

# VCE Drama 2025–2029

Unit 3: Devised ensemble  
performance

# 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 3
- 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 3 – Key changes

2019-2024 Drama study design	2025-2029 Drama study design
<b>Devised ensemble performance</b>	<b>Devised ensemble performance</b>
<b>Area of Study 1</b> – Devising and presenting ensemble performance	<b>Area of Study 1</b> – Devising and presenting ensemble performance
<b>Area of Study 2</b> – Analysing a devised performance	<b>Area of Study 2</b> – Analysing <b>and evaluating</b> a devised performance
<b>Area of Study 3</b> – Analysing and evaluating a professional drama performance	<b>Area of Study 3</b> – Analysing and evaluating a professional drama performance

# Unit 3 - Key changes

2019-2024 Drama study design	2025-2029 Drama study design
Devised ensemble performance	Devised ensemble performance
<p>In this unit, students explore the work of a range of drama practitioners and draw on contemporary drama practices as they devise ensemble performance work. Students explore performance styles and associated conventions from a diverse range of contemporary and/or historical contexts. They work collaboratively to devise, develop and present an ensemble performance.</p> <p>Students create work that reflects a specific performance style or one that draws on conventions of, or makes reference to, <b>multiple performance styles</b>. They use play-making techniques to extract and develop dramatic potential from stimulus material, then apply and manipulate conventions, dramatic elements, expressive skills, performance skills and production areas. Throughout the <b>devising process</b>, they experiment with transformation of character, time and place, and application of symbol. Students devise and shape their work to communicate meaning and to have a specific impact on their audience. <b>They learn about ways to source and use sustainable materials when applying production areas to their ensemble performance.</b></p> <p>In addition, students document and evaluate the play-making techniques applied in the creation, development and presentation of the ensemble performance. Students attend, analyse and evaluate a live professional drama performance selected from the prescribed VCE Drama Unit 3 Playlist published annually on the VCAA website.</p> <p>In this unit, the terms <i>character</i>, <i>performance</i>, <i>story</i> and <i>style</i> can be understood as one or more characters, performances, stories or styles.</p>	

# Unit 3 Area of Study 1 – Key Changes

2019-2024 Drama study design	2025-2029 Drama study design
<b>Devising and presenting ensemble performance</b>	<b>Devising and presenting ensemble performance</b>
<p>In this area of study students develop and present a devised ensemble performance. They examine the work of a range of drama practitioners working in selected performance styles to explore how dramatic work is created. Students work with given stimulus material and guidelines that provide a starting point for the structure of a performance. They apply their knowledge of ways other drama practitioners work to devise and shape their work to communicate meaning and to have an impact on their audience in specific and intentional ways. Students use play-making techniques to extract dramatic potential from the stimulus, and devise and develop characters, story and meaning in the ensemble performance.</p>	<p>In this area of study, students develop and present a devised ensemble performance. They examine the work of a range of drama practitioners working in selected performance styles to explore how dramatic work is created. Students work with given stimulus material and guidelines that provide a starting point for the structure of a performance. They apply their knowledge of ways in which other drama practitioners work to devise and shape their work to communicate meaning and to have an impact on their audience in specific and intentional ways. Students apply play-making techniques to extract dramatic potential from the stimulus, and devise and develop characters, story and meaning in the presentation of the ensemble performance.</p>

# Unit 3 Area of Study 1 – Key Changes

2019-2024 Drama study design	2025-2029 Drama study design
<b>Devising and presenting ensemble performance</b>	<b>Devising and presenting ensemble performance</b>
<p>The performance style of the resulting work may reflect one of the selected performance styles or it may draw on features from a range of styles and be eclectic in nature. When creating their ensemble performance, students develop a work that incorporates application of symbol and transformation of character, time and place. The performance style of the work will go beyond a representation of real life as it is lived. Students manipulate conventions, dramatic elements and production areas to create and to communicate meaning. They consider application of role and explore how to establish and manipulate an actor– audience relationship that is appropriate to the performance style of the work.</p>	<p>The performance style of the resulting work may reflect one selected performance style, or it may draw on features/conventions from a range of performance styles and contemporary drama practices. When creating their ensemble performance, students develop a work that incorporates application of symbol and transformation of character, time and place. In doing so, they address the nature of contemporary drama practice that focuses on non-realistic styles and structures, including non-linear narratives.</p> <p>Students manipulate conventions, dramatic elements and production areas to create and communicate meaning in their devised ensemble. They consider and explore how to establish, maintain and/or manipulate an actor–audience relationship that is relevant to the performance styles within the work. They learn about the sourcing and application of sustainable materials when applying production areas to their ensemble performance.</p>



# Unit 3 Area of Study 1

## 2019-2024 Drama study design

## 2025-2029 Drama study design

### Devising and presenting ensemble performance

### Devising and presenting ensemble performance

#### Outcome

On completion of this unit, the student should be able to develop and present characters within a devised ensemble performance that goes beyond a representation of real life as it is lived.

