

VCE Drama 2025–2029

Changes to:

Scope of Study

Rationale

Aims

Structure (Unit titles)

Terms used in this study



VICTORIAN CURRICULUM
AND ASSESSMENT AUTHORITY



Acknowledgement of Country

The VCAA respectfully acknowledges the Traditional Owners of Country throughout Victoria and pays respect to the ongoing living cultures of First Peoples.



Familiarisation On Demand Videos

- **Video 1: Overview of Changes**
- **Video 2: Unit 1**
- **Video 3: Unit 2**
- **Video 4: Unit 3**
- **Video 5: Unit 4**

VCE Drama 2025-2029

- Accreditation period of 2025–2029, with implementation commencing in 2025
- Consists of four units, with this video focusing on the overview of changes to the study.
- Important to note, any changes to this study design will be announced through the VCAA Bulletin, the only source of official information from the VCAA. It is the responsibility of the VCE teacher to monitor these changes/advice regularly.

Scope of study

Drama 2019 - 2024	Drama 2025-2029
<p>VCE Drama focuses on the creation and performance of characters and stories that communicate ideas, meaning and messages.</p> <p>Students use creative processes, a range of stimulus material and play-making techniques to develop and present devised work. Students learn about and draw on a range of performance styles relevant to practices of ritual and story-telling, contemporary drama practice and the work of significant drama practitioners.</p> <p>Students explore characteristics of selected performance styles and apply and manipulate conventions, dramatic elements and production areas. They use performance skills and expressive skills to explore and develop role and character. The performances they create will go beyond the reality of life as it is lived and may pass comment on or respond to aspects of the real world. These performances can occur in any space. Students also analyse the development of their own work and performances by other drama practitioners.</p>	<p>VCE Drama focuses on the creation and performance of characters and stories that communicate ideas, meaning and messages using contemporary drama-making practices.</p> <p>Students engage with creative processes, explore and respond to stimulus material, and apply play-making techniques to develop and present devised work.</p> <p>Students learn about, and draw on, a range of performance styles and conventions through the investigation of work by a diverse range of drama practices and practitioners, including Australian drama practitioners.</p> <p>Students explore characteristics of selected performance styles and apply and manipulate conventions, dramatic elements, and production areas, including sustainable ways to source and apply production areas. They use performance skills and expressive skills to explore and develop character(s). Within the scope of this study, students will create performances that include transformation of character, time and place, and application of symbol. The created works can occur in any space and be performed for any selected audience. The work created may pass comment on or respond to aspects of real-world issues including political, social and cultural. Students reflect on, analyse and evaluate the development and performance of their own work, and the work and performances of other drama practitioners.</p>

Rationale

Drama 2019-2024

VCE Drama connects students to multiple traditions of drama practice across a range of social, historical and cultural contexts.

Through the processes of devising and performing drama, students investigate self and others by exploring and responding to the contexts, the narratives and the stories that shape their worlds.

The study of drama introduces students to theories and processes for the creative development of new work and allows them to develop skills as creative and critical thinkers.

Students develop an appreciation of drama as an art form through their work as solo and ensemble performers, and engagement with professional contemporary drama practice.

The study of drama may provide pathways to training and tertiary study in acting, dramaturgy, theatre-making, script writing, communication and drama criticism.

Drama 2025-2029

VCE Drama connects students to multiple traditions of drama practice across a range of social, historical and cultural contexts **including Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples' artistic practice.**

Through the processes of devising and performing drama, students investigate self and others by exploring and responding to the contexts, narratives and **diverse** stories that shape their worlds.

The study of drama introduces students to theories, processes **and practices** for the creative development of new work. **Drama allows them to develop skills** as creative and critical thinkers.

Students develop an appreciation of drama as an art form through their work as solo and ensemble **creators** and performers, and their engagement with professional contemporary drama practices, **by attending professional performances.**

The study of drama may provide pathways to training and tertiary study in acting, dramaturgy, **directing, theatre production**, theatre-making, script-writing, marketing, communication and drama criticism.

