT IT IS
Agitprop	A play with a strong political message.
Black Comedy	A comedy with dark themes.
Comedy of Manners	A comedy which uses society's stereotypes.
Commedia Dell 'arte	Improvised theatre, which looks at using stock characters, such as; the slave, the damsel etc. It also uses a lot of physicality.
Docudrama	Documentary style drama.
Epic Theatre	Awareness that the audience are watching a play, usually has a strong point or message. The Audience should not empathise with the characters they should know they are watching a drama.
Farce	A drama which is highly exaggerated. This is usually comical.
Historical Drama	Drama set in historical period.
Melodrama	Exaggerated plot and characters, often plays on emotions. This will usually use stock characters. Music also plays a part in this type of drama.
Satire	Use of sarcasm and irony to get over a message or generate shock.
Comedy	A play which is comical and has a happy ending.
Tragic-comedy	A play which has both comical moments and an element of tragedy.
Drama	Relies on the action, emotion and relationships in the plot.

STRUCTURE

A structure is the way that the Drama is constructed. Structure is important because it determines how the audience see the story unfold.

Three Structure Options:

- 1. Linear:** Drama runs in time order with no flash-backs or flash-forwards
- 2. Non-Linear:** The Drama jumps about in time with flash-backs/forwards.
- 3. Episodic:** The Drama is linked by an overarching theme/idea.

STYLE

The style is the way in which the drama is performed.

There are two main styles:

Naturalistic – performance which aims to replicate real life

Non-Naturalistic – performance which is experimental

CONVENTIONS

Conventions are theatrical techniques which can add effect and help to enhance a drama.

CONVENTION	WHAT IT IS
Flash-Back	The Drama jumps back in time during the performance.
Flash-Forward	The Drama jumps forward into the future.
Tableau	A still image which gives an overview of a whole situation.
Freeze Frame	A still image which represents a moment in the Drama.
Mime	Creates an illusion without speech or props.
Monologue	An character speaks thoughts and emotions out loud. This can be delivered directly to the audience.
Movement	Could be a stylized movement piece to represent a section of the Drama.
Aside	An actor given information to the audience which other characters on stage don't know about. This can also be a commentary of the action.
Slow Motion	A section of the Drama is performed slowly.
Narration	A section of the story is spoken. There may be some action happening at the same time. This is usually spoken directly to the audience.
Voice Over	Pre recorded voice explaining the action, the thoughts of a character or giving the audience guidance.
Soliloquy	One long speech presented by one character alone on stage.
Split Stage	The stage is split into two sections, so two different pieces of action can be seen alongside each other.
Dialogue	The words exchanged between characters.

CHARACTERISATION AND REHEARSAL TECHNIQUES

Characterisation and Rehearsal Techniques are games and exercises which are carried out during the rehearsal process to aid plot and character development.

TECHNIQUE	WHAT IT IS
Character Cards	A document with character information on it.
Giving Witness	Reporting on off stage action.
Hot Seating	An actor is interviewed or asked questions and must respond in character.
Improvisation	Making up a scene in order to explore a situation or relationship.
Key Moments	Exploration of an important section or relationship in the drama.
Mantel of the Expert	The actor becomes an expert of something and improvises as if they know everything about that subject.
Role Play	Exploration of the attitudes and beliefs of a certain role.
Role on the Wall	The role or character is drawn and ideas, thoughts, given circumstances etc, are written down around the image.
Role-Reversal	Actors reverse roles in a rehearsal to increase understanding of a given situation.
Still Image or Talking through the image	An image created to help capture a key moment or emotion.
Use of prop	Exploration of a key prop during rehearsals.
Thought Tracking	An aid to characterisation: the character speaks their thoughts out loud
Thought Tunnel	Characters create a tunnel as one character walks through it, thoughts on the character or a situation are spoken aloud.
Voices in the Head	Recall of words said about a character or situation by an actor in role.
Visualisation Exercises	Use of the imagination to create a picture of a character or situation in their head.
Writing in Role	An actor writes in role about another character or situation (email, text, letter, diary entry etc.)

