

A level Drama and Theatre Glossary

This glossary has been provided to support the teaching and learning of this qualification. You might find this helpful to support students in developing their knowledge and understanding of subject specific terminology.

Performance

| Term | Definition |
|-------------------------|---|
| acting area | that area within the performance space within which the actor may move in full view of the audience. Also known as the playing area |
| acting style | a particular manner of acting which reflects cultural and historical influences |
| action | the movement or development of the plot or story in a play; the sense of forward movement created by the sense of time and/or the physical and psychological motivations of characters. |
| analysis | in responding to dramatic art, the process of examining how the elements of drama—literary, technical, and performance—are used |
| antagonist | the opponent or adversary of the hero or main character of a drama; one who opposes and actively competes with another character in a play, most often with the protagonist |
| apron | the area between the front curtain and the edge of the stage. |
| arena stage | type of stage without a frame or arch separating the stage from the auditorium, in which the audience surrounds the stage area; see theatre-in-the-round. |
| articulation | the clarity or distinction of speech |
| aside | Lines spoken by an actor to the audience and not supposed to be overheard by other characters on-stage. |
| black box | a one-room theatre, without a proscenium arch; interior is painted black, including walls, floor, and ceiling, and any drapes are also black. |
| blocking | the path formed by the actor's movement on stage, usually determined by the director with assistance from the actor and often written down in a script using commonly accepted theatrical symbols. |
| business | a piece of unscripted or improvised action, often comic in intention, used to establish a character, fill a pause in dialogue, or to establish a scene. An author may simply suggest 'business' to indicate the need for some action at that point in the play. |
| catharsis | the feeling of release felt by the audience at the end of a tragedy; the audience experiences catharsis, or is set free from the emotional hold of the action, after experiencing strong emotions and sharing in the protagonist's troubles. |
| character | a person portrayed in a drama, novel, or other artistic piece. |
| characterisation | how an actor uses body, voice, and thought to develop and portray |

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| Term | Definition |
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| | a character. |
| choreography | the movement of actors and dancers to music in a play. |
| chorus | a group of performers who sing, dance, or recite in unison; in Greek drama, the chorus was the group of performers who sang and danced between episodes, narrated off-stage action, and commented on events. |
| climax | the point of greatest intensity in a series or progression of events in a play, often forming the turning point of the plot and leading to some kind of resolution. |
| comedy | a play that treats characters and situations in a humorous way. In Shakespeare's time, a comedy was any play with a happy ending that typically told the story of a likable character's rise to fortune. In ancient Greece, comedies dealt almost exclusively with contemporary figures and problems. Low comedy is physical rather than intellectual comedy; high comedy is more sophisticated, emphasizing verbal with more than physical action. |
| comic relief | a break in the tension of a tragedy provided by a comic character, a comic episode, or even a comic line. |
| concentration | the actor's focus, also called centering; focusing on the work at hand, being in character, or being in the moment. |
| conflict | the internal or external struggle between opposing forces, ideas, or interests that creates dramatic tension. |
| contrast | dynamic use of opposites, such as movement/stillness, sound/silence, and light/darkness. |
| dénouement | The moment in a drama when the essential plot point is unravelled or explained. |
| development | progression of the plot or conflict in a play. |
| dialogue | spoken conversation used by two or more characters to express thoughts, feelings, and actions. |
| dynamic | the energetic range of or variations within physical movement or the difference between levels of sound |
| end on | Traditional audience seating layout where the audience is looking at the stage from the same direction. This seating layout is that of a Proscenium Arch theatre. See also THRUST, IN THE ROUND, TRAVERSE. |
| ensemble | the dynamic interaction and harmonious blending of the efforts of the many artists involved in the dramatic activity of theatrical production. |
| exposition | the part of a play that introduces the theme, chief characters, and current circumstances. |
| farce | an extreme form of comedy that depends on quick tempo and flawless timing and is characterized by improbable events and farfetched coincidences; from the French meaning "to stuff." |
| flashback | in a non-linear plot, to go back in time to a previous event; a <i>flash</i> |

