

GLOSSARY for Arizona Arts: Theatre STANDARDS

Acting techniques

Specific skills, pedagogies, theories, or methods of investigation used by an actor to prepare for a theatre performance

Believability

Theatrical choices thought to be “true” based upon an understanding of any given fictional moment, interpretation of text, and/or human interaction

Character traits

Observable embodied actions that illustrate a character’s personality, values, beliefs, and history

Conflict

The problem, confrontation, or struggle in a scene or play; conflict may include a character against him or herself, a character in opposition to another character, a character against nature, a character against society, or a character against the supernatural

Creative drama

A process-centered, non-exhibitional approach to drama intended to benefit the performers themselves; story drama and process drama are two types of creative drama

Creative processes

The application of production and technical elements (see the definitions) to a theatrical production

Devised drama

Creation of an original performance piece by an ensemble

Dialogue

A conversation between two or more characters

Dramatic play

Make-believe where children naturally assign and accept roles, then act them out

Focus

Commitment by a participant (an actor, technician, director) to remain in the scope of the project or to stay within the world of the play

Genre

Relating to a specific kind or type of drama and theatre such as a tragedy, drama, melodrama, comedy, or farce

Gesture

An expressive and planned movement of the body or limbs

Given circumstances

The underlying actions and events that have happened before the play, story, or devised piece begins

Guided drama experience

A leader guides participants during a process drama, story drama, or creative drama experience (see the definitions) through side-coaching, narration, and prompting; the action of the drama does not stop in order for the leader to support the students; facilitator may guide participants in or out of role

Improvise

The spontaneous, intuitive, and immediate response of movement and speech; a distinction can be made between spontaneous improvisation, which is immediate and unrehearsed, and prepared improvisation, which is shaped and rehearsed

Imaginary elsewhere

An imagined location which can be historical, fictional, or realistic

Imagined worlds

An imaginary world created collectively by participants in a drama experience

Inner thoughts

The underlying and implied meaning or intentions in the character's dialogue or actions (also known as subtext)

Motivation

Reasons why a character behaves or reacts in a particular way in a scene or play

Non-representational materials

Objects which can be transformed into specific props through the imagination

Objective

A goal or particular need or want that a character has within a scene or play

Plot

A narrative as revealed through the action and/or dialogue; traditionally, a plot has the elements of exposition, inciting incident, conflict, rising action, climax, and resolution or falling action

Process drama

A non-linear, episodic, process-centered, improvised form of drama in which teacher and students are in-role exploring and reflecting on an issue, story, theme, problem, or idea in a non-exhibitional format that is intended to benefit the performers themselves

Production elements

Technical elements selected for use in a specific production, including sets, sound, costumes, lights, music, props, and make-up, as well as elements specific to the production such as puppets, masks, special effects, or other story telling devices/concepts

Scripted drama

A piece of writing for the theatre that includes a description of the setting, a list of the characters, the dialogue, and the action of the characters

Script analysis

The study of a script to understand the underlying structure and themes of the play's story, and the motives and objectives of its characters

Staging

Patterns of movement in a scene or play including, for example, stage crosses, entrances, and exits which help to convey meaning

Story drama

Episodic, process-centered, improvised form of drama that uses existing literature as a starting point for drama exploration, the drama explores moments (before, after, or within) that may not exist in the story and is presented in a non-exhibitional format that is intended to benefit the performers themselves

Story elements

Characters, setting, dialogue, and plot that create a story

Style

The use of a specific set of characteristic or distinctive techniques such as realism, expressionism, epic theatre, documentary theatre, or classical drama; style may also refer to the unique artistic choices of a particular playwright, director, or actor

Tactic

The means by which a character seeks to achieve their objective, the selection of tactics are based on the obstacle presented; in acting and directing a tactic refers to a specific action verb

Technical elements _____

The elements of spectacle such as sets, sound, costume, lights, music, props, and makeup used to create a unified and meaningful design for a theatrical production

Theatrical conventions _____

Practices and/or devices that the audience and actors accept in the world of the play even when it is not realistic, such as a narrator, flashback, or an aside

Theme _____

The aspect of the human condition under investigation in the drama; it can be drawn from unifying topics or questions across content areas

Visual composition _____

The arrangement of actors and scenery on a stage for a theatrical production, sometimes known as *mise en scène*