

# VCE Drama 2025–2029

Unit 1: Introducing performance  
styles and contemporary drama  
practices

# 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 Unit 1
- 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.

# Overview of Unit 1 – Key changes

2019-2024 Drama study design	2025-2029 Drama study design
Introducing performance styles	Introducing performance styles and contemporary drama practices
Area of Study 1 – Creating a devised performance	Area of Study 1 - Creating a devised performance
Area of Study 2 – Presenting a devised performance	Area of Study 2 - Presenting a devised performance
Area of Study 3 – Analysing a devised performance	Area of Study 3 - Analysing a devised performance
Area of Study 4 – Analysing a professional drama performance	Area of Study 4 - Analysing and evaluating a professional drama performance

# Unit 1- Key changes

2019-2024 Drama study design	2025-2029 Drama study design
Introducing performance styles	Introducing performance styles <b>and contemporary drama practices</b>
<p>In this unit students study three or more performance styles from a range of social, historical, <b>contemporary</b> and cultural contexts. They examine the traditions of storytelling and devise performances telling stories <b>that go beyond representations of reality. They incorporate and/or juxtapose a number of performance styles to make dramatic statements and create performances that are innovative, transformational and contemporary. They learn about contemporary drama practices that incorporate a range of conventions and devices for making dramatic works.</b> Students use creative processes and play-making techniques to consider the specific purpose and intention of performance styles, and how conventions of those styles can be used in the work they devise and create for an audience.</p>	

# Unit 1- Key changes

2019-2024 Drama study design	2025-2029 Drama study design
Introducing performance styles	Introducing performance styles <b>and contemporary drama practices</b>
<p>This unit focuses on creating, presenting and analysing a devised solo and/or ensemble performance that includes real and/or imagined characters and is based on stimulus material that reflects personal, cultural and/or community experiences and stories. <b>Such stimulus material could include Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples' stories, perspectives or experiences.</b> This unit also involves analysis of a student's own devised work, and the analysis of work by professional drama practitioners and performers.</p>	

# Unit 1- Key changes

2019-2024 Drama study design	2025-2029 Drama study design
Introducing performance styles	Introducing performance styles <b>and contemporary drama practices</b>
<p>Students apply play-making techniques to shape and give meaning to their performance. They manipulate expressive and performance skills in the creation and presentation of characters and develop awareness and understanding of how characters are portrayed within certain performance styles <b>and in contemporary drama practices</b>. They <b>document the play-making techniques</b> they use to explore and <b>extract meaning</b> from stimulus material, and document the exploration of production areas, dramatic elements, and conventions of selected performance styles.</p> <p>In this unit, the terms <i>character</i>, <i>performance</i>, <i>story</i> and <i>style</i> may be understood as one or more characters, performances, stories or styles.</p>	



# Unit 1 Area of Study 1 – Key Changes

2019-2024 Drama study design	2025-2029 Drama study design
<b>Creating a devised performance</b>	<b>Creating a devised performance</b>
<p>In this area of study students use play-making techniques to devise and develop solo performances and/or ensemble performances based on a range of stimulus material relevant to their personal, cultural and/or community experiences and stories. Students explore a range of performance styles and draw on ideas as they respond to a given structure and stimulus material. They also focus on recording and documenting the play-making techniques used in the development of this performance work.</p>	<p>In this area of study, students use play-making techniques to devise and develop solo performances and/or ensemble performances based on a range of stimulus material relevant to <b>personal</b>, cultural and/or community experiences and stories. <b>Such stimulus material may include Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples' stories or perspectives.</b> Students explore <b>three or more performance styles</b> and draw on these to generate ideas when responding to a given structure and stimulus material. They also focus on recording and documenting the play-making techniques used in the development of this performance work.</p>

# Unit 1 Area of Study 1

2019-2024 Drama study design

2025-2029 Drama study design

Creating a devised performance

Creating a devised performance

## Outcome

On completion of this unit the student should be able to devise, demonstrate and document solo and/or ensemble drama works based on experiences and/or stories.