| Term | Definition |
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| | <i>forward</i> would move the action into the future. |
| focus | in acting, the act of concentrating or staying in character. |
| fourth wall | the invisible wall of a set through which the audience sees the action of the play. |
| genre | a category of literary or dramatic composition; drama is a literary genre. Drama is further divided into tragedy, comedy, farce, and melodrama, and these genres, in turn, can be subdivided. |
| gesture | any movement of the actor's head, shoulder, arm, hand, leg, or foot to convey meaning. |
| imaging | a technique which allows performers to slow down and focus individually on an issue. The performers, sitting quietly with eyes closed, allow pictures to form in their minds. These images may be motivated by bits of narration, music, sounds, smells, etc. |
| improvisation | the spontaneous use of movement and speech to create a character or object in a particular situation; acting done without a script. |
| inflection | change in pitch or loudness of the voice. |
| interaction | the action or relationship among two or more characters. |
| irony | an implied discrepancy between what is said and what is meant. There are several forms of irony. <i>Verbal irony</i> is when a writer or speaker says one thing and means something else (often the opposite of what is said). When the audience perceives something that a character does not know, that is <i>dramatic irony</i> . <i>Situational irony</i> can be described as a discrepancy between expected results and the actual results. |
| isolation | control of isolated body parts; the ability to control or move one part of the body independently of the rest. |
| kinaesthetic | resulting from the sensation of bodily position, presence, or movement. |
| language | in drama, the particular manner of verbal expression, the diction or style of writing, or the speech or phrasing that suggests a class or profession or type of character. |
| mannerism | a peculiarity of speech or behaviour. |
| melodrama | a style of play, which originated in the 19th century, relying heavily on sensationalism and sentimentality. Melodramas tend to feature action more than motivation, stock characters, and a strict view of morality in which good triumphs over evil. |
| mime | acting without words. |
| mirroring | copying the movement and/or expression or look of someone else exactly. |
| monologue | a long speech made by one actor; a monologue may be delivered alone or in the presence of others. |
| mood | the tone or feeling of the play, often engendered by the music, |

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| Term | Definition |
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| | setting, or lighting. |
| motivation | the reason or reasons for a character's behaviour; an incentive or inducement for further action for a character. |
| movement | stage blocking or the movements of the actors onstage during performance; also refers to the action of the play as it moves from event to event. |
| naturalism | a style of drama that developed in the late 19th century as an attempt to represent real life on stage faithfully and without artifice; the actions of characters tend to be dominated by determinism (societal or environmental forces). |
| pace | rate of movement or speed of action |
| parody | a mocking or satirical imitation of a literary or dramatic work. |
| performance elements | include acting (e.g., character motivation and analysis, empathy), speaking (breath control, vocal expression and inflection, projection, speaking style, diction), and nonverbal expression (gestures, body alignment, facial expression, character blocking, movement). |
| pitch | the particular level of a voice, instrument or tune. |
| plot | the events of a play or arrangement of action, as opposed to the theme. |
| plot development | the organization or building of the action in a play. |
| posture | Physical alignment of a performer's body or a physical stance taken by a performer which conveys information about the character being played |
| projection | how well the voice carries to the audience. |
| prompt | to give actors their lines as a reminder; the <i>prompter</i> is the one who assists actors in remembering their lines. |
| Proscenium | a frame or arch separating the stage from the auditorium. The proscenium opening was of particular importance to the Realistic playwrights of the 19th century, such as Ibsen and Shaw, for whom it was a picture frame or an imaginary fourth wall through which the audience experienced the illusion of spying on characters. |
| protagonist | the main character or hero in a play or other literary work. |
| proxemics | contemporary term for 'spatial relationships', referring to spatial signifiers of the relationship between different performers or a performer and elements of the set which convey information about character and circumstances. |
| realism | an attempt in theatre to represent everyday life and people as they are or appear to be through careful attention to detail in character motivation, costume, setting, and dialogue. Plays from this period (from 1820 to 1920) seek the truth, find beauty in the commonplace, and focus on the conditions of the working class. Henrik Ibsen is an exemplar of the movement; he influenced others such as George Bernard Shaw and Anton Chekov. |

