

Y10 KNOWLEDGE ORGANISER C2

PERFORMANCE SKILLS:

Actions, alignment, accuracy, balance, body language, coordination, contraction, characterisation, communication, dynamic range, energy, expression, extension, facial expression, focus and control, gesture, mannerism, movement memory, pace, posture, phrasing, projection, reaction/interaction with others.

PERFORMANCE AND INTERPRETIVE SKILLS:

Awareness of the performance space and audience, emphasis, energy and commitment, facial expression, focus, handling and use of props, set, costume, makeup and masks, interaction with and response to other performers, musicality, projection, timing, stage presence, use of space.

VOCAL AND MUSICAL SKILLS:

control, characterisation, clarity and articulation, expression, inflection pace, pitch, phrasing, projection remembering lines, timing, tone and use of pause.

DNA by Dennis Kelly


You need to KNOW this to include in your answers.

'Is it right to sacrifice the individual for the many? This for me is the central question in the play' Dennis Kelly

The plot.

DNA by Dennis Kelly is about a group of teenagers, who could be described as a 'gang', who have accidentally killed one of their classmates. When they realise their terrible mistake, they try to cover it up, but inadvertently implicate an innocent man in the process. At each moment when they could come clean, the group instead weaves a darker, more complex web of lies.

The Original Staging



PRODUCTION FACTS

- DNA was first written by Dennis Kelly for the National Theatre Connections Programme in 2007.
- It was performed in the Cottesloe at the National Theatre, London.
- It was directed by Paul Miller
- Set, Costume and Video Design by Simon Daw.
- The lighting was designed by Paule Constable.
- Sound Designer Rich Walsh

The structure

It has been constructed with a **cyclical narrative**, in three different locations.

A street, a field, a wood.

There is a pattern to the sequence, Jan and Mark introduce the problem of that particular section, then it's Leah and Phil before moving onto to the wood where everyone is present and the problem is solved. The structure is broken in the final section when it is just a street, then a field.

Themes

Bullying – the most obvious character that is bullied is Adam which happens before the beginning of the play and seemingly has caused his death. However, it is worth considering who the main bullies are and what types e.g. verbal, mental and physical.

Gangs – Adam is not only desperate to be part of the gang but consider what the others are prepared to do to remain part of the gang.

Power – there are numerous power struggles within the play and it shifts throughout. It is Cathy that ultimately takes on the role as gang leader in the end, we should consider why?

Other themes are **Responsibility, Violence, Fear and Friendship.**

Characters

Mark and Jan act as narrators who explain what's happening. They are always together and help in the cover up.

Leah is a moral character who worries about the groups actions. She is insecure and seeks Phil's attention.

Phil is the groups leader for most of the play. He's quiet, emotionless and manipulative.

John Tate starts as the group leader but his authority is weak and he leaves early on in the play.

Danny is a selfish character who is more worried about becoming a dentist than Adam's well being. Richard seems unhappy about the cover-up but he goes along with it. He challenged John Tate's leadership.

Cathy is violent and remorseless about Adam's death. She helps to kill Adam after he reappears.

Lou worries about the group getting caught. She follows whoever is in charge.

Brian is the weakest group member. He's bullied into covering up Adam's death and he suffers a mental breakdown as a result.

Adam is bullied by the group and thought to be dead. He turns out to be alive but Phil has him killed.

Original staging and style

DNA was originally staged in 2007 at The National Theatre, in **Proscenium Arch** staging. The locations were conveyed through **Projections across a bare stage** and the street/field/wood could be anywhere in Britain. The year could be any year.

The play was written with the intention that it could be interpreted or staged in different ways leaving it up to the director to consider their own artistic intentions. Although the **acting is naturalistic** the set doesn't have to be and its fast transitions between scenes to keep the tension will need to be considered with any choice of set or staging. The gender of the characters is also left up to the director and are easily interchangeable.

Use of colour – the colour blue was prominent creating a cold tense atmosphere.

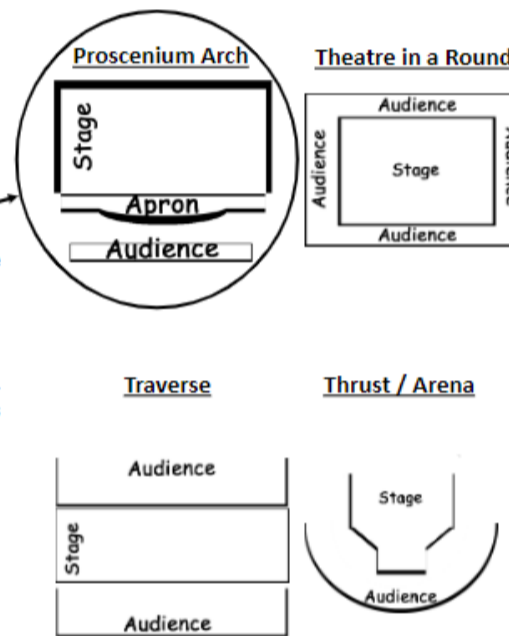
The school uniform ties were blue and the plastic bag was blue.