## Key Knowledge

- ways of creating, sustaining and developing a role
- understanding how experiences and stories can be given shape and meaning
- ways stimulus material can be researched, given meaning and shaped into a performance
- performance styles from a range of contexts relevant to drama traditions and practice that focus on ritual and story-telling
- conventions used in selected performance styles
- application of symbol and transformation of character, time and place

- ways of creating, developing and sustaining character(s)
- storytelling processes
- understanding how experiences and stories can be given shape and meaning
- ways in which stimulus material can be researched, given meaning and shaped into a performance
- performance styles from a range of contexts relevant to historical and contemporary drama practices
- conventions of selected performance styles
- application of symbol and transformation of character, time and place

# Unit 1 Area of Study 1

2019-2024 Drama study design

2025-2029 Drama study design

Creating a devised performance

Creating a devised performance

## Outcome

On completion of this unit the student should be able to devise, demonstrate and document solo and/or ensemble drama works based on experiences and/or stories.

## Key Knowledge

- production areas appropriate to selected performance styles
- dramatic elements
- play-making techniques
- exploration of character and role in a range of performance styles
- expressive and performance skills used to communicate meaning
- approaches to recording and documenting use of play-making techniques

- production areas relevant to selected performance styles and knowledge of the sustainable use of such production areas
- dramatic elements
- play-making techniques
- exploration of character(s) in a range of performance styles
- expressive and performance skills used to communicate character(s) and meaning to an audience
- approaches to recording and documenting use of play-making techniques.

# Unit 1 Area of Study 1

2019-2024 Drama study design

2025-2029 Drama study design

Creating a devised performance

Creating a devised performance

## Outcome

On completion of this unit the student should be able to devise, demonstrate and document solo and/or ensemble drama works based on experiences and/or stories.

## Key Skills

- create, sustain and develop a role to communicate meaning
- explore performance styles from a range of historical, cultural and social contexts
- identify and effectively manipulate dramatic elements
- apply symbol and transformation of character, time and place
- identify and apply production areas appropriate to the selected performance styles
- document how a range of stimulus material can be researched, given meaning and shaped into a performance
- document a devised performance.

- create, develop and sustain character(s) to communicate meaning
- explore performance styles from a range of historical, contemporary, cultural and social contexts
- identify and effectively manipulate dramatic elements
- apply symbol and transformation of character, time and place
- identify and apply production areas relevant to the selected performance styles
- document how stimulus material can be researched, given meaning and shaped into a performance
- document play-making techniques in the devising of a performance.

# Unit 1 Outcome 1 teaching and learning

## Creating a devised performance

### Outcome

On completion of this unit the student should be able to devise and document solo and/or ensemble drama works based on experiences and/or stories.

### Teaching and Learning Example

- Explore the dramatic potential of stimulus material relevant to personal, cultural and/or community experiences and stories (images, poetry, song, stories, a location/icon, a person, an event etc) through workshop-style activities which lead into creating and devising a solo or ensemble performance.
- Students document the process in preparation for the analysis of their performance in Outcome 3.
- Documentation could include the use of paper-based journals and/or digital folios that include the recording and reflection of the activities undertaken throughout the play-making process.
- **Workshop Activities** could include - creative analysis of stimulus materials, exploration of dramatic techniques, conventions, performance styles and dramatic elements e.g. tableau, soundscapes, transformation of character, use of chorus, physical theatre, rhythm, mood etc.

# Unit 1 Assessment

## Outcome 1

- demonstrate the use of play-making techniques to devise and develop a solo and/or ensemble drama works based on stories and/or characters
- document the use of play-making techniques to create and develop stories and characters in drama in:
  - a paper-based journal
  - an e-journal
  - a journal that combines hard and soft copy components.