| Term | Definition |
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| resolution | how the problem or conflict in a drama is solved or concluded. |
| rhythm | measured flow of words or phrases in verse forming patterns of sound. Regularity in time or space of an action, process or feature. |
| ritual | a prescribed form or ceremony; drama grew out of religious ritual. |
| role | the character portrayed by an actor in a drama. |
| role playing | improvising movement and dialogue to put oneself in another's place in a particular situation, often to examine the person(s) and/or situation(s) being improvised. |
| satire | a play in which sarcasm, irony, and ridicule are used to expose or attack folly or pretension in society. |
| scene | a small section or portion of a play. |
| scenography | the art of creating performance environments using one or more components including light, costume, set, space and sound. |
| set | the physical surroundings, visible to the audience, in which the action of the play takes place. |
| setting | when and where the action of a play takes place. |
| sightlines | imaginary lines of sight that determine what areas of the stage are visible to the audience from any given seat in the house. |
| soliloquy | a speech in which an actor, usually alone on stage, speaks the inner thoughts of his/her character aloud. |
| sound | the effects an audience hears during a performance to communicate character, context, or environment. |
| sound elements | music, sound effects, actors' voices. |
| space | a defined area |
| spatial awareness | traditional term for what is currently referred to as ' proxemics ', referring to spatial signifiers of the relationship between different performers or a performer and elements of the set which convey information about character and circumstances. |
| stage presence | the level of comfort, commitment, and energy an actor appears to have on stage. |
| staging | another term for blocking; deliberate choices about where the actors stand and how they move on stage to communicate character relationships and plot and to create interesting stage pictures in relation to set, properties and audience and effects created by lighting, for example. |
| stock characters | characters who represent particular personality types or characteristics of human behaviour. Stock characters are immediately recognizable and appear throughout the history of theatre, beginning with Greek and Roman comedy and elaborated upon in <i>commedia dell' arte</i> . |
| story line | the plot or plan of action. |
| structure | The arrangement of and relationship between the constituent parts |

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| Term | Definition |
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| | of a whole as in 'prologue, exposition, denouement' or scenes and acts within a play. |
| stylisation | the shaping of dramatic material, settings, or costumes in a deliberately non-realistic manner. |
| suspense | a feeling of uncertainty as to the outcome, used to build interest and excitement on the part of the audience. |
| symbolism | the use of symbolic language, imagery, or colour to evoke emotions or ideas. |
| tableau | a technique in creative drama in which actors create a frozen picture, as if the action were paused; plural is <i>tableaux</i> . Not to be confused with <i>freeze frame</i> , which is a term used in film and video production and which should not be used when discussing drama. |
| tempo | relative speed or rate of movement in pace over time, e.g. the speed at which the music for a dance should be played. Can be applied to dramatic contexts such as in 'tempo rhythm'. |
| tension | the atmosphere created by unresolved, disquieting, or inharmonious situations that human beings feel compelled to address; the state of anxiety the audience feels because of a threat to a character in a play. |
| text | the basis of dramatic activity and performance; a written script or an agreed-upon structure and content for an improvisation. |
| theatre games | improvisational exercises structured by the director or teacher to achieve a specific objective, such as breaking down inhibitions or establishing trust. |
| theatre-in-the-round: | an acting area or stage that may be viewed from all sides simultaneously. |
| theme | the basic idea of a play; the idea, point of view, or perception that binds together a work of art. |
| thrust | a stage that extends into the audience area, with seats on three sides of a peninsula-shaped acting space. |
| timbre | The distinctive character or quality of a musical or vocal sound apart from its pitch or intensity such as in a nasal voice quality. |
| timing | includes setting cues for effects and lighting, synchronizing two or more things that must happen simultaneously, and establishing the pace at which lines will be delivered or the play performed. |
| traverse | form of staging where the audience is on either side of the acting area. See also IN THE ROUND, END ON, THRUST. |
| turning point: | the climax or high point of a story, when events can go either way. |
| upstage: (verb) | to deliberately draw the audience's attention away from another actor or actors by overacting, using flashy bits of business, or other means; term originated from an actor purposefully positioning himself upstage of the other actors so that they must turn their backs on the audience to deliver their lines to him. |
| vocal expression | how an actor uses his or her voice to convey character |

| Term | Definition |
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| vocal projection | directing the voice out of the body to be heard clearly at a distance. |
| voice | the combination of vocal qualities an actor uses such as articulation, phrasing, and pronunciation. |
| wings | offstage areas to the right and left of the acting/onstage area. |