#### Key Knowledge

- play-making techniques
- approaches to exploring character and role in selected performance styles
- conventions of selected performance styles
- techniques used by drama practitioners to develop performances
- techniques for transforming character, time and place and applying symbol
- use of dramatic elements to devise and develop an ensemble performance
- techniques for establishing and manipulating actor–audience relationships
- ways of using production areas to define and enhance an ensemble performance

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- techniques used by drama practitioners to develop performances
- techniques for transforming character, time and place and applying symbol
- use of dramatic elements to devise and develop an ensemble performance
- techniques for establishing and/or manipulating actor–audience relationships
- ways of using production areas, including sustainable approaches, to define and enhance an ensemble performance

# Unit 3 Area of Study 1

2019-2024 Drama study design	2025-2029 Drama study design
<b>Devising and presenting ensemble performance</b>	<b>Devising and presenting ensemble performance</b>
<b>Outcome</b> On completion of this unit, the student should be able to develop and present characters within a devised ensemble performance that goes beyond a representation of real life as it is lived.	
<b>Key Knowledge</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• conventions used to enhance an ensemble performance</li><li>• approaches to applying expressive and performance skills</li><li>• the collaborative process used to develop and present characters for an ensemble</li><li>• approaches to documenting the development and performance of a devised ensemble work</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• conventions used to enhance an ensemble performance</li><li>• approaches to applying expressive and performance skills</li><li>• the collaborative process used to develop and present characters for an ensemble</li><li>• approaches to documenting the development and performance of a devised ensemble work.</li></ul>

# Unit 3 Area of Study 1

## 2019-2024 Drama study design

## 2025-2029 Drama study design

### Devising and presenting ensemble performance

### Devising and presenting ensemble performance

#### Outcome

On completion of this unit, the student should be able to develop and present characters within a devised ensemble performance that goes beyond a representation of real life as it is lived.

#### Key Skills

- explore dramatic potential of stimulus material and use play-making techniques to develop characters for an ensemble performance
- use play-making techniques to give dramatic form to an ensemble performance
- manipulate dramatic elements in an ensemble performance
- explore and manipulate conventions to enhance an ensemble performance
- explore and apply symbol and transformation of character, time and place
- manipulate production areas to enhance an ensemble performance
- use expressive and performance skills to communicate characters within an ensemble performance

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# Unit 1 Area of Study 1

2019-2024 Drama study design

2025-2029 Drama study design

**Devising and presenting ensemble performance**

**Devising and presenting ensemble performance**

## Outcome

On completion of this unit, the student should be able to develop and present characters within a devised ensemble performance that goes beyond a representation of real life as it is lived.

## Key Skills

- manipulate the actor–audience relationship to communicate meaning and have specific and intentional impacts on an audience
- collaborate on the construction and presentation of an ensemble performance to an audience
- present an ensemble performance to an audience.

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- collaborate on the construction and presentation of an ensemble performance to an audience
- present an ensemble performance to an audience.

# Unit 3 Outcome 1 teaching and learning

## Devising and presenting ensemble performance

### Outcome

Develop and present characters within a devised ensemble performance that goes beyond a representation of real life as it is lived.

### Teaching and Learning Example

- Use *playmaking techniques* such as *research* and *improvisation* to explore the *conventions* associated with the groups chosen/set *performance styles*.
- Explore ways to incorporate *production areas* such as *lighting* and *sound* into a performance to enhance dramatic elements such as *mood*, *tension*, *climax* and *conflict*.
- Using the group's set *stimulus*, students *brainstorm* a list of characters that might be present within the world of their ensemble and then *improvise* the characters expressive skills using practical activities such as roleplay or hot seating.
- Students record work in progress rehearsals, watch and reflect on *use of space* and *actor/audience relationship*.
- Students *reflect* on rehearsal feedback to *edit* and *refine* performances.

# Unit 3 Assessment

## Outcome 1

Develop and present characters within a devised ensemble performance that goes beyond a representation of real life as it is lived.

### Assessment task:

Development and presentation of characters within a devised ensemble performance. Each student should have approximately 5 to 8 minutes of primary focus performance time in the work.

## Outcome 1 Assessment Task example

**Task:** Devise an ensemble performance based on the topic of **Gender Stereotypes**. Your performance must combine contemporary drama practices that incorporate a range of conventions to support your prescribed performance styles, creating dramatic work that goes beyond representations of reality. The work may include further research and stories that support the overall message.