## Outcome 1 Assessment Task example

**Task/Audience:** Devise a 15-minute ensemble performance based on the book 'The Island' by Armin Greder, and other similar stories. The intended audience is Year 10 students. Your work should explore the themes of exclusion, humanity and 'otherness'. Your performance must combine contemporary drama practices that incorporate a range of conventions and techniques, creating dramatic work that goes beyond representations of reality. The dramatic possibilities are endless, the work should be driven by the images, story and themes of the book. The work may include further research and stories that support the overall message.

**Performance Style(s):** Physical Theatre and Greek Theatre

**Prescribed conventions:** application of symbol, transformation of character, time and place

**Dramatic Elements:** conflict, contrast, rhythm, sound

**Production Areas:** explore aspects of costume, set and lighting.

**Documenting and describing work through the devising process:** Keep a written or digital journal of your work as it progresses.

# Unit 1 Area of Study 2 – Key Changes

2019-2024 Drama study design	2025-2029 Drama study design
<b>Presenting a devised performance</b>	<b>Presenting a devised performance</b>
<p>In this area of study students present to an audience a devised solo and/or ensemble drama works based on a range of stimulus material relevant to the student’s personal, cultural and/or community experiences and stories. The performance should be based on the work devised in Outcome 1. Students use a range of performance styles to present these stories, ideas and characters to an audience. They also begin to explore and develop skills in establishing and maintaining an appropriate actor–audience relationship.</p>	<p>In this area of study, students present to an audience devised solo and/or ensemble drama works based on stimulus material relevant to <b>personal</b>, cultural and/or community experiences and stories. The performance should be based on the work devised in Outcome 1. Students draw on these performance styles to present these stories, ideas and characters to an audience. They further explore and develop skills in establishing, maintaining and/or manipulating an actor–audience relationship.</p>

# Unit 1 Area of Study 2 – Key Changes

2019-2024 Drama study design

2025-2029 Drama study design

**Presenting a devised performance**

**Presenting a devised performance**

## Outcome

On completion of this unit, the student should be able to perform devised works to an audience.

## Key Knowledge

- ways of creating and sustaining character and role in performance
- understanding how stories and ideas are given form and meaning through performance
- ways dramatic elements can be enhanced and manipulated through performance
- characterisation and techniques in transformation of character through the manipulation of expressive and performance skills
- conventions associated with a range of selected performance styles

- ways of creating, developing and sustaining character(s) in performance
- understanding how stories and ideas are given form and meaning through performance
- ways in which dramatic elements can be incorporated and manipulated to enhance a performance
- creation of characters through the manipulation of expressive and performance skills
- conventions associated with a range of selected performance styles and contemporary drama practices



# Unit 1 Area of Study 2 – Key Changes

## 2019-2024 Drama study design

### Presenting a devised performance

#### Outcome

On completion of this unit, the student should be able to perform devised works to an audience.

#### Key Knowledge

- application of symbol and transformation of character, time and place
- presentation of characters and ideas using a range of performance styles
- ways relationships between actors and audience are created and manipulated
- production areas and how they can be used to enhance performances.

## 2025-2029 Drama study design

### Presenting a devised performance

- application of symbol and transformation of character, time and place
- presentation of characters and ideas by applying **conventions** from a range of performance styles
- ways in which relationships between actors and audiences are established, maintained and/or manipulated
- production areas and how they can be used to enhance performances, **including how production area materials can be sourced and applied sustainably.**

# Unit 1 Area of Study 2- Key Changes

2019-2024 Drama study design

2025-2029 Drama study design

Presenting a devised performance

Presenting a devised performance

## Outcome

On completion of this unit, the student should be able to perform devised works to an audience.