Costume Design

| Term | Definition |
|---|---|
| accessories | anything carried or worn on top of the basic costume for decorative purposes, e.g. a purse or shawl |
| basic block | a pattern which is the starting block for a more detailed pattern based on a particular actor's measurements, and reflecting specifics like historical period |
| basting | sewing fabric pieces together with long or loose temporary stitches |
| breaking down | artistic process of aging or distressing a costume. Paint, glue, dye, ripping and tearing can be used in this process. |
| costume | what an actor wears to evoke the appearance of a particular character. Costumes may be realistic or stylised. They may be "period"—appropriate to the historical setting of the play—or deliberately modern in look, even when the play is set in a past era. |
| costume build | the process of constructing the costume |
| costume fitting | first meeting between the actor and his/her costume. Enables wardrobe staff to ensure a correct fit, and to enable the actor to see if all necessary movement is possible. |
| costume parade (or dress parade) | costume check on stage |
| costume plot | a list or chart made by the costume designer showing the characters appearing in each scene, and what they are wearing. This helps track each character's whereabouts throughout the performance. |
| cutter | skilled wardrobe craftsman who creates the patterns and is responsible for the construction of the female costumes. The cutter's tools include craft paper, T square and fashion ruler. |
| draping | creating a pattern by draping muslin on a dress form, pinning and tucking to get the desired shape, and transferring that shape to craft paper. |
| dresser | crew member who aids with dressing |
| dress form | the adjustable torso (male and female) used by costume cutters, dressmakers and tailors for creating garments; useful for: creating shapes from which patterns are made (draping), fitting and detailed in-place sewing. |
| dress rehearsal | dress full costume/lighting/effects/sound/ action rehearsal |
| dressing rooms | rooms containing clothes rails and mirrors (often surrounded with lights) in which actors change into their costumes and apply make-up. Dressing Room doors have a list of the actors contained within. See also GREEN ROOM. |
| First Hand | an assistant to a cutter or tailor who may sew the costume together, assist at fittings, supervise the sewing team and do the finishing details on a costume. |

| Term | Definition |
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| fittings | the process of adjusting the costume to the actor's body. |
| flat drafting | the use of a basic block and cutter's tools to draft a pattern on craft paper. |
| gondola | an enclosed easily transportable costume rail with removable side which enables large shows to manage huge quantities of costumes, wigs etc. easily. |
| hand | the way a particular fabric feels when it is touched; it may have a soft hand, or a crisp hand, etc. |
| Head of wardrobe | person in charge of the wardrobe and responsible for budgeting, supplies, staff allocation. |
| maquette | a model of the set or costume sketch intended for use by the builder as a guide to construction. |
| mock-up | a full-scale model of a costume, used as a test-run. |
| muslin | a simply woven cotton fabric used to make the costume mock-up, also called factory cotton or unbleached cotton |
| pancake | water based stage make up, applied with sponge |
| preliminaries | the costume designer's first rough drawings which are assessed for feasibility and affordability |
| personal props | small props that are usually carried in an actor's costume, such as money or a pen |
| props | abb. for Properties. Any items used onstage which are not costume or scenery; any moveable object that appears on stage during a performance. |
| quick change | a change of costume that needs to happen very quickly takes place close to the side of the stage. Costume designers need to know about the need for a quick change so that the costume is made incorporating elements such as velcro and zips rather than buttons. A quick change room is often erected at the side of the stage to enable changes to take place in privacy. |
| quick change room | area adjacent to the stage containing lighting, a mirror and a costume rail in which actors can make costume changes quickly, sometimes with the aid of a dresser. |
| seamstress | member of the wardrobe department who operates sewing machines and carries out other sewing tasks. |
| silhouette | a figure whose outline indicates the shape of clothing in a particular historical period. |
| stock | costumes stored from previous productions for recycling and re-use. |
| swatch | a sample of fabric to demonstrate the material to use on a costume or set design, or a sample of lighting gel. A catalogue of all the gel colours made by a particular manufacturer is called a SWATCH BOOK. |
| T-square | ruler, with perpendicular crosspiece at one end (it looks like the |

