

Year 8 - Knowledge Organiser – Modern and Post-Modern Theatre

Definition of Modern and Post-Modern Theatre: *Post-modern performances are often non-narrative and technically busy. Modern performances are realistic and narrative. Both feature social themes such as power, alienation and disconnection from society.*

Modern Drama:	Post Modern Drama:	Physical Theatre:
Realism or Naturalism: dealing with the real problems of life in a realistic technique	The accepted norms of seeing and representing the world are challenged and disregarded, while experimental perceptions and representations are created.	A form of theatre which emphasizes the use of physical movement, as in dance and mime , for expression
The Problem Play deals with conflict in marriage, justice, law and the strife between capitalists and labour	The narrative needs not be complete but can be fragmented , paradoxical and imagistic. There is a movement away from linearity to multiplicity in plotlines.	Challenges the traditional performer/audience relationship, often known as breaking the fourth wall
A Play of Ideas the play is used to give expression to ideas which the playwright wants to spread to society	Characters are fragmented , forming a collection of contrasting and parallel voices stemming from a central idea, theme or traditional character	Encourages audience participation and involvement in the performance
Often used the construction of The Well Made Play	The play steps back from reality to create its own self-conscious atmosphere and can be called meta-theatre .	It is often abstract in style , using movement in a stylised and representational way.

History of Modern and Post Modern Theatre	Dramatic Method
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Modern drama usually means a period between 1850 and WW2. Plays during this time moved towards realism, depicting real life environments and real time dramatic plots; the characters became psychologically realist and the themes became social criticisms These plays were often 'well made plays' where the story depends upon a key piece of information kept from some characters, but known to others (and to the audience). Most of the story takes place before the action of the play begins, making the beginning of the play a late point of attack. In the later 20th and 21st century plays moved from a 3 act structure to a 2 act structure and playwrights began to explore the more temporary ideas of 'before' and 'after', rather than exposition, development, resolution Stylistically, the realistic style started to give way towards the 'absurdist', here themes were more concerned with the way the universe worked in relation to human existence Postmodern theatre emerged as a reaction against modernist theatre. Most postmodern productions are centred on highlighting the fallibility of definite truth, instead encouraging the audience to reach their own individual understanding. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Setting – location (country, city, house, room), time of day (how much light?) On stage action - who is on stage? Who can hear what is being said? Does any character enter or exit? For what reason? Who speaks? What kind of speech is it –stately, informal, conspiratorial, friendly, insincere? Character's speech - who dominates? Who speaks the most? Is there anyone who is silent? Is this relevant in any way? How do the stage directions function? Are they precise or nonspecific? Implicit stage directions - indications from the dialogue about stage directions, props or tone of voice

Notable Modern and Post-Modern Plays (in chronological order)

A Doll's House – Henrik Ibsen, 1879	Pygmalion – George Bernard Shaw, 1913	Mother Courage – Bertold Brecht, 1941	An Inspector Calls – J B Priestley, 1945	Waiting for Godot – Samuel Beckett, 1953	A View from a Bridge – Arthur Miller, 1955	Rhinoceros - Eugene Ionesco 1959	Saraf – Vijay Tendulkar , 1991	Blasted – Sarah Kane, 1995	Pretty Fire – Charlayne Woodard, 1995	The Coast of Utopia – Tom Stoppard, 2002	The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-Time – Simon Stephens, 2012	The Trial – Steven Berkoff, 2015
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Year 8 The Curious Incident Vocabulary Lists

experimental	inflexible	prime	improvisation
fragmented	vivid	mete	didactic
self-conscious	rhetoric	vulnerable	pathos
mundane	police-procedural	scuffle	articulate
idiomatic	unorthodox	spontaneous	deftly
conflicted	problematic	interlude	ardently
revelation	perspective	fallibility	impassively
maternal	implicit	paradoxical	wearily
marital	intertwined	authentic	belligerently

Year 8 Modern and Post-Modern Theatre Test 1

You must write all your answer in full sentences in your books.

1. Give two different sub-genres of the modern play. (2)
2. What time period does Modern Drama usually refer to?
3. Who wrote *An Inspector Calls*?
4. Give a structural feature of the 'well made play'.
5. What does physical theatre encourage audiences to do?
6. Give two possible dramatic methods. (2)
7. What was absurdist theatre concerned with?
8. Give a definition for 'realism or naturalism'.

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Year 8 Modern and Post-Modern Theatre Test 2

You must write all your answer in full sentences in your books.

1. What does 'breaking the fourth wall' mean?
2. Give two types of conflict that a problem play might deal with. (2)
3. Who wrote *A Doll's House*?
4. Give a definition for physical theatre.
5. Give two adjectives that might describe different types of character speech. (2)
6. Give two possible dramatic methods. (2)
7. What did post-modern theatre emerge as a reaction against?

Year 8 Modern and Post-Modern Theatre Test 3

You must write all your answer in full sentences in your books.

1. In the later 20th and 21st century, plays moved from what kind of act structure to what? (2)
2. Give a definition for a play of ideas.
3. Who wrote *The Trial*?
4. What is meta-theatre?
5. What are implicit stage directions?
6. Who wrote *A View from the Bridge*?
7. Give two possible dramatic methods. (2)
8. What is a feature of characters in a realist modern drama?

Year 8 Modern and Post-Modern Theatre Test 4

You must write all your answer in full sentences in your books.

1. What three social themes do both modern and post-modern theatre feature? (3)
2. Who wrote *Pygmalion*?
3. What two features could you consider as part of setting?
4. Give a definition of post-modern theatre.
5. Give two things could you consider when thinking about character's speech. (2)
6. What two ideas do playwrights in the late 20th and 21st century begin to explore instead of the more traditional exposition, development and resolution? (2)

Year 8 Modern and Post-Modern Theatre Test 5

You must write all your answer in full sentences in your books.

1. In post-modern theatre a narrative need not be complete but can be...(what)?
2. Who wrote the script for *The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-Time*?
3. Give two possible dramatic methods. (2)
4. Give a definition of modern theatre.
5. What does post-modern theatre encourage the audience to reach at the end of a performance?
6. In post-modern theatre there is a move from what to what in terms of plotlines? (2)
7. Who wrote *Waiting for Godot*?
8. How does physical theatre use movement?