

# VCE Theatre Studies

## 2025–2029

Unit 2: Contemporary theatre  
styles and movements

# 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 Unit 2
- 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 2 – Key changes

2019-2024 Theatre Studies	2025-2029 Theatre Studies
Modern theatre styles and conventions	<b>Contemporary</b> theatre styles and movements
<b>Area of Study 1</b> – Exploring modern theatre styles and conventions	<b>Area of Study 1</b> – Exploring contemporary theatre styles and/or movements
<b>Area of Study 2</b> – Interpreting scripts	<b>Area of Study 2</b> – Interpreting scripts
<b>Area of Study 3</b> – Analysing and evaluating a theatre production	<b>Area of Study 3</b> – Analysing and evaluating a theatre production

# Unit 2- Key changes

Additional information added to the overview of this Unit

## 2025-2029 Theatre Studies

### Contemporary theatre styles and movements

In this unit, students study contemporary theatre practice through the exploration of scripts from 1945 to the present day. They select scripts from either two distinct theatre styles OR a theatre movement between 1945 and the present day. In either option, students should study at least one Australian play.

Contemporary theatre movements can be defined as performance styles from 1945 onwards that push the boundaries of traditional theatre styles and conventions. They often consist of a range of conventions and features and can cut across art forms, genres and disciplines.

# Unit 2- Key changes

2019-2024 Theatre Studies	2025-2029 Theatre Studies
<b>Modern theatre styles and conventions</b>	<b>Contemporary theatre styles and movements</b>
<p>This unit focuses on the application of acting, direction and design in relation to theatre styles from the modern era, that is, the 1920s to the present. Students creatively and imaginatively work in production roles with scripts from the modern era of theatre, focusing on at least three distinct theatre styles. They study innovations in theatre production in the modern era and apply this knowledge to their own works. Students develop knowledge and skills about theatre production processes including dramaturgy, planning, development and performance to an audience and apply this to their work. They study safe and ethical working practices in theatre production and develop skills of performance analysis, which they apply to the analysis of a play in performance.</p>	<p>This unit focuses on the application of acting, direction and design in relation to contemporary theatre practice from 1945 to the present day. Students work in production roles to interpret scripts. They study developments and innovations in theatre and apply this knowledge to their own work.</p> <p>Students develop knowledge of, and skills relating to, theatre production processes that include dramaturgy, planning, development and presentation to an audience, and they apply these to their own work. They study safe, ethical, inclusive and sustainable working practices (where possible, using environmentally sustainable approaches) in theatre production.</p> <p>They develop skills in theatre production analysis and evaluation, which they apply to their own work and to the work of other practitioners.</p>

# Unit 2- Key changes

These styles and movements are examples only- not prescribed.

2019-2024 Theatre Studies	2025-2029 Theatre Studies
<b>Modern theatre styles and conventions</b>	<b>Contemporary theatre styles and movements</b>
<p>Theatre styles from the modern era of theatre include Epic theatre, Constructivist theatre, Theatre of the Absurd, Political theatre, Feminist theatre, Expressionism, Eclectic theatre, Experimental theatre, Musical theatre, Physical theatre, Verbatim theatre, Theatre-in-education, and Immersive/Interactive theatre.</p>	<p>Examples of theatre styles post-1945 include Kitchen Sink Drama, Immersive theatre, Verbatim theatre, Theatre of the Absurd, Australian realism, Musical theatre, Butoh, Forum theatre. Examples of theatre movements post-1945 include Theatre-in-education, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander theatre, Feminist theatre, Post-Colonial theatre, Queer theatre, Black Rights theatre, Theatre for Climate Justice, Physical theatre, Cross-cultural theatre, Post-Dramatic theatre, Memory plays.</p> <p>Note: Some theatre movements may be linked to a particular practitioner or company. Some theatre styles or movements may have been established prior to 1945 and may still have a significant presence post-1945.</p>