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| Term | Definition |
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| | letter "T"), used for establishing and drawing parallel lines. |
| tailor | an expert in building clothing for men: historic costumes, military costumes and formal wear. A tailor would create the patterns for jackets, trousers and shirts using the actor's body measurements. |
| unpick | small cutter designed for unpicking a sewn seam. Useful for undoing alterations to a costume following a production. |
| wardrobe | the general name for the costume department, its staff and the accommodation they occupy. |
| wardrobe maintenance | washing and repair of costume |
| wardrobe plot | actor-by-actor, scene-by-scene inventory of all the costumes in a production, with a detailed breakdown into every separate item in each costume. |
| working drawings | drawings made in addition to designers |

Lighting Design

| Term | Definition |
|------------------------|--|
| advance Bar | lighting bar hung from auditorium close to stage |
| amp | abb. amplifier used to amplify sound |
| AMP | abb. Ampere, a unit of electrical current |
| baby Spot | small spotlight under 500w |
| backlight | light coming from upstage, behind scenery or actors, to sculpt and separate them from the background |
| back projection | a method of projecting images onto a translucent screen from behind. Often used for projected scenery or special effects. Because the projector is usually close to the screen, special lenses are needed to ensure that the image seen by the audience is large enough. |
| bar | metal tube used for hanging lanterns |
| barn-door | a rotatable attachment consisting of two or four metal flaps (hinged) which is fixed to the front of a Fresnel or PC type lantern to cut off the beam in a particular direction(s). Profile lanterns use SHUTTERS to achieve a greater degree of control and accuracy. |
| battens | compartmentalised floodlights set up so as to allow colour mixing. See also GROUNDROW. Low voltage battens are commonly used as light curtains & for colour washes. Known in the US as a Strip light. |
| beam Light | lantern with no lens but with parabolic reflector |
| bifocal spot | profile lantern with two sets of shutters, one of which produces a hard edge, and one a soft edge. Not necessary in zoom profiles, because this requirement is fulfilled by two lenses. |
| blackout | a lighting cue where all stage lights go off simultaneously. |

| Term | Definition |
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| board | abb. for "lighting control board" |
| build | increase light levels |
| bulb round | lighting check |
| channel | connected circuit in lighting system |
| check | decrease light levels |
| cinemoid | type of colour gel |
| circuit | means by which a lantern can be identified and connected to a dimmer |
| clamp | normally used to attach lanterns to bars |
| colour call | list of gels for a design |
| colour filter | a sheet of plastic usually composed of a coloured resin sandwiched between two clear pieces. The coloured filter absorbs all the colours of light except the colour of the filter itself, which it allows through. A colour filter is sometimes known as a Gel, after the animal material Gelatine, from which filters were originally made. |
| colour mixing | combining the effects of two or more lighting gels. |
| control room | where lighting is controlled from |
| cross-fade | bringing another lighting state up to completely replace the current lighting state. Sometimes abbreviated to Xfade or XF. |
| cue lights | system of lights used to give "Cues". |
| cue sheet | list of effects |
| diffusion gel | also called Frost. Softens light |
| dimmer | device that controls electricity passed to lanterns |
| downlight | a light from directly above the acting area. |
| dress rehearsal | full costume/lighting/effects/sound/ action rehearsal |
| electrician | (Chief, Deputy, Assistant) responsible for lighting |
| elex | 'LX' electrical things or electrical department |
| elex tape | "LX" tape sticky back plastic tape available in various colours |
| ellipsoidal | type of reflector used in profile spots |
| engineer | usually "sound" but can be "lighting" |
| fader | means of controlling lights |
| flash | when lights are flashed for effect |
| flash up | method of testing lanterns |
| floats | jargon for footlights |
| flood | to wash the stage with general lighting. The name given to a basic box-shaped lantern with a simple reflector used to achieve this effect. |

