Complete Drama for Cambridge IGCSE®

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Welcome! Drama is an exciting subject and one that people become very passionate about. Now that you have opened this book, come and see what we have to offer. We hope that you are already curious and are willing to have a go, and that is all we ask of you at this stage. Everything else will come to you as you work your way through the course.

**Cambridge IGCSE syllabus aims**

The syllabus aims to:

- develop learners’ understanding of drama through practical and theoretical study
- enable learners to understand the role of actor, director and designer in creating a piece of theatre
- develop learners’ acting skills, both individually and in groups
- enable learners to develop skills in devising original drama
- help learners communicate feelings and ideas to an audience
- foster understanding of the performance process and enable learners to evaluate the various states of that process
- encourage enjoyment of drama.

**Did you know?**

Theatre has formed an important part of many civilisations. In Ancient Greece, tragedies or comedies were performed by men or boys, often wearing masks.
1.1 Why choose drama?

Drama is a practical subject. It deals with people. Drama involves looking at people’s thoughts, their feelings, and their relationships with each other and with the world about them. Through drama we can see into the lives of others and it can help us make sense of our own.

For thousands of years people have made audiences laugh or cry by acting out stories that were important to them. Even today, audiences can feel sympathy with characters created by the ancient Greeks and join in the laughter of traditional Japanese Kyōgen (comedic theatre often performed as a short intercession between longer, more solemn forms of theatre). By doing IGCSE drama you can become part of those traditions and learn how to present stories and ideas to an audience. For some, the pleasure of having a responsive, appreciative audience is the biggest reason for choosing the subject, but everyone will find something to interest and challenge them. You all will have an important part to play in whatever project you are working on.

Drama is about working with other people

Working as part of a team is something that draws people to the study of drama. It is also a skill that attracts prospective employers, as the ‘Remember’ box below shows.

As you work in your group, you will learn to share ideas and to offer and take criticism constructively. Unlike many other subjects, in Cambridge IGCSE Drama you are not alone. Sometimes you will have to work under pressure to meet firm deadlines and this can be made less daunting by having the support of others in your group. This is both a comfort and a responsibility. It means that, in return, you will need to give support to others by being reliable, turning up on time for rehearsals, and by making sure that lines are learnt or that costumes or sound effects are ready on time. Throughout this book you will see that group working is stressed in every unit and this is because the success of a drama performance depends entirely on collaboration and teamwork.

Drama is about learning new skills

Drama is not just about acting. There are other important areas of skill to be learnt, involving directing and design elements. Though you may start with one area that attracts you, it is possible to branch out and try other skills. In fact, it is an advantage for a lighting designer to know what problems an actor faces on stage when designing the lighting plot, and all designers need to be aware of the practical limitations of their sets or costumes. You will learn the correct vocabulary and the methods commonly used by professionals, not by memorising lists but by doing.

Remember

A qualification in drama demonstrates that you have:

● shown creativity and imagination
● worked with others constructively
● worked to, and met, tight deadlines
● learnt to communicate effectively
● interpreted your own and other people’s ideas and realised them.
1.2 What can you expect?

Objectives
In this section you will learn:
● how Cambridge IGCSE Drama is assessed
● how the knowledge and skills you develop during your course are examined.

How Cambridge IGCSE Drama is assessed
The assessment areas are as follows:
● understanding of repertoire – you will be assessed on your knowledge and understanding of the possible ways of interpreting and presenting plays in the published repertoire
● devising – you will be assessed on your ability to devise and perform dramatic material, and reflect on its effectiveness
● acting – you will be assessed on your acting skills and your ability to communicate effectively to an audience.

There are two assessed components:
● Component 1 Written examination
● Component 2 Coursework

Component 1: the written examination
The written examination will be based entirely on practical work you have done, relating to pre-release material sent to your centre some months before you sit the paper. This will consist of three stimuli and an extended extract from a play. By the time you come to sit the written examination, you will have spent time studying the play extract and will have devised a piece of drama based on one of the given stimuli. The questions that are set require that you have engaged with the pre-release material from the point of view of actor, director and designer. In other words, the examination is focused on material you will already have experienced from a practical perspective.

The question paper will be structured in three sections:
● Section A (30 marks) consists of 6 short-answer questions on the play extract (20 marks) and 2 questions on the drama devised from your chosen stimulus (10 marks).
● Section B (25 marks) consists of one longer-answer question from a choice of three questions on the extract from a play.
● Section C (25 marks) consists of one longer-answer question from a choice of three on the drama devised from your chosen stimulus.