## Key Skills

- present a solo and/or ensemble performances
- sustain role and character in performance
- shape and give form and meaning to stories and ideas
- manipulate expressive and performance skills to present characters, ideas and stories
- incorporate appropriate conventions from selected performance styles
- manipulate dramatic elements to communicate meaning
- apply symbol and transformation of character, time and place
- create an actor–audience relationship that is appropriate to the selected performance styles
- effectively incorporate and manipulate production areas.

- present a solo and/or ensemble performance
- sustain **character(s)** in performance
- shape and give form and meaning to stories and ideas
- manipulate expressive and performance skills to present characters, ideas and stories
- incorporate relevant conventions from selected performance styles
- manipulate dramatic elements to communicate meaning
- apply symbol and transformation of character, time and place
- create an actor–audience relationship that is relevant to the selected performance styles **and the selected audience**
- effectively incorporate and manipulate production areas.

# Unit 1 Outcome 2 teaching and learning

## Presenting a devised performance

### Outcome

On completion of this unit the student should be able to perform devised works to an audience.

### Teaching and Learning Example

Students rehearse, edit and refine an ensemble and/ or solo performance developed in Outcome 1. They document the process and create a working script. They make decisions about production areas and the use of the performance space. They seek feedback from peers and their teacher throughout the process, particularly in relation to directorial decisions and communication of ideas. Students then present this work to an audience, ensuring they demonstrate the key knowledge.

#### *Examples*

- Solo performance presented to the class and/or at a performance evening
- Ensemble performance presented at a performance evening, to a local primary school or to another class.

# Unit 1 Assessment

## Outcome 2

Perform devised solo and/or ensemble drama work that features stories and characters.

## Outcome 2 Assessment Task example

Students present a devised solo and/or ensemble drama work to an audience and are assessed against the key skills, including:

- Ability to sustain character
- Demonstration of form and meaning to create stories and ideas
- Application and manipulation of expressive skills
- Application and manipulation of performance skills
- Presentation of conventions from selected performance styles
- Application and manipulation of dramatic elements
- Application of symbol and transformation of character, time and place
- Establishment of an actor-audience relationship
- Application and manipulation of production areas

# Unit 1 Area of Study 3 – Key Changes

2019-2024 Drama study design	2025-2029 Drama study design
<b>Analysing a devised performance</b>	<b>Analysing a devised performance</b>
<p>In this area of study students focus on observation and analysis of their own performance work completed in Outcomes 1 and 2. They reflect upon and document work processes using appropriate drama terminology. They demonstrate development of the use of expressive skills, performance skills, stimulus material, dramatic elements, conventions, production areas, performance styles, and approaches to character and roles</p>	<p>In this area of study, students focus on observation, <b>documentation</b> and analysis of their own performance work completed in Outcomes 1 and 2. <b>They reflect upon documented work processes, applying relevant drama terminology.</b> They demonstrate exploration and development of the use of expressive skills, performance skills, stimulus material, dramatic elements, conventions, production areas, performance styles, and approaches to character(s) in a devised performance.</p>

# Unit 1 Area of Study 3- Key Changes

2019-2024 Drama study design	2025-2029 Drama study design
<b>Analysing a devised performance</b>	<b>Analysing a devised performance</b>
<b>Outcome</b> On completion of this unit, the student should be able to describe, reflect on and analyse the exploration and development of a devised performance to an audience.	
<b>Key Knowledge</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• key knowledge for Outcomes 1 and 2</li><li>• drama terminology that can be used to describe and analyse performances</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• key knowledge for Outcomes 1 and 2</li><li>• drama terminology that can be applied to describe, reflect on and analyse devised performances.</li></ul>

# Unit 1 Area of Study 3- Key Changes

2019-2024 Drama study design

2025-2029 Drama study design

**Analysing a devised performance**

**Analysing a devised performance**

## Outcome

On completion of this unit, the student should be able to describe, reflect on and analyse the exploration and development of a devised performance to an audience.