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| Term | Definition |
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| focus | The adjustment of lighting/projection equipment and/or the direction in which it is aimed |
| focusing session | when adjustment and plotting is done |
| follow spot | large profile spotlight with operator |
| fresnel | adjustable spotlight giving a diffused light, created by the construction of its lens of 'concentric circles'. Used with barn doors. |
| FX | abb. for 'effects' |
| gel | coloured lighting film (originally made from gelatine) |
| gobo | metal slide placed in gate of lantern which throws a pattern |
| groundrow | floodlight battens placed on stage |
| halogen | gas contained in lamps |
| heads below | warning shouted if anything is dropped from above |
| house lights | the lights that illuminate the auditorium before and after the performance and during intermission. |
| impedance | term of electrical resistance |
| iris | device in lantern gate that allows beam size to be altered |
| kill | instruction to stop action or effect |
| lamps | the thing that creates light in a lantern ("bulb" in domestic terms) |
| lantern | stage light |
| level | intensity of light |
| lighting plot | lighting cue description |
| light set | a term used to describe a situation where no physical set is used on stage. The 'set' is created entirely by means of lighting. |
| lose | to turn something off |
| limes | old term for Follow Spots |
| mains | power source |
| master | lever/slide which controls all light |
| multicore | thick cable containing many cables |
| PC – prism convex | or "pebble". A lens in a lantern |
| par can | type of lantern containing a fixed beam par lamp |
| patch panel | panel where lighting circuits are connected and changed – 'patched' |
| perch | lighting position concealed behind proscenium |
| profile spot | lantern which can produce hard or soft light |
| plot | any list of cues |
| prompt copy/book | the master copy of the performance, including all blocking, effects and cues |

| Term | Definition |
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| record | plotting a lighting cue by saving it to the lighting board |
| reflector | shiny surface in back of lantern which helps throw light |
| rigging | fixing lighting, sound and scenic devices to the theatre structure |
| saturation rig | lighting rig at full capacity |
| scatter | low level light cast at side of normal light beam |
| shin buster | low side lights |
| shutter | device in lantern used to shape beam |
| slots | side lighting position in auditorium walls |
| special effects | lighting effects used to enhance a theatrical performance. |
| spill | unwanted light on the stage |
| strobe | flashing light |
| tech | Technical Rehearsal |
| throw | distance between lantern and object |
| tripe | thick bundle of cables from lighting bar |
| tri-lite | lighting/scenic metal section made from three lengths of lightweight alloy (triangular construction) |
| UV | abb. Ultra Violet |
| working lights | lights used by stage crew to aid work |

Set Design

| Term | Definition |
|------------------------|--|
| act drop | cloth flown in at the end of an act |
| backcloth | flown cloth behind scenic element |
| back projection | a method of projecting images onto a translucent screen from behind. Often used for projected scenery or special effects. Because the projector is usually close to the screen, special lenses are needed to ensure that the image seen by the audience is large enough. |
| bar | metal tube used for hanging scenery |
| batten | length of wood attached to cloth to keep it taut |
| book flat | a hinged flat |
| border | flown scenic element used in masking |
| box set | a set with three walls and a ceiling, leaving the fourth wall to be imagined by the actors. The box set represents a real room with doors and windows that work. |
| brace | portable support for flats |
| breaking down | artistic process of aging costume, props or scenery. |