**Audience:** The intended audience is family and friends and Year 10 and 11 Drama students.

**Groups:** Groups of 4 students, 20-32 mins in length

**Stimulus:** These will range from songs, poems, images, novels, films, etc

**Performance style:** Epic and Musical Theatre

**Conventions:** Transformation of Time, Place, Character, and Application of Symbol. Incorporating conventions of song, narration and dance.

**Dramatic Elements:** Rhythm, Mood & Space

# Unit 3 Area of Study 2 – Key Changes

2019-2024 Drama study design	2025-2029 Drama study design
<b>Analysing a devised ensemble performance</b>	<b>Analysing and evaluating a devised performance</b>
<p>In this area of study students analyse the ensemble performance devised in Outcome 1. They describe, reflect upon, interpret, analyse and evaluate the construction and performance of this ensemble performance. They analyse the selection, use and manipulation of conventions (including application of symbol and transformation of character, time and place), dramatic elements, expressive skills, performance skills, play-making techniques, production areas and selected performance styles. Students also use appropriate drama terminology to discuss their own performance work and to analyse the dramatic potential of stimulus material and resources for developing characters for an ensemble performance.</p>	<p>In this area of study, students focus on the <b>process and creation</b> of the ensemble performance devised in Outcome 1. <b>They describe, analyse and evaluate</b> the creation and performance of their devised ensemble. They reflect upon the selection, application and manipulation of conventions (including application of symbol and transformation of character, time and place), dramatic elements, expressive skills, performance skills, play-making techniques, production areas and conventions of selected performance styles. They consider the decisions made in relation to extracting the dramatic potential from the stimulus material and developing intended meaning in an ensemble performance for an audience. In analysing and evaluating a devised performance, they apply relevant drama terminology.</p>

# Unit 3 Area of Study 2

2019-2024 Drama study design	2025-2029 Drama study design
<b>Analysing a devised ensemble performance</b>	<b>Analysing and evaluating a devised performance</b>
<b>Outcome</b> On completion of this unit, the student should be able to describe, analyse and evaluate the use of processes, play-making techniques and skills to create, develop, and present a devised ensemble performance.	
<b>Key Knowledge</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• key knowledge identified in Outcome 1.</li><li>• appropriate drama terminology</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• key knowledge identified in Outcome 1</li><li>• relevant drama terminology.</li></ul>



# Unit 3 Area of Study 2

## 2019-2024 Drama study design

## 2025-2029 Drama study design

### Analysing a devised ensemble performance

### Analysing and evaluating a devised performance

#### Outcome

On completion of this unit, the student should be able to describe, analyse and evaluate the use of processes, play-making techniques and skills to create, develop, and present a devised ensemble performance.

#### Key Skills

- analyse the dramatic potential and use of stimulus material
- describe, analyse and evaluate play-making techniques used at different stages of the development of a devised ensemble performance that goes beyond a representation of real life as it is lived
- describe the performance styles of the work
- describe, analyse and evaluate a performance of an ensemble work
- describe, analyse and evaluate ways that conventions (including application of symbol and transformation of character, time and place), dramatic elements, expressive skills, performance skills, play-making techniques, production areas and selected performance styles have been used in the construction, development and presentation of the ensemble performance
- use drama terminology appropriately

- analyse the dramatic potential and use of stimulus material
- describe, analyse and evaluate play-making techniques used at different stages of the development of a devised ensemble performance
- describe the performance styles of the work
- describe, analyse and evaluate a performance of an ensemble work
- describe, analyse and evaluate ways in which conventions (including application of symbol and transformation of character, time and place), dramatic elements, expressive skills, performance skills, play-making techniques, production areas and selected performance styles have been used in the creation, development and presentation of the ensemble performance
- apply relevant drama terminology.

# Unit 3 Outcome 2 teaching and learning

## Analysing a devised performance

### Outcome

**Describe, analyse and evaluate** the use of processes, play-making techniques and skills to create, develop, and present a devised ensemble performance.

### Teaching and Learning Examples

- Collect material to use in an oral presentation that demonstrates how processes, techniques and skills were used to create and present your ensemble performance.
- **Complete short written exercises** that prompt description, reflection, and interpretation to articulate responses to stimulus material.
- Analyse and evaluate the construction and performance of the ensemble presentation, drawing on record keeping (hard-copy, digital folio, combination) and working script.

# Unit 3 Assessment

## Outcome 2

Describe, analyse and evaluate the use of processes, play-making techniques and skills to create, develop and present a devised ensemble performance.

### Assessment task:

A **description, analysis and evaluation** of the development and performance of characters from the ensemble work developed for Outcome 1.

The **description, analysis and evaluation** may be presented in one or both of the following formats:

- an oral presentation
- written responses to structured questions.

