

VCE Theatre Studies 2025–2029

Changes to:

Scope of study

Rationale

Aims

Structure (Unit titles)

Safety and wellbeing

Work practices

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 Theatre Studies 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

Theatre Studies 2019 - 2024

In VCE Theatre Studies students interpret scripts from the pre-modern era to the present day and produce theatre for audiences. Through practical and theoretical engagement with scripts they gain an insight into the origins and development of theatre and the influences of theatre on cultures and societies. Students apply dramaturgy and work in the production roles of actor, director and designer, developing an understanding and appreciation of the role and place of theatre practitioners.

Throughout the study, students work individually and collaboratively in various production roles to creatively and imaginatively interpret scripts and to plan, develop and present productions. Students study the contexts – the times, places and cultures – of these scripts, as well as their language. They experiment with different possibilities for interpreting scripts and apply ideas and concepts in performance to an audience. They examine ways that meaning can be constructed and conveyed through theatre performance. Students consider their audiences, and in their interpretations, incorporate knowledge and understanding of audience culture, demographic and sensibilities.

Theatre Studies 2025-2029

In VCE Theatre Studies, students interpret scripts from historic periods to the present day and produce theatre for audiences. Through practical and theoretical engagement with scripts, they gain an insight into the origins and development of theatre, the influences of theatre on cultures and societies, and the influences of culture and society on theatre. Students apply dramaturgy and work in the production roles of actor, director and designer, developing an understanding and appreciation of the role of theatre practitioners.

Throughout the study, students work individually and collaboratively in production roles to interpret scripts and to plan, develop and present productions. Students study the contexts of scripts (time and place, including the historical, cultural, political and social contexts) and the languages of scripts, as well as theatre movements. They experiment with different possibilities for interpreting scripts and apply ideas and concepts for presentation to audiences. They examine ways in which meaning can be constructed and conveyed through theatre performance. Students consider their audiences and, in their interpretations, incorporate knowledge and understanding of audience culture and demographics.

Rationale

Theatre Studies 2019 - 2024

Theatre as a form of cultural expression has been made and performed for audiences from the earliest times and is an integral part of all cultures. Theatre is ever evolving and exists as entertainment, education, ritual, an agent for change, a representation of values and a window on society. Theatre practice has developed and has influenced cultures over many centuries through a wide variety of productions in diverse spaces and venues for a range of audiences. Theatre makers work as playwrights, actors, directors and designers, producing theatre for diverse purposes.

Through the study of VCE Theatre Studies students develop, refine and enhance their analytical, evaluative and critical thinking skills as well as their expression, problem-solving, collaborative and communication skills. They work both individually and in collaboration with others to interpret scripts. Through study and practice, students develop their aesthetic sensibility, including an appreciation for the art form of theatre, interpretive skills, interpersonal skills and theatre production skills.

The study of theatre, in all its various forms, prepares students for further study in theatre production, theatre history, communication, writing, acting, direction and design at tertiary level. VCE Theatre Studies also prepares students for further learning in vocational educational training settings or for industry or community-related pathways.

Theatre Studies 2025-2029

Theatre as a form of cultural expression has been made and performed for audiences from the earliest times and is an integral part of all cultures. Theatre is ever evolving and exists as entertainment, education, ritual, an agent for change, a representation of values and a critical window on society. Theatre practice has developed from, and been influenced by, cultures over many centuries through a wide variety of productions in diverse performance spaces for a range of audiences. Theatre-makers work as playwrights, actors, dramaturgs, directors and designers, producing theatre for diverse purposes.

Through the study of VCE Theatre Studies, students develop, refine and enhance their analytical, evaluative and critical thinking skills as well as creative expression, technical application, problem-solving, collaborative and communication skills. They work both individually and in collaboration with others to interpret scripts. Through theoretical study and creative practice, students develop their aesthetic understanding and appreciation of the art form of theatre, and their interpretive and theatre production skills. Through the study of theatre, students also explore world views, alternative perspectives and ways of being.

The study of theatre, in its various forms, prepares students for further study in theatre production, theatre history, communication, marketing, production management, writing, acting, direction and design at tertiary level. VCE Theatre Studies also prepares students for further learning in vocational educational training settings or for industry or community-related pathways.