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| Term | Definition |
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| butterfly tabs | tabs fixed at top and drawn in from sides |
| carpenter | (Scenic, Deputy, Master): maker of scenery |
| centre line | imaginary line shown on ground-plan |
| cleat | metal device used for tying sash lines |
| cloth | a piece of scenic canvas, painted or plain, which is flown or fixed to hang in a vertical position. A Backcloth (or Backdrop) hangs at the rear of a scene. A Floorcloth is a painted canvas sheet placed on the stage floor to mark out the acting area, or to achieve a particular effect. A Frontcloth hangs well downstage, often to hide a scene change taking place behind. |
| come down | when the curtains come down |
| counterweights | system used for lowering and raising scenery |
| curtains | at front of stage - called Tabs |
| curtain up/down | beginning and end of performance |
| cut cloth | scenic piece with no centre |
| cyclorama | a fabric drop hung from a curved or segmented batten, or a curved wall at the back of the stage, upon which light can be cast to create effects (<i>cyc</i> for short). |
| dead | marked position of scenery or equipment |
| dock | area at side/rear of stage for storing scenery |
| dress rehearsal | dress full costume/lighting/effects/sound/ action rehearsal |
| effect | scenic |
| elevation | technical drawing showing side view |
| EMU | electrical Multiple Unit, used to describe stage machinery composed from multiple moving parts |
| false pros' | decorative proscenium arch |
| fit up | installation of equipment and scenery |
| flat | a wooden frame, usually covered with painted cloth, used to create walls or separations on stage. |
| flies | area above stage where flown scenery is kept |
| floor-cloth | painted canvas flooring |
| footing | to steady a ladder/flat with your foot |
| flown | scenery or equipment which has been "flown" into the flies |
| fly | raising scenery above audience sight level |
| flyman | crew member operating flying equipment |
| fly tower | structure above stage containing flying equipment |
| french flat | solid flat |

| Term | Definition |
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| french brace | collapsible brace fixed to flat |
| gaffer tape | sticky back fabric tape |
| gauze | see 'Scrim' |
| genie trap | a mechanised trap where actor shoots through stage floor |
| get in | when a touring company installs a show |
| get out | when touring company uninstalls show |
| grave trap | body length trapdoor in stage |
| grid | metal frames in flying tower from which flying equipment is held (wooden in very old theatres) |
| ground-plan | technical drawing of stage |
| hand props | properties such as tools, weapons, or luggage that are carried on stage by an individual actor. |
| header | horizontal flying piece horizontal flying piece |
| heads below | warning shouted if anything is dropped from above |
| hemp | type of abrasive rope originally used in theatre for flying |
| hemp flying | traditional method of flying using 3 or 5 hemp ropes and no counter-weights |
| iron | fireproof metal curtain |
| ladder | framework in shape of ladder |
| leg | flown cloth or flat masking side of stage |
| light set | A term used to describe a situation where no physical set is used on stage. The 'set' is created entirely by means of lighting. |
| lose | to remove from set |
| maquette | a model of the set intended for use by the builder as a guide to construction. |
| mark it | instruction to record position of performer/object on stage |
| mark out | temporary objects/lines on rehearsal floor used to describe set/stage |
| mask | to hide from audience's sight |
| masking | flats/cloths used to Mask |
| model | model of stage design |
| model box | model of theatre in which stage design model is housed |
| milliput | type of modelling plastic used to create model figures and model scenery |
| out | piece of scenery that has been flown "Out" |
| platform | also referred to as a riser or rostrum it is a stationary, standard flat walking surface for actors to perform on. Typically, they are built to be assembled modularly. They are often used to provide varying levels, to make a show more visually interesting. They are also used |

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| Term | Definition |
|-------------------------|---|
| | to separate areas on stage, and as seating. |
| pin hinge | hinge jointed by removable pin |
| practical | a working object onstage, such as a door or window |
| preset | position of scenery and effects at start of performance and scene |
| props | abb. for Properties. Any items used onstage which are not costume or scenery; any moveable object that appears on stage during a performance. |
| prop box/skip | place to store props |
| prop table | table situated in wings on which props are placed |
| props room | room for construction of props |
| pyrotechnics | bombs, bangs, flashes etc. |
| rigging | fixing lighting, sound and scenic devices to the theatre structure |
| runner | used to hold down carpet edges |
| scenery | the theatrical equipment, such as curtains, flats, backdrops, or platforms, used in a dramatic production to communicate environment. |
| scenic artists | people who paint scenery |
| scrim (or gauze) | A drop made of fabric that seems almost opaque when lit from the front but semi-transparent when lit from behind. |
| set | the physical surroundings, visible to the audience, in which the action of the play takes place. |
| set designer | the person who designs the physical surroundings in which the action of the play takes place. |
| setting line | line past which no scenery, props or furniture may be set |
| size | glue like preparation made from animal bones, used to harden and preserve canvas on flats |
| spike | nail something to floor |
| stage brace | extending support for scenery |
| stage crew | employed to move/operate scenery |
| star trap | a mechanised trap where actor shoots through stage floor |
| strike | to remove object or scenery from stage |
| swag | curtains fashioned so they do not hang straight |
| tabs | curtains |
| teaser | short flown border |
| tech | technical rehearsal |
| treads | steps or stairs |
| tri-lite | lighting/scenic metal section made from three lengths of lightweight alloy (triangular construction) |

| Term | Definition |
|------------------|--|
| truck | platform with wheels |
| working drawings | drawings made in addition to designers |

