Exercise walk-through

1.1
Intention, blocking and audience: supported rehearsal

International Baccalaureate · IB Diploma · Theatre · SL

Reading the play as a theatre-maker

- A literature student reads a play to find what it means.
- A theatre-maker reads it to find what it **demands**: what must be seen and heard, who is on stage, and what changes from moment to moment.
- Think of the text as a **score** for performance, like sheet music: it is only complete when it is played.
- The theatre-maker's read has four layers:

Vision, design and the audience

- **proscenium** : the audience watch through an invisible "fourth wall", like people looking into a room;
- **thrust** : the stage pushes out into the audience on three sides; actors can speak almost to them;
- **traverse** : the audience sit on two sides facing each other; they see the action and each other, like guests at a party;
- **in the round** : the audience surround the stage; nothing can be hidden.

Sources for this lesson

- International Baccalaureate, *Theatre guide* (first assessment 2024).
- A. Chekhov, *The Cherry Orchard* (1904), and his letters of 1903–1904 on the first production.
- K. Stanislavski, *My Life in Art* (1924), on the Moscow Art Theatre productions of Chekhov.
- P. Brook, *The Shifting Point* (1987), on his 1981 production at the Bouffes du Nord.

Exercises 2.1·2.2

2.1 Name the four parts of the theatre-maker's read. [2]



2.2 Distinguish a theme from a concept, with one example of each. [2]



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2.1 Given circumstances; the spine; action units; the world of the play (2 – 1 for three).

2.2 Distinguish a theme from a concept, with one example of each. [2]



2.2 A theme names subject matter ("loneliness"); a concept is a performance argument the staging can execute ("the room shrinks as each daughter leaves") (2).

Exercises 2.3·2.4

2.3 How is a concept tested before any design work? [2]



2.4 What does the audience's position decide? Give two seating arrangements and the role each assigns the audience. [3]



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2.3 How is a concept tested before any design work? [2]



2.3 By staging the opening, the pivot and the ending from it: a concept that cannot stage the ending (or the pivot) is a mood, not a concept (2).

2.4 What does the audience's position decide? Give two seating arrangements and the role each assigns the audience. [3]



2.4 The audience's role – what they ARE in the theatre event: fourth-wall end-on makes them voyeurs (unseen witnesses); traverse makes them trapped witnesses (walls of the event); promenade makes them ghosts following the action (any two + roles, 3).

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Exercise 2.5

2.5 Name the proposal's five-part structure. [2]



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2.5 The play and its world; the concept unpacked; the three moments; the design areas; the audience's position (2 – 1 for four).

Exercise 3.1

3.1 *(Concept style.)* A play's read yields the sentence: "this staging shows a family eating its young to keep its house." Unpack this concept: state what the set, light and final image do to serve it. [6]



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3.1 Set: the room physically shrinks – tracking walls close per act, the house consuming its own space as the daughters leave (2). Light: naturalism narrowing act by act to a single lamp's circle – safety shrinking with the space until only the table is lit (2). Final image: the daughter out, the parents facing the table in a pool the size of a plate – the family kept its house and lost everyone in it, the concept's sentence landed as a picture (2).

Exercise 3.2

3.2 *(Proposal style.)* Draft the three moments (opening image, pivot, final image) this concept implies, and justify each in one line from the concept. [6]



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3.2 Opening image: the family eats at a table filling a wide stage, walls far – abundance stated, so the shrink has somewhere to go (justified: the world before the eating begins) (2). Pivot: the daughter stands and the lamp is the only light, walls halved – the moment the eating becomes visible to its victim (justified: the spine's turn staged as loss of space) (2). Final image: the parents alone in the plate-sized pool, the vacated width dark – the argument completed (justified: keeping the house, losing the young) (2).

Exercise 3.3

3.3 *(Evaluation style.)* A student's proposal opens with a strong concept sentence but the design pages never mention it again. Name the failure and state the repair. [3]



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3.3 The failure is the concept drop: a strong sentence the pages never cash (2). The repair: every design and staging choice is rewritten to justify FROM the concept – each set, costume, light, sound and space paragraph opens by returning to the sentence, and the three moments are checked to stage it (1).

Local review guidance: each design area must DO something the concept can be seen doing; a moment is a picture plus its justification, not a summary; (R1 3.3) evaluation names the failure from the proposal craft, not general writing advice. Authored guidance.