Aims

Theatre Studies 2019 - 2024	Theatre Studies 2025-2029
<p>This study enables students to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• acquire knowledge of theatre including its styles, purposes and audiences• interpret scripts through engagement in the production process• experiment creatively and imaginatively with theatrical possibilities and elements of theatre composition• apply knowledge of production roles and the skills to interpret scripts• understand themselves as theatre practitioners and audience• appreciate theatre and its significance as an art form• apply safe and ethical personal and interpersonal practices in theatre production• conduct performance analysis and production evaluations and apply learning to their own theatre production work• apply thinking, problem-solving and communication skills to creatively participate in the theatre life of their community.	<p>This study enables students to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• acquire knowledge of theatre including its styles, movements, purposes and audiences• interpret scripts through engagement in the production process• experiment with theatrical possibilities and elements of theatre composition• apply knowledge of production roles and the skills to interpret scripts• understand themselves as theatre practitioners and audiences• appreciate theatre and its significance as an art form• apply safe, ethical, inclusive, sustainable (where possible, environmentally sustainable) and personal and interpersonal practices in theatre production• conduct performance analysis and production evaluations and apply learning to their own theatre production work• apply thinking, problem-solving and communication skills to creatively participate in the theatre life of their community.

Unit titles

Theatre Studies 2019 - 2024	Theatre Studies 2025-2029
Unit 1: Pre-modern theatre styles and conventions	Unit 1: History of theatre styles and conventions pre-1945
Unit 2: Modern theatre styles and conventions	Unit 2: Contemporary theatre styles and movements
Unit 3: Producing theatre	Unit 3: Producing theatre
Unit 4: Presenting an interpretation	Unit 4: Presenting an interpretation

Safety and wellbeing

Theatre Studies 2019 – 2024

(Initial information remains the same for both study designs.)

For scripts that students will interpret and performances they will attend, teachers are advised to:

- read the script
- be familiar with the themes, context and world of the play, **with** particular attention to matters identified in the advice
- if available, read information such as the director's vision or creative concept for the production
- identify any issues that may require additional resourcing such as information about different perspectives on controversial historical, social, cultural or political themes
- make **selection/s** in consultation with school leaders.

For performances that students will attend, teachers are advised to:

- discuss issues of concern with the theatre company
- if available, read information such as the director's vision or creative concept for the production
- if possible, attend a preview performance
- discuss aspects of the production that may be challenging for students with colleagues at the school and develop support material as required.

Theatre Studies 2025-2029

(Initial information remains the same for both study designs.)

For scripts that students will interpret and performances they will attend, teachers are advised to:

- read the script
- be familiar with the themes, contexts and world of the play, **and pay** particular attention to matters identified in the advice **provided by publishers and theatre companies, and in the VCE Theatre Studies Playlist**
- (if available) read information such as the director's vision or creative concept for the production
- identify any issues that may require additional resourcing, such as information about different perspectives on controversial historical, social, cultural and/or political themes
- make **the** selection in consultation with school leaders, **including wellbeing staff**.

For performances that students will attend, teachers are advised to:

- discuss issues of concern with the theatre company
- (if available) read information such as the director's vision or creative concept for the production
- (if possible) attend a preview performance
- discuss with colleagues at school (**including wellbeing staff**) any aspects of the production that may be challenging for students and develop support material as required.

Safe, ethical, inclusive and sustainable work practices

Revised
Term

Theatre Studies 2019 - 2024

In VCE Theatre Studies students may be required to handle equipment and use chemicals, for example adhesives, solvents and paints used in set or costume design that are potentially hazardous. Also, lifting and movement of heavy objects may be required and students should be instructed on the appropriate ways of lifting and moving objects. Students and teachers must be aware of acceptable levels of sound, particularly when using amplifiers and PA systems. Equipment should be 'tested and tagged' to comply with WorkSafe Victoria regulations and regulations must be followed regarding persons working two metres or more above the ground. For activities that take place in a performance space, all people who access the space during the activity must be made aware of relevant safety and evacuation procedures.

The Victorian WorkCover Authority website www.worksafe.vic.gov.au/ regularly updates relevant occupational health and safety regulations. Relevant information is also provided on the Department of Education website www.education.vic.gov.au/hrweb/safetyhw.

*(Previously included in **Safety and wellbeing.**)*

Theatre Studies 2025-2029

In VCE Theatre Studies, students may be required to handle equipment and use chemicals (for example, adhesives, solvents and paints used in set or costume design) that are potentially hazardous. Also, **since** lifting and **moving** heavy objects may be required, students should be instructed on appropriate ways of **doing this**. Students and teachers must be aware of acceptable levels of sound, particularly when using amplifiers and PA systems. Equipment should be tested and tagged to comply with WorkSafe Victoria regulations and regulations must be followed regarding persons working two metres or more above the ground. For activities that take place in a performance space, all people who access the space during the activity must be made aware of relevant safety and evacuation procedures.