## Key Skills

- describe the use and manipulation of expressive and performance skills to develop and present characters, stories and ideas
- describe the dramatic potential of stimulus material
- analyse stages in the development of characters and roles
- reflect on the use of play-making techniques
- describe and analyse the use of dramatic elements, performance styles, conventions and production areas in the presentation of performances

- describe the application and manipulation of expressive and performance skills to develop and present characters, stories and ideas
- describe the dramatic potential of stimulus material
- analyse the development of characters
- reflect on the use of play-making techniques
- describe and analyse the use of dramatic elements, performance styles, conventions and production areas in the presentation of devised performances

# Unit 1 Area of Study 3- Key Changes

2019-2024 Drama study design

2025-2029 Drama study design

**Analysing a devised performance**

**Analysing a devised performance**

## Outcome

On completion of this unit, the student should be able to describe, reflect on and analyse the exploration and development of a devised performance to an audience.

## Key Skills

- analyse the application of symbol and transformation of character, time and place
- analyse the actor–audience relationship in a performance
- use drama terminology appropriately to describe and analyse performances

- analyse the application of symbol and transformation of character, time and place
- analyse the actor–audience relationship in a performance
- apply relevant drama terminology to describe, reflect on and analyse a devised performance.



# Unit 1 Outcome 3 teaching and learning

## Analysing a devised performance

### Outcome

On completion of this unit the student should be able to document, reflect on and analyse the exploration and development of a devised performance to an audience.

### Teaching and Learning Example

Demonstrate documentation, reflection and analysis of the development and performance of the devised work(s) to an audience through a series of short questions, a multi-media presentation, or an oral presentation.

- Class discussion / note taking - how the key skills were manipulated in both the development and presentation of a devised performance.
- Watch a recording of the performance and critically analyse how meaning was / was not effectively communicated.
- Annotate journal / workbook / script highlighting key knowledge and skills.

# Unit 1 Assessment

## Outcome 3

Analyse the drama work created and performed in Outcomes 1 and 2 using one of the following formats:

- an oral presentation
- a multimedia presentation
- responses to structured questions.

## Outcome 3 Assessment Task example

### Written responses to structured questions

- Students documenting, reflecting and analysing their own devised performance work
- A range of questions covering key knowledge and skills
- A range of marks allocated to the questions to represent higher and lower order thinking
- Sample questions will be provided in the support materials

# Unit 1 Area of Study 4 – Key Changes

2019-2024 Drama study design	2025-2029 Drama study design
<b>Analysing a professional drama performance</b>	<b>Analysing and <b>evaluating</b> a professional drama performance</b>
<p>In this area of study students observe and analyse a performance by professional drama performers. Drama performances by students enrolled at a school may not be analysed for this outcome. Attending and analysing a performance by professional drama performers provides opportunities for students to make connections with their own work. They build their experience of how dramatic elements, conventions, performance styles, production areas, and expressive and performance skills can be manipulated to communicate meaning in performance.</p>	<p>In this area of study, students <b>attend</b>, observe, <b>explain</b>, analyse and <b>evaluate</b> a performance by professional drama <b>practitioners/performers</b>. <b>Drama performances by students enrolled at a school may not be analysed for this outcome. Attending, analysing and evaluating a performance by professional drama practitioners/performers provides opportunities for students to make connections with their own work and enhance their aesthetic knowledge.</b> They build their experience and <b>knowledge of, and skills in, how contemporary drama practices</b>, dramatic elements, conventions, performance styles, production areas, and expressive and performance skills can be manipulated to communicate meaning in performance.</p>

# Unit 1 Area of Study 4 – Key Changes

2019-2024 Drama study design	2025-2029 Drama study design
<b>Analysing a professional drama performance</b>	<b>Analysing and <b>evaluating</b> a professional drama performance</b>
<p>Students learn about ways of establishing, sustaining and manipulating actor–audience relationships and use appropriate drama terminology to explain, analyse and evaluate the performance. Where students are not able to attend a suitable professional performance they may attend a community performance of appropriate standard.</p>	<p>Students learn about ways of establishing, <b>maintaining</b> and/or manipulating actor–audience relationships and apply relevant drama terminology to explain, analyse and evaluate the performance. Where students are not able to attend a suitable professional performance, they may attend a community performance of a commensurate standard.</p>