VOICE

Below are a list of voice terms which are used to help an actor or director describe how voice is used during a drama to add emotion or effect.

TERM	WHAT IT MEANS
Pitch	How high or low a voice is.
Pace	The speed of speech.
Emphasis	Stress on a word or phrase.
Volume	How loud or quiet a voice is.
Accent	Way of speaking in a country or local area.
Clarity	Clearness of the voice.
Intonation	The rising and falling of the voice.
Pause	A break in speaking; a period of silence.
Tone	The changing of the voice to express emotion.
Articulation	Clear pronunciation of words.
Fluency	Natural, flowing speech.
Projection	Strength and volume in the voice when speaking.
Register	Appropriate speech for the person being spoken to.
Rhythm	Words delivered following a beat or pattern.

MOVEMENT

Below are a list of movement terms which are used to help an actor or director describe how movement is used during a drama to add emotion or effect.

Naturalistic Movement: Movement which helps to portray character

Naturalistic Terms

TERM	WHAT IT MEANS
Body Language	Messages given by the position of the body.
Facial Expression	Look on the face to show emotion.
Eye Contact	Where the eyes are looking to portray emotion.
Gesture	A movement of the hand or arm which communicates a message.
Mannerisms	A common movement used by a character to show personality.
Posture	How the body is held upright.
Positioning	The placement of the actors on stage.
Proxemics	The positioning and distance of characters on stage to give dramatic impact.
Use of Space	The way the character moves around the space.

Stylized Movement: Movement which tells a section of the story and is more abstract.

Stylized Movement Terms

TERM	WHAT IT MEANS
Balance	The distribution of weight.
Mime	A stylized form of movement which creates an illusion without speech or props.
Positioning	The placement of the actors on stage.
Proxemics	The positioning and distance of characters on stage to give dramatic impact.
Rhythm	Movements which follow a pattern or beat.
Speed	How fast or slow movements are.
Stance	The attitude of the position the actors body is in.
Timing	Moving or pausing at the right moment.
Use of Levels	Position which are high up, mid-level or low down.
Use of Space	The way actors move around the space.
Use of Direction	The direction of movement of actors on the stage.

STAGING AND AREAS OF THE STAGE

Staging is the way the audience are positioned in relation to the performance.