Sound Design

| Term | Definition |
|--------------|---|
| amp | abb. amplifier used to amplify sound |
| AMP | abb. Ampere, a unit of electrical current |
| build | increase sound levels |
| cardioid | heart-shaped pick-up pattern of microphone |
| channel | connected circuit in sound system |
| check | decrease sound levels |
| condenser | type of microphone |
| control room | where lighting and sound is controlled from |
| cross-fade | in sound, bringing another sound state up to completely replace the current sound state/ change at which some channels are increased while other are lowered. Sometimes abbreviated to Xfade or XF. |
| crossover | sound system device that routes pitch to the correct part of the speaker |
| cue sheet | list of effects |
| decibel | dB. measurement of sound |
| desk | Sound Desk – sound operators desk |
| dub | reproduce sound from one copy to another |
| dynamic | type of microphone |
| elex | 'LX' electrical things or electrical department |
| elex tape | "LX" tape sticky back plastic tape available in various colours |
| engineer | Sound engineer |
| E.Q. | abb. for equalisation |
| fader | means of controlling sound |
| feedback | when a mic picks up its own signal from a speaker |
| floatmic's | microphones placed along front of stage |
| foldback | sound sent to performer |
| frequency | number of times a sound vibrates |
| FX | abb. for 'effects' |
| gain | the "master" volume control on mixer |

Glossary

| | |
|-------------------------|---|
| horns | metal speakers |
| hypercardioid | type of pick-up pattern of a microphone |
| impedance | term of electrical resistance |
| kill | instruction to stop action or effect |
| lavalier | type of radio-mic fitting |
| level | intensity of sound |
| lose | to turn something off |
| mains | power source |
| master | lever/slide which controls all sound |
| mixer | desk/software for mixing sound |
| multicore | thick cable containing many cables |
| omnidirectional | pick up pattern of microphone |
| overture | music which starts a musical performance |
| PA system | the public address system or any sound system |
| PFL | "Pre Fade Listen" means of listening to a mic channel without bringing up the fader |
| pitch | the particular level of a voice, instrument or tune. |
| PZM | Pressure Zone Mic. Small plate collects reflections of sound into a small condenser mic |
| pan | to move sound from one place to another |
| plot | any list of cues |
| prompt copy/book | the master copy of the performance, including all blocking, effects and cues |
| radio mic | personal microphone without power lead |
| rigging | fixing lighting, sound and scenic devices to the theatre structure |
| sound | the effects an audience hears during a performance to communicate character, context, or environment. |
| sound design | the three categories of sound design, are: <i>Functional</i> (e.g. practical sounds such as a gunshot to coincide with an action on stage) <i>Atmospheric</i> (i.e. the possibility of using underscoring that may include music but which may also be in the form of a soundscape) <i>Incidental</i> where sound can be used to cover moments of transition (e.g. between scenes or to cover the placing of stage props). |
| sound effects | 1) Recorded: Often abbreviated to FX. There are many sources for recorded sound effects, from Compact Discs, to downloading from the internet. May form an obvious part of the action (train arriving at station) or may be in the background throughout a scene (e.g. birds chirping). 2) Live: Gunshots, door slams, and offstage voices (amongst many others) are most effective when done live. |

| | |
|------------------------|--|
| sound elements | music, sound effects, actors' voices. |
| special effects | sound effects used to enhance a theatrical performance. |
| tech | technical rehearsal |
| timbre | The distinctive character or quality of a musical or vocal sound apart from its pitch or intensity such as in a nasal voice quality. |