Costume – school uniform but each character wore a jacket or hoody to create an individual image, the ties were loosened. Adam's shirt was muddied and bloodied.

Space – the grey stage remained bare and if they sat, they sat on the floor. The focus was on the dialogue and the characters listening to the instructions. The acting was stripped down and there was strength in the stillness and the space between the characters.

Transitions – the street scene was created by an isolated strip of light downstage.

The transitions were swift and stylised movements were kept to a minimum getting character from A to B. SFX were used to show the passing of time, similar to a 'whoosh' sound.



What you need to be able to do

Explain how meaning is conveyed

Explain how **an actor** conveys meaning on stage through their use of...

Vocals

Volume – Loud / Soft / Booming and Powerful / Ear piercing / Nervously quiet, conveying...

Pace – Slow / Moderate / fast / Hurried / Alarming / Casual / Sluggish / Deliberate / Fearful / Frantic / Rapid, which creates an atmosphere of...

Pause – which marks or highlights...

Tone – aggressive / questioning / Intense / worried / impatient / Anxious, suggests mood and intention.

Rhythm – Unfinished / Short sharp / Erratic rhythms, variation of rhythms expressing her rollercoaster of emotions.

Pitch – high / low, to indicate...

Accent – Upper/Lower class / Regional

Emphasis – making certain words stand out and can change their meaning.

Intonation – Rise and fall of the voice helps us to say what we mean. His/her speech is - erratic - stuttering - varying in pace - attention seeking, - trying to reassure herself - revealing her panic.

Motivation

A characters reasons for doing what they are doing. This can relate to their background and how this effects their actions or it may be more in the moment. It also is about how the character is feeling at that moment and what they are perhaps thinking but not saying or revealing.

He wants to exert his power over them and take control in order to protect them from the consequences.
She needs to be loved/liked
She yearns for affection
She won't show any emotion and doesn't appear to have any.

Movement

Body language

Gesture

Mime

Physical Theatre – representing / symbolises

Slow and Steady gestures which communicate...

Over exaggerated hand gestures moving from hips to head to folded highlighting his/her...

Pacing across the stage creating an atmosphere of...

His/her movement / gestures are - threatening - fearful - friendly - sudden - disturbingly in a tentative manner.

Interaction

Repetition of lines not expecting an answer

Isolation from the group suggesting...

Sitting closely for reassurance

Silence and only interacting when necessary

Sudden bursts of physical violence make others wary of her.

Needing to fill the space with words.

Lack of eye contact to suggest...

The exam questions will ask you to **consider your role as a director**. You need to consider how to prepare the actor for the role they will play in performance. Be prepared to **explain how rehearsal techniques prepare actors for their roles and help them to understand the characters motivation and relationships with the other characters. E.g.**

- Hot seating/Thought tracking/Freeze frames
- Improvising outside the text/Vocal games
- Spatial games to consider proxemics and interactions.

Set design

Entrances and exits

Rostra

Flats - static / suspended or moveable

Backdrop

Levels

Suspended

Projection

Sightlines

Sloping

Rotating

Colours

Naturalistic

Non-Naturalistic

Symbols - Dressed with - leaves - drinks crate

Symbols of youth, den, meeting place, proximity to city

Hidden, dark secret

Lighting LFX

Intense – Bright / Dim / Focussed / wash covering larger area.

Flashing / Chase – A chase is a sequenced set of flashing lights

Colour – can be altered by using gels, helps inform mood or can be used to symbolise something.

GOBO – creates shapes / patterns for the lights.

Types of light

Fresnel - soft edge effect

Flood - covers larger areas, can create washes

Parcan - good for strong saturated colours

Profile spot - Fixed, hard edged spot light

Follow spot - Moveable spot light

Position - Overhead / side / floor / on stage / rear

Explain what decisions a **designer** may make in order to convey meaning through **Lighting/sound/set design and costume.**

Sound SFX

Sound to mark or Music to highlight transition

Live or recorded sound

Volume

Intense

Calm

Contrasts

Fast paced creating tension, setting a mood of...

Costume

Describe

Head -> Toe

Hat -> Shoe

Makeup

Accessories which indicate...

Bags, scarfs, headband, cap etc...

Colour / Logo / Uniform

State – smart / scruffy / trendy / unkept

This highlights her status...

Conveying her need to fit in...

Portraying her individual nature and desire to stand out.