## Outcome 2 Assessment Task example

### Written responses to structured questions

- Students are describing, analysing and evaluating their own ensemble 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 3 Area of Study 3 – Key Changes

2019-2024 Drama study design	2025-2029 Drama study design
<b>Analysing and evaluating a professional drama performance</b>	<b>Analysing and evaluating a professional drama performance</b>
<p>In this area of study students analyse and evaluate a professional drama performance selected from the prescribed VCE Drama Unit 3 Playlist. Students analyse the actors' use of expressive and performance skills to represent character and to communicate meaning in the performance. They consider how the actor–audience relationship is created and manipulated and analyse and evaluate how the conventions, dramatic elements, production areas and performance styles are used in the performance. The prescribed VCE Drama Unit 3 Playlist is published annually on the VCAA website.</p>	<p>In this area of study, students <b>attend</b>, analyse and evaluate a professional drama performance selected from the prescribed VCE Drama Unit 3 Playlist. Students analyse and evaluate the actors' use of expressive and performance skills to represent character and to communicate meaning in the performance. They consider how the actor–audience relationship is established, <b>maintained</b> and/or manipulated to create an effect, and analyse and evaluate how the selected conventions, dramatic elements, production areas, performance styles and <b>contemporary practices</b> are applied in the performance. The prescribed VCE Drama Playlist is published annually on the VCAA website.</p>

# Unit 3 Area of Study 3

## 2019-2024 Drama study design

### Analysing and evaluating a professional drama performance

## 2025-2029 Drama study design

### Analysing and evaluating a professional drama performance

#### Outcome

On completion of this unit, the student should be able to analyse and evaluate a professional drama performance [from the prescribed VCE Drama Playlist](#).

#### Key Knowledge

- performance styles and conventions and their use in performance
- the actors' use of expressive and performance skills to represent characters in performance
- manipulation of dramatic elements and production areas to enhance performance
- drama terminology associated with performance styles and practitioners from contemporary and/or historical and/or cultural traditions relevant to the performance.

- performance styles and conventions and their application in a performance
- actors' use of expressive and performance skills to represent characters in performance
- manipulation of dramatic elements and production areas to enhance performance
- [contemporary drama practices](#)
- [actor–audience relationships](#)
- drama terminology associated with performance styles and contemporary drama practices.

# Unit 3 Area of Study 3

2019-2024 Drama study design

2025-2029 Drama study design

Analysing and evaluating 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 a professional drama performance from the prescribed VCE Drama Playlist.

## Key Skills

- analyse and evaluate the representation of characters within a performance
- analyse and evaluate the manipulation of conventions, dramatic elements and production areas within a performance
- analyse and evaluate the use of performance styles within a production
- analyse and evaluate the actors' use of expressive and performance skills in a performance
- analyse and evaluate the establishment, maintenance and manipulation of the actor–audience relationship in a performance.

- analyse and evaluate the representation of characters within a performance
- analyse and evaluate the manipulation of conventions, dramatic elements and production areas within a performance
- analyse and evaluate the use of performance styles and contemporary drama practices within a production
- analyse and evaluate actors' use of expressive and performance skills in a performance
- analyse and evaluate the establishment, maintenance and/or manipulation of the actor–audience relationship in a performance
- apply relevant drama terminology.

# Unit 3 Outcome 3 teaching and learning

## Analysing and evaluating a professional drama performance

### Outcome

Analyse and evaluate a professional drama performance from the [prescribed VCE Drama Playlist](#).

### Teaching and Learning Example

- Select a play from the Unit 3 VCE Drama Playlist (*published annually by the VCAA*). Use information about the production of this play (for example, a script, images or notes from the theatre company or own research) to consider the *performance style/s* and associated *conventions*.
- Workshop the *conventions* that can be associated with the *performance style/s*.
- Discuss ways in which the *actor-audience relationship* was established, maintained and manipulated within the performance. Write a list of these with examples from the production.
- Following the performance, analyse the actors' use of *expressive* and *performance skills* when representing character and communicating meaning in the performance.
- Analyse the application of conventions and performance style(s)

# Unit 3 Assessment

## Outcome 3

Analyse and evaluate a professional drama performance from the **prescribed VCE Drama Playlist**.

### Assessment task:

An analysis and evaluation of a play selected from the Unit 3 Playlist. The analysis and evaluation will be presented as written responses to structured questions.

## Outcome 3 Assessment Task example

### Written responses to structured questions

- Students are analysing and evaluating a live performance they saw from the VCE Drama Playlist
- A range of questions covering key knowledge and skills
- A range of marks allocated to the questions to represent higher and lower order thinking
- Throughout the life of the Study Design (2025-2029), VCAA End of Year Written Drama Exams are useful to model questions on, keeping in mind they should relate to the performance the students saw from the VCE Drama Playlist (published annually by the VCAA)



# Contact

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