# Unit 1 Area of Study 4- Key Changes

2019-2024 Drama study design	2025-2029 Drama study design
<p><b>Analysing a professional drama performance</b></p>	<p><b>Analysing and evaluating a professional drama performance</b></p>
<p><b>Outcome</b> On completion of this unit, the student should be able to analyse and evaluate the presentation of ideas, stories and characters in a drama performance by professional or other drama practitioners.</p>	
<p><b>Key Knowledge</b></p>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• ways characterisation can be achieved through the manipulation of expressive and performance skills</li> <li>• dramatic elements, conventions and production areas and their use in structuring, and creating meaning in, a performance</li> <li>• performance styles and how they are defined by acting, conventions and production areas</li> <li>• ways that the actor–audience relationship can be created and manipulated</li> <li>• drama terminology that can be used to analyse and to evaluate performance.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• ways in which characterisation can be achieved through the manipulation of expressive and performance skills</li> <li>• ways in which dramatic elements, conventions and production areas can be manipulated to create meaning in a performance</li> <li>• performance styles and how they are defined by acting, conventions and production areas</li> <li>• ways in which the actor–audience relationship can be created, maintained and/or manipulated</li> <li>• drama terminology that can be applied to analyse and evaluate performance.</li> </ul>

# Unit 1 Area of Study 4- Key Changes

2019-2024 Drama study design

2025-2029 Drama study design

**Analysing a professional drama performance**

**Analysing and evaluating a professional drama performance**

## Outcome

On completion of this unit, the student should be able to analyse and evaluate the presentation of ideas, stories and characters in a drama performance by professional or other drama practitioners.

## Key Skills

- evaluate the expressive and performance skills used to communicate character to an audience
- identify and evaluate the effectiveness of conventions, dramatic elements and production areas in communicating meaning in a performance
- analyse and evaluate the use of performance styles based on the way conventions, dramatic elements and production areas are used in the performance
- analyse and evaluate how the actor–audience relationship is created and manipulated
- use appropriate drama terminology to analyse and evaluate a performance.

- evaluate the expressive and performance skills used to communicate character to an audience
- identify and evaluate the effectiveness of conventions, dramatic elements and production areas in communicating meaning in a performance
- analyse and evaluate the use of performance styles based on the way conventions, dramatic elements and production areas are used in the performance
- analyse and evaluate how the actor–audience relationship is created, maintained and/or manipulated
- apply relevant drama terminology to analyse and evaluate a performance.

# Unit 1 Outcome 4 teaching and learning

## Analysing and evaluating a professional drama performance

### Outcome

On completion of this unit the student should be able to analyse and evaluate the presentation of ideas, stories and characters in a drama performance by professional or other drama practitioners.

### Teaching and Learning Example

- Prior to attending a performance, if a script is available, read the script and/or teachers notes.
- Discuss the characters, setting and themes in the performance.
- Examine the dramatic elements (where there might be moments of conflict, tension or climax etc.).
- Identify any production areas on which the play relies.
- Research and discuss the performance style(s) of the play.
- Following the performance, discuss the actors' use of *expressive* and *performance skills* when representing character and communicating meaning in the performance.

# Unit 1 Assessment

## Outcome 4

Analyse and evaluate a drama performance by professional or other drama practitioners in response to structured questions.

## Outcome 4 Assessment Task example

### Written responses to structured questions

- Students analysing and evaluating a professional drama performance
- A range of questions covering key knowledge and skills
- A range of marks allocated to the questions to represent higher and lower order thinking
- Sample questions will be provided in the support materials



# Contact

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