

The art form

Handout DN2

Theatre is an art form that usually presents **people** involved in some sort of **action** in some sort of **space**, whether it's a theatre, a classroom or a street.

In a **play text**, the action is communicated through words in the form of episodes/scenes/moments of action. Some words are spoken but some may be instructions from the playwright to the artists working on the play.

The structure of these episodes/scenes/moments of action gives a focus and communicates a meaning, idea, story or experience to an audience. This is communicated through the following.

Performance		<ul style="list-style-type: none">a. Bodyb. Facec. Gestured. Movemente. Voice
Production	Directing	<ul style="list-style-type: none">a. Interpreting the play textb. Transforming the text and its ideas into actionc. Communicating meaning, ideas and/or story through action
	Design	<ul style="list-style-type: none">a. Set and costumeb. Lights and soundc. Props

Plays are written in many different styles and often experiment with form. Play texts may also differ depending on cultural traditions regarding playwriting and the recording of intended action. The “art form checklist” may not, therefore, be applicable to every play.

The art form checklist

The following checklist may be helpful when working with a play text but can also be helpful for the creation of new work.

<p style="text-align: center;">Action</p> <p>What happens in the play?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Story and plot (when appropriate)• Structure• Dramatic tension• Pace• Mood	<p style="text-align: center;">Meaning</p> <p>What is the play about?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Themes• Ideas• Messages• Symbols and symbolic actions• Text and subtext
<p style="text-align: center;">Context/setting</p> <p>Where does the action of the play take place?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Location• Culture• Period• Social conditions• Atmosphere	<p style="text-align: center;">Performer</p> <p>Who are the characters in the play?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Physiology• Background• Psychology• Emotion• Attitude towards other characters• Status• Objective