



Ark Pioneer Learning at Home Extended Curriculum

Drama

Work to be completed

- Task 1:** Read the information on the purpose of set design.
- Task 2:** Answer the questions on set design and mark your answers.
- Stretch:** Design the set for any well-known story.

Resources/Links to help with work

- **Link 1 (Set design in theatre)**
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tYX5YXjYaA>

How will this work be checked?

Each week you will be given 'red pen work' to carry out corrections on the learning that you are doing at home.

If you complete your work to a really high standard please email a picture to your form tutor or to info@arkpioneer.org and we will upload the best examples to celebrate on our website!

How much time should I be studying and what happens if I don't finish all my work?

For core curriculum subjects you are expected to do 30min each day as a minimum. Those subjects are English language, English literature, Maths, Science, History and Geography. These subjects all have a weekly quiz and will be checked in on by your form teacher when they call each week.

All other subjects are 'Extended Curriculum' and they should be done after you have finished the Core Curriculum tasks for the day. You should plan to do work in different subjects each day. We recommend that pupils do one hour per week in each of the 'extended curriculum' subjects.

We recognise that it is not possible for all pupils to complete all work given the exceptional circumstance. Please speak with your form tutor about the work if it is becoming unmanageable.



Aim high



Have integrity



Be kind



Model determination

Task 1: Read the information below on 'The purpose of set design'.

The purpose of set design

The set helps show where and when the story of a play takes place, while also conveying meaning to the audience.

Setting

The most important aspect of set design is to show the audience where the action takes place, which might be as general as a country or as specific as a room within a house.

Period

As well as showing the setting, the set design should suggest the time period of the play. For example, a play set in a living room in the 1970s could feature yellow and browns within the patterned walls and floors and large retro furniture associated with the era.



Communicating themes or symbols

The set design can also communicate abstract concepts, such as themes and symbols. As an example, a design could include a large, dead tree to suggest the themes of death and decay.

Considering colour, condition, practicalities and scale

When designing a set, there are several aspects to consider, including:

- colour
- condition
- practicalities
- scale

Colour

Colour can be used within set design to symbolise various ideas on stage. For example, a set designer might make a Victorian schoolhouse look stricter by using dull greys and a monochromatic palette (black and white).

Condition

The condition of a design can reveal important information about the setting or a character's circumstances. For example, a living room with tatty, ripped curtains and stained carpets might suggest that the house is old or that the character who lives there is poor.

Practicalities

A set designer will need to consider the practical aspects of set design. If the play has lots of fast-paced scenes in various locations, set design may need to be kept minimal to help with the quick changes.

Scale

A set designer can experiment with scale to create different effects on stage. Forced perspective is a design technique used to make an object appear either further away or closer than it is in reality. For example, a scene set on a street could feature a row of houses on both sides of the stage, and those further from the audience can be smaller to create an optical illusion, making the road appear longer.



For this set to be constructed on a stage, the houses further away from the audience could be made smaller, using forced perspective to make the road appear longer

Using shape, texture and transitions

Designers will also consider:

- shape
- staging configuration
- texture
- transition
- health and safety

Shape

The use of shape within set design can also convey ideas to the audience. For example, a forest set with lots of bare trees forming sharp and jagged shapes could help to create a more eerie atmosphere.

Staging configuration

The **staging configuration**, eg end-on or in the round, impacts how the audience relates to the action on stage. A set designer will need to consider

the theatre space they are designing for and how to create a set that is effective for that space.

Texture

The materials used within set design provide different textures that help to create the feel of a set. For example, a room with rustic, wooden-plank floorboards and flat blinds will feel very different to a room with soft, thick carpets and velvet curtains.

Transition

Transitions are the moments between scenes, and often during these transitions the scenery will move to suggest a new location. If several locations or time periods are to be represented on stage at the same time, a composite set (a set that represents more than one room at a time) will be required.

Health and safety

Set designers need to consider the **health and safety** of stagehands, performers and the audience, to protect them from injury. They will need to ensure that all items of scenery are properly secured, and that their movement can be conducted safely.