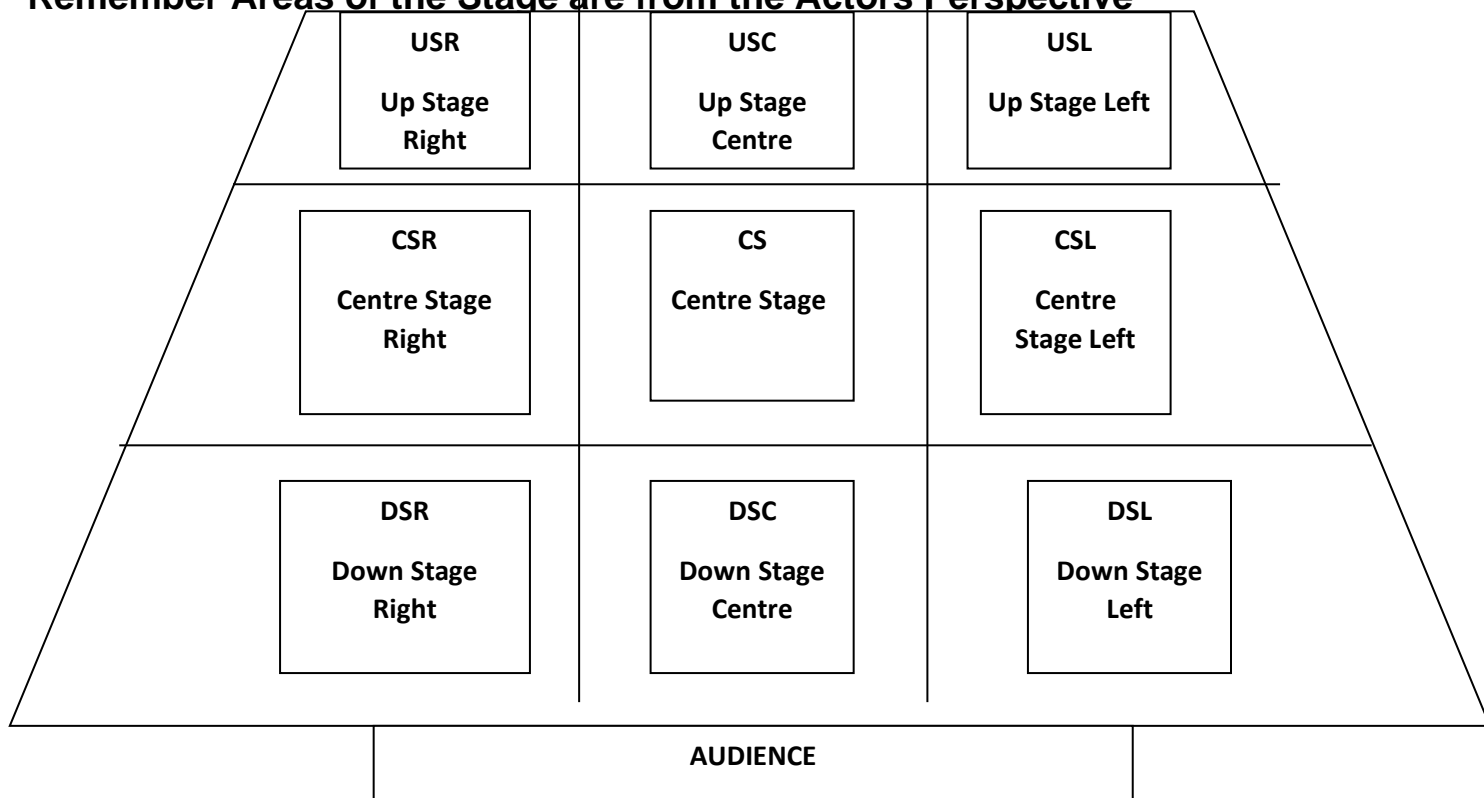
TYPES OF STAGING

TYPE	DESCRIPTION
End On	The audience are seated at the end of the acting area.
Theatre in the Round	The audience are seated on all four sides of the acting area, in the shape of a circle or a square
Thrust	The audience are seated on three sides of the acting area in a U shape.
Avenue/Traverse	The audience are seated on two sides of the acting area, a bit like a catwalk.
Promenade	The audience follow the action around a venue.
Proscenium Arch	The action takes place on a raised stage with a prominent arch around the top of the end on stage.

Areas of the Stage are the nine different stage positions which should be referred to when describing positions of set, lights, props or actors.

AREAS OF THE STAGE

Remember Areas of the Stage are from the Actors Perspective



PRODUCTION AREAS

ACTING

Acting Terms are useful for helping to describe what an actor does when portraying a character.

Acting Terms	Definition
Accent	Way of speaking used in a local area or country
Body Language	Messages given by the position or movement of the body
Characterisation	The process of fully developing a character
Dramatic Irony	Actions or remarks whose significance is not realised by all the characters
Emphasis	The stress on a word or phrase
Facial expression	Look on face which shows emotion
Fluency	Natural, flowing speech
Focus	Key moment, scene, character, relationship or event in a drama
Hot-seating	Questioning a character in role
Intonation	Rising and falling of voice in speech
Masking	One actor unintentionally preventing another from being seen by the audience
Monologue	A character speaks their thoughts aloud
Movement	Use of the body as a means of communication
Pace	Speed of speech or movement
Pause	A break in speaking; period of silence
Pitch	How high or low the voice is
Posture	Position of the body – how it is held
Register	Appropriate speech for the person being spoken to, or for the situation
Rhythm	Movements or speech which follow a pattern or beat
Soliloquy	A single lengthy speech, made when no other characters are on stage
Stance	Attitude or position of the body
Status	Importance relative to others
Tension	Build up of excitement
Thought tracking	An aid to characterisation: the character speaks their thoughts out loud
Timing	Speaking, moving or pausing at exactly the right moment
Tone	Change of voice to express emotion
Voices in the head	Recall of words said by others about a character or situation
Volume	Loudness or quietness of the voice

DIRECTING

Directing Terms are useful for helping to describe what a director does when directing a play.

