

GLOSSARY for National Core Arts: Theatre STANDARDS

Acting techniques
Specific skills, pedagogies, theories, or methods of investigation used by an actor to
prepare for a theatre performance
Believability
Theatrical choices thought to be "true" based upon an understanding of any given
fictional moment, interpretation of text, and/or human interaction
Character traits
Observable embodied actions that illustrate a character's personality, values, beliefs, and
history
<u>Conflict</u>
The problem, confrontation, or struggle in a scene or play; conflict may include a
character against him or herself, a character in opposition to another character, a
character against nature, a character against society, or a character against the
supernatural
Creative drama
A process-centered, non-exhibitional approach to drama intended to benefit the
performers themselves; story drama and process drama are two types of creative drama

Creative processes
The application of production and technical elements (see the definitions) to a
theatrical production
Devised drama
Creation of an original performance piece by an ensemble
<u>Dialogue</u>
A conversation between two or more characters
Dramatic play
Make-believe where children naturally assign and accept roles, then act them out
<u>Focus</u>
Commitment by a participant (an actor, technician, director) to remain in the scope of
the project or to stay within the world of the play
Genre
Relating to a specific kind or type of drama and theatre such as a tragedy, drama,
melodrama, comedy, or farce
Gesture
An expressive and planned movement of the body or limbs
Given circumstances
The underlying actions and events that have happened before the play, story, or devised
piece begins
Guided drama experience
A leader guides participants during a process drama, story drama, or creative drama
experience (see the definitions) through side-coaching, narration, and prompting; the
action of the drama does not stop in order for the leader to support the students;

facilitator may guide participants in or out of role

<u>Improvise</u>
The spontaneous, intuitive, and immediate response of movement and speech; a
distinction can be made between spontaneous improvisation, which is immediate and
unrehearsed, and prepared improvisation, which is shaped and rehearsed
Imaginary elsewhere
An imagined location which can be historical, fictional, or realistic
Imagined worlds
An imaginary world created collectively by participants in a drama experience
Inner thoughts
The underlying and implied meaning or intentions in the character's dialogue or actions
(also known as subtext)
<u>Motivation</u>
Reasons why a character behaves or reacts in a particular way in a scene or play
Non-representational materials
Objects which can be transformed into specific props through the imagination
<u>Objective</u>
A goal or particular need or want that a character has within a scene or play
<u>Plot</u>
A narrative as revealed through the action and/or dialogue; traditionally, a plot has the
elements of exposition, inciting incident, conflict, rising action, climax, and resolution or
falling action
Process drama
A non-linear, episodic, process-centered, improvised form of drama in which teacher
and students are in-role exploring and reflecting on an issue, story, theme, problem, or

idea in a non-exhibitional format that is intended to benefit the performers themselves

Production elements
Technical elements selected for use in a specific production, including sets, sound, costumes, lights, music, props, and make-up, as well as elements specific to the
production such as puppets, masks, special effects, or other story telling
devices/concepts
Scripted drama
A piece of writing for the theatre that includes a description of the setting, a list of the
characters, the dialogue, and the action of the characters
Script analysis
The study of a script to understand the underlying structure and themes of the play's
story, and the motives and objectives of its characters
<u>Staging</u>
Patterns of movement in a scene or play including, for example, stage crosses,
entrances, and exits which help to convey meaning
Story drama
Episodic, process-centered, improvised form of drama that uses existing literature as a
starting point for drama exploration, the drama explores moments (before, after, or
within) that may not exist in the story and is presented in a non-exhibitional format that
is intended to benefit the performers themselves
Story elements
Characters, setting, dialogue, and plot that create a story
<u>Style</u>
The use of a specific set of characteristic or distinctive techniques such as realism,
expressionism, epic theatre, documentary theatre, or classical drama; style may also refer
to the unique artistic choices of a particular playwright, director, or actor
<u>Tactic</u>
The means by which a character seeks to achieve their objective, the selection of tactics
are based on the obstacle presented; in acting and directing a tactic refers to a specific
action verb

Technical elements
The elements of spectacle such as sets, sound, costume, lights, music, props, and makeup used to create a unified and meaningful design for a theatrical production
Theatrical conventions
Practices and/or devices that the audience and actors accept in the world of the play
even when it is not realistic, such as a narrator, flashback, or an aside
<u>Theme</u>
The aspect of the human condition under investigation in the drama; it can be drawn
from unifying topics or questions across content areas
Visual composition
The arrangement of actors and scenery on a stage for a theatrical production,
sometimes known as mise en scène