# Unit 2 Area of Study 1 – Key Changes

2019-2024 Theatre Studies	2025-2029 Theatre Studies
<b>Exploring modern theatre styles and conventions</b>	<b>Exploring contemporary theatre styles and/or movements</b>
<p>In this area of study students study scripts from the modern era of theatre and investigate innovations in theatre practice from the 1920s to the present. They study at least three distinct theatre styles of the modern era, as well as scripts associated with each. They learn about contexts, cultural origins, production roles and performance possibilities for each of the selected theatre styles. Through practical workshops students gain knowledge of how these styles shaped and contributed to the world of modern theatre.</p>	<p>In this area of study, students select and explore scripts from contemporary theatre styles and/or movements from 1945 to the present day. They study two or more distinct theatre styles OR two or more playwrights within one contemporary theatre movement. In examining distinct theatre styles, students consider dramaturgy and research to explore scripts associated with the selected styles. Similarly, in exploring playwrights and scripts from a contemporary theatre movement, students consider the style(s) and conventions implied in the selected scripts from that movement. Dramaturgy may include the social political contexts, cultural origins, intentions, comparisons in structure and languages, production roles and performance possibilities for each of the selected scripts from either the distinct styles OR the selected theatre movement.</p>

# Unit 2 Area of Study 1 – Key Changes

2019-2024 Theatre Studies	2025-2029 Theatre Studies
Exploring modern theatre styles and conventions	Exploring <b>contemporary theatre styles and/or movements</b>
	Students learn about audiences and audience culture. Through practical workshops and experimentation, students gain knowledge of how these styles and/or movement(s) shape and contribute to the world of contemporary theatre.

# Unit 2 Area of Study 1

## 2019-2024 Theatre Studies study design

### Exploring modern theatre styles and conventions

## 2025-2029 Theatre Studies study design

### Exploring contemporary theatre styles and/or movements

#### Outcome

On completion of this unit, the student should be able to identify and describe the distinguishing features of distinct theatre styles and/or the characteristics of a theatre movement(s) through scripts written from 1945 to the present day.

#### Key Knowledge

- characteristics and features of three or more theatre styles from the modern era
- origins, characteristics and contexts of scripts from the modern era
- approaches to exploring theatre styles implied in scripts, including consideration of previous productions where relevant
- production processes for realising scripts from the modern era for performance to an audience
- approaches to interpretation of scripts through acting, direction and design
- innovations established in theatre production in the modern era
- theatre terminology and expressions

- conventions of selected contemporary theatre style(s) from 1945 to the present day
- characteristics and features of selected contemporary theatre movements from 1945 to the present day
- approaches to dramaturgy such as contexts and intended meaning of selected scripts
- elements of theatre composition
- approaches to interpretation of these scripts through acting, direction, design
- innovations established in theatre production, such as theatre technologies through contemporary styles and/or movements
- audiences and audience culture
- relevant theatre terminology

# Unit 2 Area of Study 1

## 2019-2024 Theatre Studies study design

Exploring pre-modern theatre styles and conventions

## 2025-2029 Theatre Studies study design

Exploring contemporary theatre styles and/or movements

### Outcome

On completion of this unit, the student should be able to identify and describe the distinguishing features of distinct theatre styles and/or the characteristics of a theatre movement(s) through scripts written from 1945 to the present day.

### Key Skills

- describe the factors that influence the development of theatre styles in the modern era
- describe how the contexts of scripts can influence a production
- outline characteristics of theatre styles from the modern era
- identify and describe production processes that are characteristic of the modern era
- research and discuss production roles and their use in the modern era
- research and discuss the impact of theatre productions on audiences in the modern era

- describe the factors that influence or have influenced the development of selected contemporary theatre styles and/or a contemporary theatre movement
- describe how the contexts of scripts from selected contemporary theatre styles and/or a theatre movement can influence a production
- outline conventions of specific contemporary theatre styles
- outline the characteristics of specific contemporary theatre movements
- identify and describe production processes that are characteristic of contemporary theatre styles and/or movements
- apply elements of theatre composition

# Unit 2 Area of Study 1

2019-2024 Theatre Studies study design

2025-2029 Theatre Studies study design

Exploring pre-modern theatre styles and conventions

Exploring contemporary theatre styles and/or movements

## Outcome

On completion of this unit, the student should be able to identify and describe the distinguishing features of distinct theatre styles and/or the characteristics of a theatre movement(s) through scripts written from 1945 to the present day.