Directing Terms	Definition
Accent	Way of speaking used in a local area or country
Blocking	The Moves of the actor during a scene.
Body Language	Messages given by the position or movement of the body
Characterisation	The process of fully developing a character
Corpse	When an actor comes out of character, usually by laughing when they shouldn't – this 'kills' the illusion of the character
Dramatic Irony	Actions or remarks whose significance is not realised by all the characters
Emphasis	The stress on a word or phrase
Facial expression	Look on face which shows emotion
Fluency	Natural, flowing speech
Focus	Key moment, scene, character, relationship or event in a drama
Hot-seating	Questioning a character in role
Intonation	Rising and falling of voice in speech
Masking	One actor unintentionally preventing another from being seen by the audience
Monologue	A character speaks their thoughts aloud
Movement	Use of the body as a means of communication
Pace	Speed of speech or movement
Pause	A break in speaking; period of silence
Pitch	How high or low the voice is
Posture	Position of the body – how it is held
Register	Appropriate speech for the person being spoken to, or for the situation
Rhythm	Movements or speech which follow a pattern or beat
Sightlines	The sightline indicates the audience's line of vision.
Soliloquy	A single lengthy speech, made when no other characters are on stage
Stance	Attitude or position of the body
Status	Importance relative to others
Subtext	The underlying or less obvious meaning
Tension	Build-up of excitement
Thought tracking	An aid to characterisation: the character speaks their thoughts out loud
Timing	Speaking, moving or pausing at exactly the right moment
Tone	Change of voice to express emotion
Use of levels	Low/mid/high or lie/sit/stand – offers variety; a more interesting picture
Voices in the head	Recall of words said by others about a character or situation
Volume	Loudness or quietness of the voice

SET DESIGN TERMS

Set Design Terms are useful for helping to describe how set is constructed.

Set Design Concepts	Definition
Cyclorama	A white cloth that is used to light and/or project on to.
Black Box	A simple black studio space.
Backcloth	Canvas cloth which covers the back of the stage - can be painted.
Box Set	Box sets create the illusion of reality by connecting flats together.
Flats	Wooden frames, joined together and covered with canvas, which can be painted.
Flies	Area above the stage from where scenery/actors are flown in on pulleys.
Rake	Slope of stage and/or audience (to allow actors to be seen).
Staging	End On, Thrust, In The Round, Traverse, Promenade, Site-Specific.
Onstage and Offstage World	What can the audience see? What should the audience believe is offstage?
Style of Set	This could be minimal, stylised or naturalistic.
Visibility and Viability	This relates to sight lines and health/safety.
Areas of the stage	CS, USC, DSC, USR, USL, DSR, DSL
Trucks	Piece of scenery on wheels for ease of movement.
Revolving Stage	Stage which turns in a circle.
Rostra	Blocks or platforms used to create levels.

LIGHTING DESIGN TERMS

Lighting Design terms are useful for helping to describe how Lighting is designed.

Lighting Concepts	Definition
Key Light	An obvious source of light e.g. sunshine through a window.
Specials	For example - projection, strobe, UV, glitter ball, smoke machine, pyrotechnics.
Gobo	Thin metal plate cut out in a pattern and placed in a lantern to project pattern or shape into the acting area.
Gel	Film placed in front of a lantern to change the colour of the beam.
Fresnel	Lantern giving a soft-edged beam of light.
Flood	Lantern giving a wide spread of light.
Profile Spot	Lantern giving a hard-edged beam of light.
Follow Spot	Powerful profile used to follow actors around the acting area.
Barn Doors	Adjustable metal flaps attached to the front of a fresnel for shaping the beam of light.
Focus	Positioning light to create a desired effect.
Timing (Snap, Cross Fade, Slow)	Length of time it takes to light an acting area and/or black out an acting area.
Onstage and Offstage World	What can the audience see? What should the audience believe is offstage?
House lights	Practical working lights that are not theatre lights.
Intensity	The level of light used.