Scenic devices - drapery, levels, projections and flats

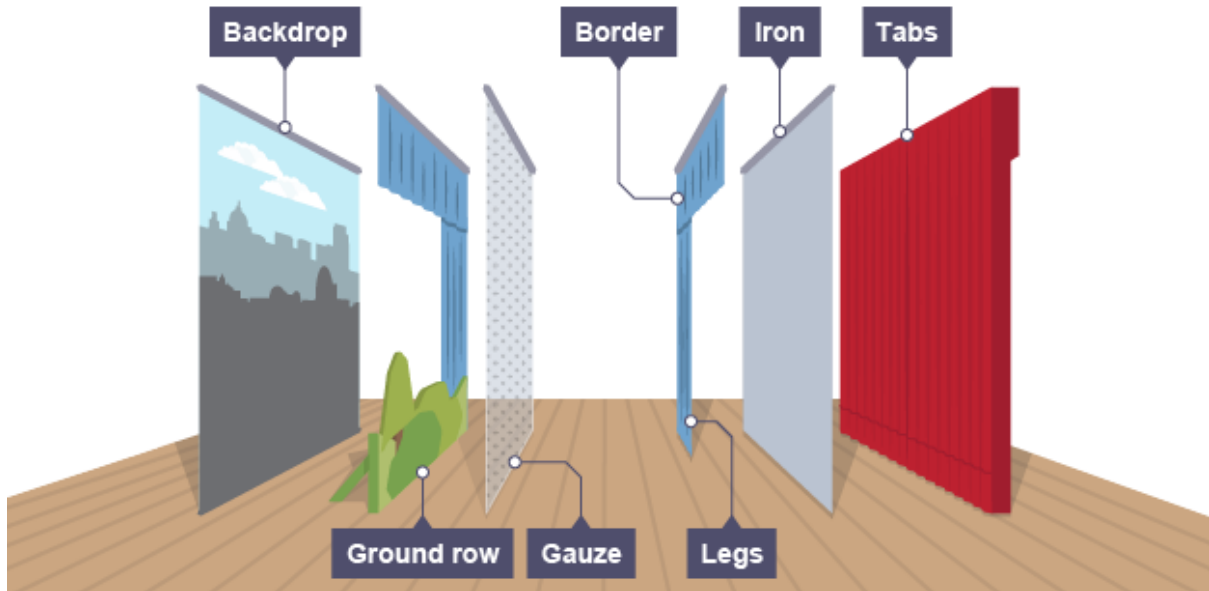
Set designers use a range of scenic devices to convey their design ideas.

Drapery

There are different types of curtains that are used for different purposes:

- **backdrops** (also called a **backcloth**) - a piece of cloth hung behind the stage in a theatre as part of the scenery that can be painted or have coloured light or projections shone onto it
- **borders** - wide and short drapes that mask the top of the stage where lights are hung
- **gauze** (also called a **scrim**) - a thin curtain that can be lit either from the front to make it opaque, or from behind to make it transparent
- **legs** - long and narrow drapes used to mask the wing space
- **tabs** - the name for stage curtains that can open horizontally or fly vertically

- **ground row** - a long, low piece of stage scenery, built to simulate part of a landscape. It is sometimes used to conceal lanterns from the audience
- **iron** - a safety curtain designed to prevent stage fires spreading into the auditorium



Levels

A set designer can vary levels through the use of **rostra (see image below)**, ramps and steps. Ordinary blocks, staging units, scaffolding and planks can be used to create levels and can be joined together to create steps or other shapes. Levels are often used in productions to portray a character's status, power or situation.





An example of set design featuring levels within a performance of Kuddam Bab al-Safara al-Leil Kan Tawil, Al-Madina Theater