## Key Skills

- identify and describe innovations established in theatre production in the modern era
- use theatre terminology and expressions in writing and discussion
- conduct dramaturgical research
- research and discuss production roles and their application in the styles and/or movement
- research and discuss the impact of theatre productions on audiences in contemporary theatre
- identify and describe innovations established in theatre production in contemporary theatre
- outline the role of audiences
- apply relevant theatre terminology.

# Unit 2 Outcome 1 teaching and learning

## Exploring contemporary theatre styles and/or movements

### Outcome

On completion of this unit the student should be able to identify and describe the distinguishing features of distinct theatre styles and/or the characteristics of a theatre movement(s) through scripts written from 1945 to the present day.

### Teaching and Learning Example

- Researching and classifying theatre programming in Melbourne, reading the play synopsis of each show and determine if there are movements happening now.
- Discuss what we might expect from a theatre movement happening in Melbourne right now
- Describe the differences between features and a convention
- Watching clips from a specific movement
- Listing features of a theatre movement
- Analysing how the elements of theatre composition can work to enhance the ideas and aims within a theatre movement

# Unit 2 Assessment

## Outcome 1

On completion of this unit, the student should be able to identify and describe distinguishing features of distinct theatre styles and/or the characteristics of a theatre movement(s) through scripts written from 1945 to the present day.

## Outcome 1 Assessment Task example

### Theatre Movement: The Asian Diaspora

In groups, students present on the features of a play that fits into the 'Asian Diaspora' movement.

Within that presentation students must consider:

- Conventions associated with the play
- The context of the play
- Where it was originally staged
- Critical reception
- Who might be the intended audience(s)

### Groupings

Group 1: Asian Diaspora Play 1

Group 2: Asian Diaspora Play 2

Group 3: Asian Diaspora Play 3

# Unit 2 Area of Study 2 – Key Changes

2019-2024 Theatre Studies	2025-2029 Theatre Studies
<b>Interpreting scripts</b>	<b>Interpreting scripts</b>
<p>In this area of study students work in at least two of the production roles of actor, director and/or designer to realise scripts from at least three distinct theatre styles from the modern era. Through this work, students gain an understanding of how production teams can work collaboratively to interpret scripts. They also learn how work in production roles is informed by and contributes to the development of different theatre styles, and consider ways that theatre production work is itself shaped by the styles and contexts of the scripts.</p>	<p>In this area of study, students work in at least two of the production roles of actor, director and/or designer to realise scripts from <b>at least two distinct contemporary theatre styles or one contemporary theatre movement from 1945 to the present day</b>. Through this work, students gain an understanding of how production teams can work collaboratively to interpret scripts. They also learn how work in production roles is informed by, and contributes to, the development of different theatre styles <b>and/or a theatre movement</b>. They consider ways in which theatre production work is itself shaped by the styles and contexts <b>inherent</b> in scripts and <b>theatre movements</b>.</p>



# Unit 2 Area of Study 2 – Key Changes

2019-2024 Theatre Studies	2025-2029 Theatre Studies
<b>Interpreting scripts</b>	<b>Interpreting scripts</b>
<p>Students learn about theatre production processes including dramaturgy, planning, development and performance to an audience, and apply this to their work. Throughout the production process, students will have opportunities to develop oral skills by participating in discussions and explaining how their work in production roles contributes to realising the production aims. They study and apply elements of theatre composition and safe and ethical working practices in theatre production</p>	<p>Students <b>continue to</b> learn about theatre production processes, including dramaturgy, planning, development, performance to audiences, <b>and audience culture</b>, and they apply this knowledge to their own work. Throughout the production processes, students will have opportunities to develop oral skills by participating in discussions and explaining how their work in production roles contributes to realising the production aims. They study and apply elements of theatre composition and safe, ethical, <b>inclusive and sustainable (where possible, environmentally sustainable)</b> working practices in theatre production.</p>

# Unit 2 Area of Study 2

## 2019-2024 Theatre Studies study design

## 2025-2029 Theatre Studies study design

### Interpreting scripts

### Interpreting scripts

#### Outcome

On completion of this unit, the student should be able to work in production roles to interpret scripts from theatre styles or movements from 1945 to the present day.