The Victorian WorkCover Authority [website](#) regularly updates relevant occupational health and safety regulations. Relevant information is also provided on the Department of Education [website](#).

Students learn about inclusive theatre-making and establishing inclusive performance spaces for a range of abilities and needs, and for a range of audience members. They consider accessibility, including participation in production roles, and possibilities in relation to venue access, relaxed performances and visual and aural adjustments. Further information can be found at [Creative Australia – accessibility](#), [Arts Access Victoria](#) and [Arts Access Australia](#).

Students also learn about, engage with and, where possible, apply environmentally sustainable work practices in the theatre. This includes energy efficiency, sustainable materials, ethical sourcing of materials, and ways to actively reduce the carbon footprint of theatre production (see [Sustainable Theatres Australia – Green Guides](#)).

Terms used in the study - Script

Theatre Studies 2025-2029

The term script refers to a text used for a theatre performance. A script may be an entire play or excerpts from plays. A script may also be an adaptation of a screenplay from a film or a novel, or a libretto/score from a musical.

Terms used in the study – Dramaturgy

Theatre Studies 2025-2029

Dramaturgy refers to exploration and research into a play to inform an interpretation of it. This may include examining the **structure, language, theatre style(s), conventions and devices of the play**, the **contexts of the play including historical, political, social and cultural**, its intended meanings, the background of the playwright, and previous productions of the play. Dramaturgy is part of the production process and may be applied at any stage and in any production role; it is not a separate stage of the production process.

The dramaturgical process assists the **production team to interpret the script through research, questioning, discussion, and feedback**, and then apply directorial and design concepts, inquire into and analyse the text for key moments, character arcs, timelines, plot turning points, the intentions of the playwright (particularly in new works), theatrical possibilities and consider the most effective way to present their interpretation of the script to an audience.

Terms used in the study –

Production roles

Theatre Studies 2025-2029

Production role is the term used to describe an area of work in theatre production. There are key production roles identified in this study design and there are additional roles students may wish to explore within their study such as stage management, production management, publicity and marketing, technical operation, voice coach, intimacy coach, fight choreographer, dance choreographer, etc. The production roles that are to be given focus and to be assessed in this study are:

- actor
- director
- designer: costume
- designer: hair and make-up
- designer: props
- designer: set
- designer: lighting
- designer: sound.

Terms used in the study-

Theatre production processes

Theatre Studies 2025-2029

Planning

Planning is the stage of the production process where there is an **initial** exploration of script. Where **initial** theatrical possibilities are established through reading, annotating, the undertaking of dramaturgy, and evaluation of the process. From this process **initial** concepts, aims, and creative and theatrical possibilities are generated.

Development

Development is the stage of the production process whereby rehearsing, trialling, experimenting and refining of **initial concepts, ideas and aims occur to determine achievability, viability, suitability, and sustainable production processes for performance.** This includes reflection and evaluation of this stage of the production process and may be informed by **further dramaturgical work.**

Presentation

Presentation is where the final stages of a creative concept and idea are **realised for performance to a live audience.** These concepts and ideas can be **further refined through** technical and dress rehearsals, during performance, and through post-performance evaluation and feedback.

Terms used in the study - Contexts

Theatre Studies 2025-2029

Contexts refer to the circumstances surrounding a play and its interpretation for an audience. This may include the time and place in which the play is set and was written, influences on the playwright(s), the languages of the script, circumstances associated with the **contents of the play (including historical, social, cultural and/or political)**, the possibilities for interpreting a script, and the intended audience.

Recontextualisation can take various forms, depending on the director's vision and artistic choices. It might involve setting a play in a different time period or culture, altering the social or political context, or incorporating modern elements into a traditional work. The purpose of recontextualisation is to provide a new perspective on a familiar story, challenge audience expectations or explore the relevance and universality of a particular work.

Terms used in the study

Theatre styles and conventions

Theatre Studies 2025-2029

Theatre styles are the traditions of theatre that are accepted by different cultures as conventional and are particular to specific times, places and peoples. By their very nature, theatre styles and their associated conventions are not static, constant or definitive, rather, they are indicative. For example, a theatre style might indicate a historical period or political movement. In contemporary theatre, it is understood that theatre styles are fluid and experimental and evolve in response to a range of contexts and purposes so that productions may be eclectic in nature.