Aims

Drama 2019-2024	Drama 2025-2029
<p>This study enables students to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• develop, through practice and analysis, an understanding of drama as a way of communicating stories, ideas and meaning• examine contemporary drama practice, the work of selected practitioners and theorists and associated performance styles• appreciate multiple traditions of drama practice across a range of contexts• manipulate dramatic elements and production areas in devising and performing drama• foster their appreciation of drama as an art form.	<p>This study enables students to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• develop, through practice, analysis and evaluation, an understanding of drama as a way of communicating stories, ideas and meaning• examine contemporary drama practices as exemplified by, or represented through, the work of a range of Australian and other diverse practitioners, theorists and their associated performance styles• appreciate multiple traditions of drama practice across a range of contexts and cultures, including Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander artists' work• manipulate dramatic elements, conventions and production areas in devising and performing drama• foster appreciation of drama as an aesthetic art form.

Unit titles

Drama 2019 - 2024	Drama 2025-2029
Unit 1: Introducing performance styles	Unit 1: Introducing performance styles and contemporary drama practices
Unit 2: Australian identity	Unit 2: Contemporary drama practices and Australian identity
Unit 3: Devised ensemble performance	Unit 3: Devised ensemble performance
Unit 4: Devised solo performance	Unit 4: Devised solo performance

Terms used in the study- Conventions

Drama 2025-2029

Conventions

Conventions are techniques or devices incorporated into the style of a performance. There are many conventions such as direct address, asides, caricature, exaggerated movement, stylized movement, tableau, heightened use of language, use of fact, pathos, placards, dramatic metaphor, satire, song, and stillness and silence. In VCE Drama students study the conventions associated with selected performance styles and [contemporary drama practices](#).

Students also study the following conventions that are required to be used in devised performances presented for Unit 3 and 4 assessments and the end-of-year performance examination:

- Transformation of character (changing characters in front of the audience).
- Transformation of time (changing time in front of the audience).
- Transformation of place (changing place/location in front of the audience).
- Application of symbol (creating meaning that is not literal). Application of symbol allows actors to communicate ideas and themes through action, gesture, language, vocal or facial expression, object/prop, costume, set pieces, heightened or lyrical movement or other means. Application of symbol may assist transformations.

Key Changes

[additional conventions are listed as examples, including “direct address,” “stylised movement,” “tableau,” “use of fact,” “dramatic metaphor,” and “heightened use of language.](#)

Terms used in the study-

Contemporary drama practices

Drama 2025-2029

New terminology

Contemporary drama practices

In this study, contemporary drama practices are informed by a diverse range of artists, performance styles and conventions to create performances for contemporary audiences in an ever-evolving theatrical landscape. Contemporary drama practitioners are those who create and make performance work in the present day, and whose work may be influenced by historical, cultural, political and structural practices and contexts. Contemporary drama practice includes the work of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander artists.

Terms used in the study- **Devised drama**

Drama 2025-2029

Devised drama

Devised drama is original work developed by the actors rather than work developed through interpretation of any pre-existing script. Each devised work has a creative process that encompasses a range of play-making techniques. Students use creative processes that draw from the work of a range of contemporary drama practices, drama practitioners, and performance styles to make decisions about shaping the content in their devised performances.

Key Changes

Previous study design

Students use creative processes that draw from the work of drama practitioners and make decisions about how to shape and define their performances using relevant performance styles.

Revised study design

Students use creative processes that draw from the work of a range of contemporary drama practices, drama practitioners and performance styles to make decisions about shaping the content in their devised performances.

Terms used in the study-**Dramatic elements**

Drama 2025-2029

Dramatic elements

The Dramatic elements remain the same - there are some small language clarification refinements to the definitions.

Dramatic elements are essential features of drama and are a core aspect of every performance in this study. Actors and practitioners manipulate dramatic elements to shape and enhance content to make meaning. The dramatic elements for VCE Drama are:

Climax

Climax is the significant moment of tension or conflict in a drama. It often occurs towards the end of the plot. Other points of climax or anti/climax may occur within a work.

Conflict

Conflict generally occurs when a character cannot achieve an objective due to an obstacle. This obstacle may be internal or external, between characters or between characters and their environment. Conflict may be shown in a variety of ways, for example through physical, verbal, psychological, or symbolic means. Conflict may be embedded in the structure of the drama.

