**SUMMER TASKS – GCSE TO A-LEVEL TRANSITION**

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| **Subject: A-Level**  |
| **Title: Drama and Theatre Studies** |
| **Task:**Dear A Level Drama and Theatre Studies students,The A Level Drama and Theatre Studies course is a really varied experience and, as you would expect, at its heart is practical performance. However, as a student of Drama and Theatre Studies you will also be required to analyse and evaluate plays and performances in writing and from a variety of perspectives. The four different perspectives from which you will write next year are:1. As a performer
2. As a designer
3. As an audience member
4. As a director / creative collaborator

**For your written summer preparatory work, I would like you to write a short essay from the perspective of an audience member**. Choose one piece of theatre which you have seen. This should not be anything that you studied at school as I don’t want to see any work recycled from your GCSEs or other studies. I want to see your own unique, individual and fresh thoughts and interpretations of a work of theatre. Go into as much descriptive detail as you can!If you have been unable to see a production recently, you may not be able to remember this in lots of detail. However, there are lots of theatre available online now and I would encourage you to seek out and watch one of these productions in full and use this as the focus of your written work. E.g. Your current school may have given you access to *Drama Online* or *Digital Theatre* or *National Theatre at Home* which have dozens of filmed performances in its archive. Do some research on Google and find a production that interests you! Please ensure that this is a professional production, filmed professionally, as amateur footage will not give you a good enough audience experience.To begin writing the essay you will need an introduction which:1. Names the production, the theatre venue, the playwright and the director and establishes what the production was about overall i.e. Where and when is it set? What are the most significant plot points, key relationships and relevant social / historical context?
2. You should then try and identify what you think the key aims of the piece were in terms of intended effects and intended audience responses. What did the director and their team want to make their audience think about with the production overall? Why was this important? How did they want to make the audience feel and why?
3. Finally in this introductory section – concisely identify what performance styles were used. You may need to do some research into this. Some common performance styles include *Naturalism, Expressionism, Epic Theatre, Physical Theatre, Classical Tragedy, Classical Comedy, Satire, Farce, Documentary Theatre* etc. Read up on these and see if they match what you are watching. Try and identify which aspects of the production suggested that it was drawing on which particular style and what effect these stylistic choices had on the production.

This Introductory section should last about half a typed A4; so don’t waffle or repeat yourself. Be concise and clear. Plan your work first and decide in advance what the key points that you want to make are.1. When writing about theatre, we use specific examples or “moments” to ensure that we are describing and analysing performance in close detail rather than making vague generalisations.

For the remainder of this audience focussed essay; choose **2 contrasting moments** from the production to describe and analyse.Structure your moments as follows:1. Identify the ‘moment’ by giving some concise context about what is happening in each scene, e.g. where it is taking place and who is involved / affected? Define the significance of this moment in relation to the wider play.
2. Describe how one or more actors performed a specific line or short sequence of lines. State the quoted line/s and include a description of the line delivery (tone of voice / pace / pitch / volume etc), facial expression, physicality / body language, movement, proxemics, posture, gesture, stage positioning etc. Use adverbs to help you concisely define the attitude with which each of these performance choices was conveyed e.g. she moved *stealthily,* with a *sneering* expression, inching closer to him before *suddenly* grabbing him.
3. Identify the effect/effects created by the moment (either as a whole or at various points within the moment), stating what meaning was conveyed to the audience (i.e. what did you **understand** about the play / scene / relationships / characters as appropriate).
4. Identify and justify your personal **emotional** response to each moment described. How did you feel in response? Why did you feel this way?

Please complete this essay and email it to me at jmcmahon-harvey@yorkcollege.ac.uk before your first A Level Drama and Theatre Studies Lesson at York College after Summer. In addition to this essay, it would be great if you could try and watch as much theatre as you are able to (Make lots of use of those free online filmed productions) and read as many plays as you can find. The more preparation for the subject you can do between now and the start of the course, the more creative we can be together and the more stimulating and rewarding your work will be!I look forward to reading your work and to working with you in the future.James McMahon-Harvey(Course Leader – A Level Drama and Theatre Studies) |
| **How long should I spend on this? 1hr** |
| **How will I get feedback?**  |
| **Contact email:** jmcmahon-harvey@yorkcollege.ac.uk |