Terms used in the study

New term

Contemporary theatre movements

Theatre Studies 2025-2029

For the purposes of this study, contemporary theatre movements are defined as theatre from 1945 to the present day – theatre that pushes the boundaries of, and experiments with, traditional theatre and its conventions. Such movements can cut across theatre styles, art forms, genres and disciplines.

Contemporary theatre movements are influenced by cultural structures, which may be religious, ideological, political and/or social.

Contemporary theatre may include social or political movements, for example feminism, human rights, climate justice, anti-racism, queer theatre and contemporary Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander theatre.

A theatre movement may focus on particular forms such as cine-theatre, physical, verbatim or documentary theatre, or plays written by particular playwrights during what could be regarded as a contemporary movement. This may be time-bound (within a specified period of years, such as a decade), it may be a movement that emerges across a longer period of time, or a movement that emerges in response to a particular point in time. A movement may also constitute a series of works by specific directors or theatre-makers who experiment with form, themes or ideas. Scripts remain central to study when selecting a theatre movement.

Terms used in the study

Elements of Theatre Composition

Theatre Studies 2025-2029

The elements of theatre composition can be applied to explore the interpretation of script throughout the stages of the production process. They can be applied individually or in combination, in any theatre style. **These elements can be used to generate, develop and refine ideas and concepts. They can be applied to realise the aims and intentions of those of the creative production team.**

The elements of theatre composition in a performance can be applied to deliberately affect an audience, encourage or lead the audience towards the meaning or interpretation desired by the creative team, and assist in establishing, manipulating and/or maintaining an actor-audience relationship.

Members of the creative team may incorporate elements of theatre composition into **their practice to give form and structure to their interpretation of the script.** They may collaboratively apply specific elements of theatre composition across production roles to generate and emphasise a unified concept or idea. Additionally, production roles might choose to focus on one or more elements of theatre composition, individually, to create and express a certain idea to their audience.

Terms used in the study

Elements of Theatre Composition

Theatre Studies 2025-2029

For the purposes of this study the elements of theatre composition are:

- **cohesion** – the overall unity and balance of an interpretation or of moments within an interpretation
- **motion** – the movement, implied movement and/or stillness of actors and/or design features that occur in the space (this may include position, pattern, arrangement, proportion and flow)
- **rhythm** – the pace, timing and tempo within certain moments or across the interpretation
- **emphasis** – aspects of the interpretation are given a particular focus, importance or prominence
- **contrast** – **juxtaposition (two things being seen or placed close together with contrasting effect)** of different or opposing aspects or qualities within certain moments in the interpretation
- **variation** – changes to the dynamics of the interpretation, as may be evident in the use and manipulation of tension, conflict, intensity, energy and space (**variation may be gradual and may occur in certain moments or across an interpretation**).

Terms used in the study

Theatre technologies

Theatre Studies 2025-2029

This term refers to any form or technology (mechanical, electrical, digital) applied in the theatrical process, be it planning, development or production. Technological enhancement has been central to theatrical innovation over time, and development of technology continues to enhance all facets of theatrical production to shape the appearance, sound, operation and audience experience of a performance.

Theatre technologies can include networked, online, extended reality, immersive, mobile and situated tools, devices and environments that enable certain forms of theatrical expression and experience.

Students explore past, present and emerging theatre technologies and their applications. They develop an understanding of, and language for, how technologies such as sound, light, set, image, artificial intelligence (AI) and hybrid forms can be used across production roles and production processes when interpreting scripts.

Students also consider the technologies they engage with and apply as part of a production team across production processes including, where possible, environmentally sustainable practices in the use of technologies. They consider how the technologies they use and incorporate may differ from the technologies they experience as an audience member seeing a production.

Terms used in the study

Audience and audience culture

New Term

Theatre Studies 2025-2029

Theatre as an art form is constructed and created for an audience of one or more spectators. In this study, students are both artists and audiences. As artists, they learn about the importance of audience, audience and performance spaces, audience and intended meaning, and the effect of their work on an audience. As audiences, they attend professional theatre for the purposes of analysis and evaluation.

Audience culture refers to the attitudes, beliefs, values and behaviours of a particular group of people who engage with theatre performances. In this study, audience culture pertains to an intended audience and may be directly related to or informed by the historical, political, social and cultural contexts in which a script was written. Audience culture is also related to theatre styles, conventions and movements. Historical plays written for audiences of their time can offer new insights or meanings when performed to contemporary audiences. Contemporary theatre practices offer new insights into the role of an audience, for example a contemporary performance of a Shakespearean play or an immersive performance.