Terms used in the study-**Dramatic elements**

Drama 2025-2029

Contrast

Contrast presents the dissimilar, or opposite, in order to highlight or emphasise difference. Contrast may be explored in many ways and may include contrasting through expressive skills, characters, settings, times, themes, elements, production areas and performance styles.

Mood

Mood is the overall feeling or emotion that a performance may evoke. This may be achieved through manipulation of expressive and performance skills, conventions, or production areas.

Rhythm

Rhythm is a regular pattern of words, sounds or actions that may be created by an actor. Performances also have their own rhythm that may be influenced by the emotional nature of the plot, the pace of line delivery, the dialogue (long and/or short lines), the pace of scene transitions and the length of scenes.

Terms used in the study- **Dramatic elements**

Drama 2025-2029

Sound

Sound is created live by the actor, in the performance. Voice, body percussion and objects can be used individually or in combination to create sonic effects in performance and to enhance meaning. Sound may include silence or the deliberate absence of sound.

Space

Space involves the way the performance area is used to communicate meaning, to define settings, to represent status and to create and/or manipulate actor–audience relationships. This may be achieved through levels, proximity and depth. The use of space may be symbolic.

Tension

Tension is the suspense that holds an audience's attention as a performance unfolds. It may be constructed through mood or the use of other elements. The release of tension may have a comic or a dramatic effect.

Terms used in the study- Expressive skills

Drama 2025-2029

Expressive skills

The Expressive Skills remain the same

Expressive skills are used to express and realise character(s). Expressive skills may be used in different ways and will be influenced by different performance styles and contemporary drama practices. They include:

Voice

for example diction, pitch, pace, tone, resonance, muscularity and vocal sounds

Movement

for example gait, posture and stance

Gesture

for example using the body or body parts, usually the hands, to create symbols and meaning

Facial Expressions

for example manipulating facial expressions to communicate emotions, reactions and meaning.

Terms used in the study- Performance skills

Drama 2025-2029

The Performance Skills remain the same - there are some small language clarification refinements to the definitions.

Performance skills are used to enhance performance and in combination create an actor's presence. For the purposes of this study performance skills are:

Focus

Focus is the ability of the actor to commit to their performance and to use concentration to sustain character(s). Focus may also be used to create an implied character or setting through the manipulation of the audience's attention towards a specific place. The manipulation of focus may assist the actor to develop, establish and/or manipulate an effective actor–audience relationship.

Timing

Timing is used to control or regulate the pace of a performance. Timing may be manipulated in drama to build tension, to evoke feeling for an audience, to coordinate effective synchronisation within an ensemble, and to develop the comic or dramatic potential of a scene.

Terms used in the study- Performance skills

Drama 2025-2029

Energy

Energy is the intensity an actor brings to a performance. At different times, an actor will use different levels of energy to create different performance dynamics. An actor may use a certain energy to create pathos. Conversely, an actor may use a certain energy to create a moment of tension or conflict.

Actor–audience relationship

The actor considers what impact they intend their performance to have on an audience. The actor–audience relationship is the way in which an actor deliberately establishes, maintains and/or manipulates an audience's moods, emotions and responses to a performance. This may be done through the positioning of the actor in relation to the audience, the way the actor engages the audience, and the emotional and intellectual response to a character's situation by an audience, intended or otherwise. An actor–audience relationship exists as part of a performance but in this study may also be present when rehearsing and refining work during the development process.

Terms used in the study-Performance styles

Drama 2025-2029

Performance styles

Performance styles are defined by the way stories, acting, conventions, and production areas are conceived and manipulated to shape performances. In VCE Drama students draw on a range of performance styles and their conventions to devise performances that will include non-linear narratives, transformation of character, time and place, and application of symbol. They juxtapose conventions of performance styles to make dramatic statements and create theatre. Students use creative processes and playmaking techniques to devise and explore performance styles for each work they devise and consider the specific purpose and intention for the audience.