Projections

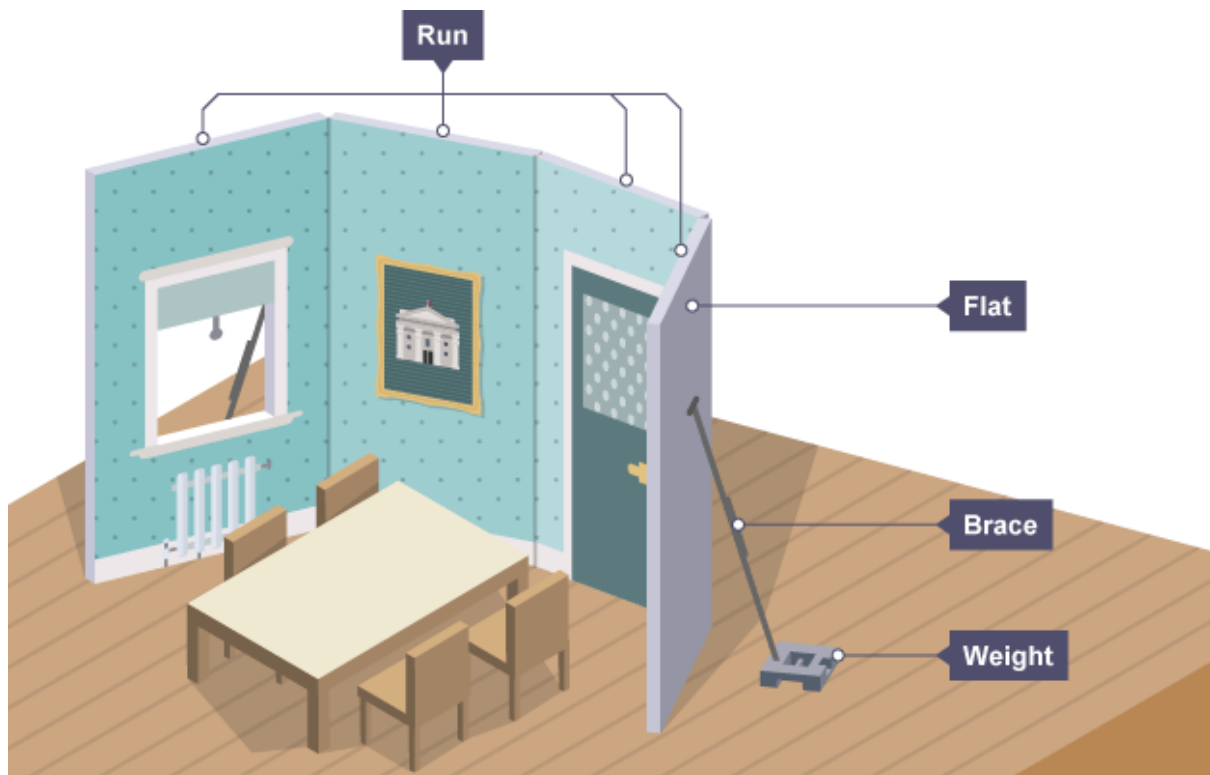
Projections are becoming more common within set design and can be used to add detail and texture on stage. In some venues scenery can be projected, which can be very effective but can have limitations. For example, unless it can be projected from behind the set, actors will cast shadows onto it.



An example of scenery being projected onto the stage in *Sunday In The Park With George*, 2013

Flats

A flat is a piece of scenery used to represent a wall or to conceal a backstage area. A series of flats can be joined together to make a run, where each flat is supported by a brace with a heavy weight attached.



Scenic devices - set dressing and special effects

There are several other scenic devices that can be incorporated into a set design:

- **set dressing** - smaller items that add details to a set, such as stage furniture, to help establish setting and era
- **entrances and exits** - a set designer might include naturalistic doors or performers may enter from the wing space or even enter or exit from trap doors
- **floors** - sets usually incorporate a floor that is fixed to the stage
- **pyrotechnics (pyro)** - the use of fireworks within theatre to create effects, eg explosions

- **hydraulics** - machinery used in large-scale productions to move set, usually up and down
- **smoke** - used to create dramatic effects and created with a fogger or a hazer
- **truck** - a moving platform on which a piece of scenery is built to facilitate scene changing
- **revolve** - a turntable built into the stage floor on which scenery can be set and then turned
- **flying** - involves a manual or electric system that lifts performers off the stage, allowing for stunts and aerial sequences



Pyrotechnics on stage during Marie-Antoinette, Group F



Smoke on stage during a circus performance



Flying on stage during Fatherland, Manchester International Festival

Task 2: Answer the questions on set design and mark your answers using the information on page 12.

1. What is the purpose of set design?

2. What do you think is meant by having a **minimalistic** set?

- a) Having a very detailed set with lots of props.
- b) Having a very minimal set, with few props to accommodate lots of scene changes.
- c) Having a very small set and stage.
- d) Having a very large and spacious set.

3. Which technique is used to create a 3D effect by making objects appear far away?

- a) Foreground
- b) Background
- c) Forced Perspective
- d) Projection

4. What can rostra, ramps and steps be used to create, in theatre?

- a) Different levels
- b) Different steps
- c) An illusion of space
- d) A depth of field

5. What is a piece of scenery, used to represent a wall, called?

- a) Rostra
- b) A flat
- c) A Brace
- d) Backdrop

Answers:

1. What is the purpose of set design?

Setting – to show where the performance is taking place, Period – what era the play is set in, and to represent themes and symbols.

2. What do you think is meant by having a **minimalistic** set?

a) Having a very detailed set with lots of props.

b) Having a very minimal set, with few props to accommodate lots of scene changes.

c) Having a very small set and stage.

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Stretch: Design and label the set for a play/story of your choice. (Some suggestions below.) Try to label to different equipment used.

- Blood Brothers
- Oliver Twist
- Cinderella