Terms used in the study

Character(s) and Acting skills

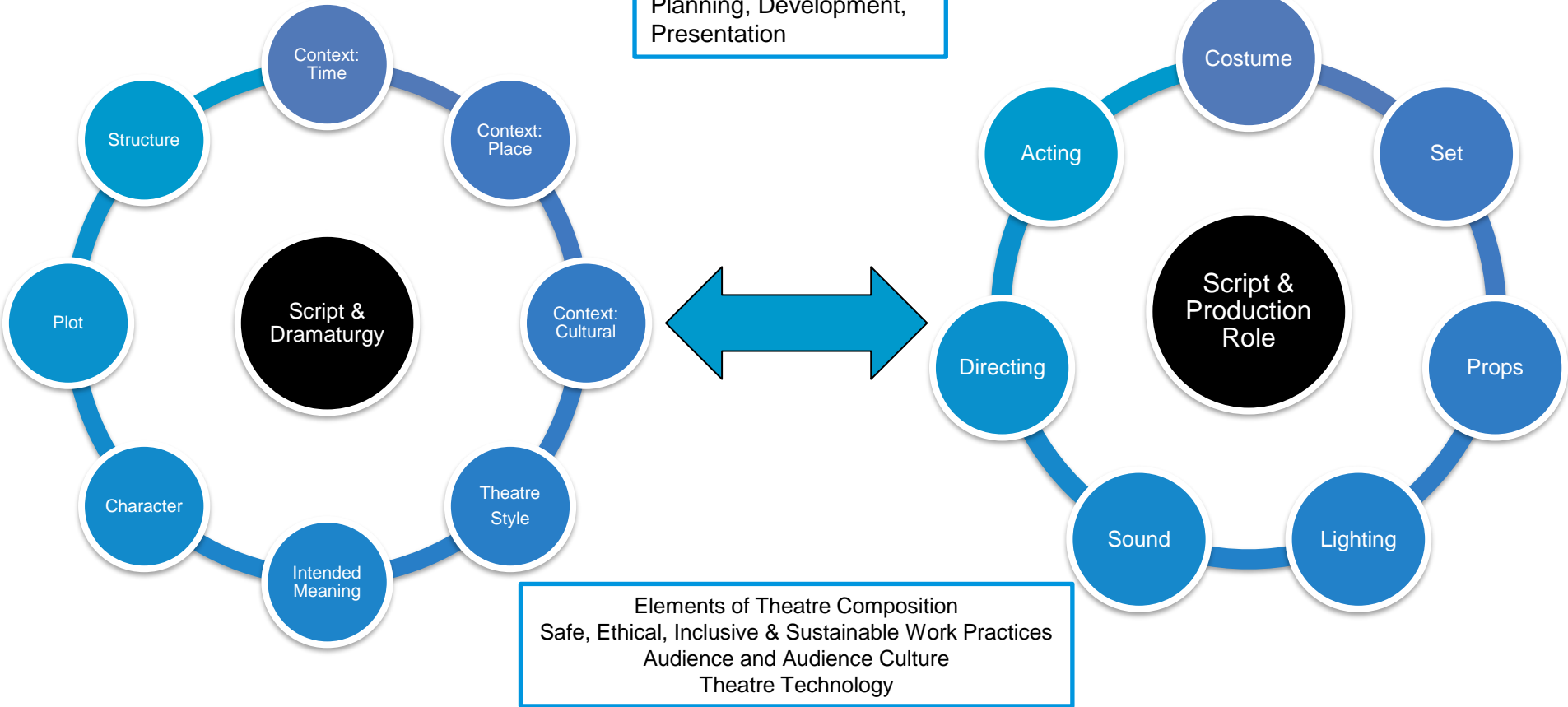
New Term

Theatre Studies 2025-2029

Character(s) refers to the roles played by actors in a production to an audience. Characters are inherent in scripts from early forms of theatre to contemporary theatre forms. Students study character(s) in productions, examining their function and purpose, objective(s), motivation(s), status and traits or qualities.

Acting skills are skills used by actors to portray character(s) in the interpretation of a script. Acting skills include the use of facial expression, voice, gesture, movement, stillness and silence, focus, and verbal and non-verbal language to convey the intended meanings of characters in a script. Acting skills also assist to establish, maintain and/or manipulate the actor–audience relationship. Acting skills may be enhanced by other production roles.

Production Process:
Planning, Development,
Presentation



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