Across Units 1 to 4 students will study a diverse range of performance styles, that will include:

- storytelling
- contemporary drama practices
- the work of selected drama practitioners and associated performance styles including the work of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander artists and theatre makers.

Terms used in the study-Play-making techniques

Drama 2025-2029

Play-making techniques

The playmaking techniques remain the same - there are some small language clarification refinements to the definitions, notably, it mentions that **play-making techniques are not necessarily linear and can be revisited during the development and devising process.**

Play-making techniques are used to explore and extract the dramatic potential of stimulus material to develop and refine ideas, characters, dramatic action, story and themes to construct devised performances. There are many play-making techniques. For the purposes of this study, play-making techniques are:

- researching
- brainstorming
- improvising
- scripting
- editing
- rehearsing
- refining

Playmaking techniques are not necessarily linear, and each can be revisited throughout the development and devising process.

Terms used in the study- Production areas

Drama 2025-2029

Production areas

Production Areas – minor adjustments to the explanation and definition of this term including *Students learn about sustainable practices in relation to production areas, sourcing sustainable materials and consciously minimizing environmental impact.* .

Addition of the term 'Technologies'

Production areas encompass design elements or technologies that are applied within a performance. Production areas can work separately or be combined to structure, enhance and realise (bring to life or make real) the dramatic potential of stimulus material. They may contribute to establishing character, era, place, mood, theme or provide social commentary within a performance. In VCE Drama, production areas are applied in ways that are relevant to selected performance style(s).

For example, students' own work and the professional performances they attend might feature atmospheric lighting, stylised make-up, symbolic costuming, soundtrack, use of technologies such as microphones, projections or haze, props that are transformed into multiple items, and fragmentary set pieces.

Students also learn about, engage with, and apply sustainable practices in devising and performing work including energy efficiency, sustainable materials, ethical sourcing of materials, and ways to actively reduce the carbon footprint of a performed work. Further information is at: [Sustainable Theatres Australia – guide](#).

Terms used in the study- Production areas

Drama 2025-2029

There are many production areas. For the purposes of this study, production areas are:

Costume, lighting design, Make-up, mask, props, puppetry, set pieces, sound design, technologies.

Technologies in this study relate to those used in contemporary drama practices and include digital, electrical or mechanical. They may be dependent on the nature of the works created by artists, the work as it is experienced by an audience, and may range in levels of sophistication and application.

Terms used in the study- Stimulus material

Drama 2025-2029

Stimulus material

In VCE Drama stimulus material is used as the starting point of the play-making process. Stimulus material should be appropriate to the size of the task. Stimulus material may refer to any or a combination of a person (real-life, historical, contemporary, fictional), an event (real, historical, contemporary, fictional), an issue, a place, an image, a text (one word, many words, a definition, a quotation, lyrics, speech), sound (music, diegetic, environmental) or an icon. Stimulus material may be presented in a variety of forms including aural, digital, visual, and written.

Key Changes

Stimulus material may be presented in a variety of forms including **aural**, digital, visual, and written.

Terms used in the study-Storytelling

Drama 2025-2029

New terminology

Storytelling

Storytelling refers to the sharing of identities, cultures, memories, ideas, rituals, and experiences. In drama, storytelling involves the active creation of stories for an audience by applying a range of expressive skills, performance skills, production areas, dramatic elements, performance styles and conventions. Such stories may be personal, historical, cultural, real, fictional, individual, or collective.

Terms used in the study-Transformation

Drama 2025-2029

Transformation

Transformation refers to techniques or methods used by actors to transform or transition between characters and/or times and/or places. In this study, the process of changing or transforming is a feature of contemporary drama practices and devised performance work. It contributes to the non-realistic and non-linear nature of the devised work. Examples of techniques for transforming may include: snapping, morphing/melding, giving and taking, action and reaction, use of production areas, use of a sound/word, use of an action or gesture, use of heightened language, and repetition. Actors may also explore the speed of the transition, for example slow-motion, fast-forward or reverse. Application of symbol may assist with transformation. Transformational techniques may be associated with certain performance styles and their conventions.

Key Changes

Note inclusion of [contemporary drama practices](#) and [non-linear](#).

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