SOUND DESIGN TERMS

Sound Design Terms are useful for helping to describe how Sound is designed.

Sound Concept	Definition
Live SFX	Sound effects that are made live.
Pre-recorded SFX	Sound effects that have been recorded in advance.
Foley SFX	Sound effects that are created.
Live Music	Music that is created live onstage with musicians.
Pre-recorded Music	Sound that has been created by music artists.
Voice Over	Recorded speech played during a drama.
Levels (low, medium, high)	The volume level.
Timing (Snap, Cross Fade, Slow)	Length of time it takes to introduce sound and/or mute sound.
Onstage and Offstage World	What can the audience hear? What should the audience believe is offstage?

PROPS DESIGN TERMS

Props Design terms are useful for helping to describe how Props are designed.

Props Concepts	Definition
Set Props	An item placed on the set, usually part of it e.g. a lamp, clock, picture.
Personal Props	Objects that are carried on by the actor, can be used to show status.
Props Table	A place that props are stored and organised.
Visibility and Viability	This relates to whether it can be seen and health/safety.

HAIR and MAKE UP DESIGN TERMS

HAIR and MAKE UP design terms are useful for helping to describe how Hair and Make Up is designed.

Hair and Make Up Concepts	Definition
Fake Blood	Powder, liquid or capsules which create the effect of bleeding.
Foundation	The base coat applied to the face which is the basic skin colour.
Liners	Sticks of make up in different colours used to create lines, bruises, shading, highlighting etc.
Pencils	Soft pencils in different colours which are easily smudged and blended.
Scarring	Scars created with make up, putty or scarring material.
Stipple Sponge	Used to create unshaven look or the appearance of cracked veins.
Tooth Varnish	Used to create the look of a missing tooth by blacking out the existing one.
Crepe Hair	Plaits of artificial hair which can be cut and trimmed to form eye brows, moustache and beards.
Highlighting	Using light colours to make areas of the face stand out.
Shading	Using colours to make areas of the face look shrunken.
Spirit Gum	Glue used to attach hair to the face.
Latex	Liquid rubber that can be used to make a skull cap, moulds or false noses.
Nose Putty	Type of clay used for altering the shape of the nose or chin and making warts and wounds.
Skull Cap	Plastic head shaped covering to give the appearance of baldness.
Wigs/Hair Piece/Extension	Fake hair used to create different hair styles.

COSTUME DESIGN TERMS

Costume Design terms are useful for helping to describe how Costumes are designed.

Costume Concepts	Definition
Hats	An item you wear on your head.
Hair and Face Accessories	Items used to show personality/status e.g. ribbon, glasses, nose ring etc.
Jewellery	Items used to show personality/status e.g. ring, necklace, bracelet etc.
Clothing	Items that a character wears e.g. trousers, skirt, t-shirt etc.
Shoes	Items worn on the feet to show character e.g. boots, high heels etc.
Specials	For example – fat suits, pregnancy bumps, hooped skirts, shoulder pads etc.
Tailoring	The shape and fit of clothing.

STUDY TIPS

To help you remember the terms here are some ideas of what you could do:

TECHNIQUE	WHAT TO DO
Traffic Light Terms	Highlight the terms in Green, Orange and Red to indicate how well you know or understand them to help organise revision time.
Create a Rhythm or acronym to help remember the terms	Use the rhythm of a song and replace the lyrics with your drama terms. Create a word or Rhyme which uses the first letters or words of the drama terms you what to learn.
Record the terms	Pre-record the words on a voice memo and listen to them over and over again.
Writing out	Write out the terms a few times to help remember them.
Create Movements	Create movements or a dance routine to help you actively and visually remember the terms.