Remember
You can read about your assessments in more detail using the Cambridge IGCSE Drama syllabus at www.cie.org.uk.
Component 2: the coursework
You will need to submit three pieces of practical work, including one individual piece and two group pieces. You should have an opportunity to create more than these three pieces of work during your course so that you have a selection of pieces from which to choose your best work for submission.

The coursework components are as follows:

- one individual performance of an extract from a play, lasting between 3 and 5 minutes
- one group performance of an extract from a play
- one group performance of an original devised piece.

Good practice during your course
As you complete the practical work, get into the habit of discussing it and keeping notes on what you have done and why you did it in that particular way. Your teacher will be following your progress, so it will be important for you to show that you know and understand what you are doing. Most importantly:

- show commitment to your group and the project
- carry out research for yourself and share it
- listen to advice and criticism, and act upon it
- set targets to ensure the work progresses effectively.

The practical coursework performance is like any presentation in front of others. It is natural that you might feel nervous. Just think of nerves as being proof of your excitement and a sign that you want to do well. As a performer, take a few deep breaths and go for it – make it your best. When you try your hardest, nobody can expect more of you and you will even surprise yourself and gain confidence for next time.

Plan ahead
As soon as you start work on the pre-release material, it makes sense to start thinking about the kinds of question you will answer in an examination. From your very first lesson, you will have been learning new vocabulary and approaches to drama. Keep notes of these after each lesson. At times when you have completed a project, organise your notes in a way that makes sense and will fit in with the kinds of question you might be asked. You will be given ideas on what you will need to know in each unit and section. Whether you organise the points in lists, spider diagrams or even pictures will depend on what works best for you, but do keep up to date. A few notes made often will get you into good habits and it is actually easier than leaving it all to build up. These notes and plans will help you revise.
1.3 How this book works

Objectives
In this section you will learn:
● how to get the best out of this book
● about the units covered
● how the book tackles different skills.

How to get the best out of this book
Whenever you start a new course the amount you have to learn always seems daunting. Don’t worry. This book is here to give you help and confidence.
● First, dip in and look at the units that interest you most.
● Notice that most units are arranged in pairs of pages called “spreads”.
● Work your way through one spread at a time.
● Follow-up the suggestions and apply them to your own work.
● Take note of the various boxes on this spread, which are used throughout the book to help you and offer guidance.
● Key terms in orange are defined in a box on the page and/or in the Glossary at the end of the book.

Remember
All the examples given in this book can be applied elsewhere. Use the advice and skills information given and transfer it to your own work. Experiment and enjoy!

Activity
These boxes suggest activities you might do in the classroom or at home. Here is one to get you started.

1. Turn to Unit 2 and read the spreads on preparing your individual piece of work. You will discover how you might approach your own individual project. Turn to the costume design spreads in Unit 4. These will give you a start on considering costume design both for your coursework pieces and the written examination.

Figure 1.2 Students preparing for a performance
What this book covers

The book is arranged in sections to support you in all areas of your work.

**Unit 2 Scripted work** deals with approaches to acting and scripted work and gives advice on interpreting a text that you will find useful as actor or director.

**Unit 3 Devising practical work** covers a wide range of approaches using different stimuli such as you may find presented in the pre-release material. Many of the working methods, particularly improvisation, will also be helpful in preparing for scripted work.

**Unit 4 Design and technical work** explores a range of elements that can enhance a production and help communicate ideas effectively.

**Unit 5 Developing your physical skills** addresses movement, gesture, facial expression and voice – aspects that you will need to employ in your performances.

**Unit 6 Preparing for a performance** gives practical advice that will help you to present your performance more efficiently and effectively.

**Unit 7 Writing about your performances** offers advice to help you prepare for examination, and gives examples of the kind of questions you may be asked. You are strongly advised to look at this section early in your studies in order to make best use of your practical work.

**Remember**

Drama is what you make of it. Though it may seem difficult at times, if you give it your best effort you will enjoy it and feel the satisfaction of having achieved something important. Good luck!

**Useful tip**

These boxes are written by experienced teachers. Each box will give you some helpful advice. The tip from this box is:

Always take notice of the blue boxes, they will point you in the right direction!

**Key term**

These boxes give definitions of words that may be new to you. You will also find these and other important terms in the Glossary at the end of this book. Learn them, as you will need to use them in your work. Learn to spell them correctly for written examinations.

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*Figure 1.3 A student performance*