#### Key Knowledge

- characteristics of theatre styles from the modern era
- elements of theatre composition
- approaches to interpreting selected scripts creatively and imaginatively, including use of elements of theatre composition to exploit possibilities in a script
- contexts of scripts from the modern era
- the collaborative nature of theatre production

- conventions of contemporary theatre styles from 1945 to the present day
- characteristics of contemporary theatre movements from 1945 to the present day
- elements of theatre composition
- approaches to interpreting selected scripts, such as use of elements of theatre composition to explore and investigate possibilities in a script
- audiences and audience culture
- contexts of scripts from contemporary theatre styles and/or movements
- the collaborative nature of theatre production

# Unit 2 Area of Study 2

## 2019-2024 Theatre Studies study design

## 2025-2029 Theatre Studies study design

### Interpreting scripts

### Interpreting scripts

#### Outcome

On completion of this unit, the student should be able to work in production roles to interpret scripts from theatre styles or movements from 1945 to the present day.

#### Key Knowledge

- dramaturgy and production processes and practices for realising a theatre production for performance to an audience
- approaches to applying the production roles of actor, director and/or designer in modern theatre
- the use of theatre technologies in theatre production
- ways of documenting ideas that inform interpretation of the script
- safe and ethical working practices in theatre

- dramaturgy, production processes and practices for realising a theatre production for performance to an audience
- ways of documenting ideas that inform interpretations of selected scripts
- approaches to applying the production roles of actor, director and/or designer in contemporary theatre from 1945 to the present day
- theatre technologies used in contemporary theatre production
- safe, ethical, inclusive and sustainable (where possible, environmentally sustainable) working practices in contemporary theatre.

# Unit 2 Area of Study 2

## 2019-2024 Theatre Studies study design

## 2025-2029 Theatre Studies study design

### Interpreting scripts

### Interpreting scripts

#### Outcome

On completion of this unit, the student should be able to work in production roles to interpret scripts from theatre styles or movements from 1945 to the present day.

#### Key Skills

- develop creative and imaginative interpretations of scripts from the modern era
- apply dramaturgy and the theatre production process for performance to an audience
- convey the contexts of scripts from the modern era through the use of compositional skills and the application of production roles
- apply appropriate theatre styles when presenting scripts from the modern era
- employ two or more of the production roles to interpret scripts
- apply theatre technologies as appropriate
- use elements of theatre composition
- work collaboratively
- document ideas that have contributed to the development of the interpretation
- apply safe and ethical working practices in theatre

- develop interpretations of scripts from contemporary theatre styles or a movement from 1945 to the present day
- apply theatre styles when presenting scripts from 1945 to the present day
- apply dramaturgy and theatre production processes for performance to an audience
- employ two or more production roles to interpret scripts
- apply elements of theatre composition
- work collaboratively to develop an interpretation
- identify intended audience(s)
- document ideas that have contributed to the planning and development of the interpretation
- apply safe, ethical, inclusive and sustainable (where possible, environmentally sustainable) working practices in theatre.

# Unit 2 Outcome 2 teaching and learning

## Exploring contemporary theatre styles and/or movements

### Outcome

On completion of this unit the student should be able to work in production roles to interpret scripts from theatre styles or movements from 1945 to the present day.

### Teaching and Learning Example

- Read and annotate an excerpt of a script from the lens of different production roles
- Research the context of the script being interpreted and determine an appropriate style
- Read and annotate a script for potential conventions to be used
- Students write a list of what they do and don't know about the context of the play and reflect on their positionality to the work and how they might approach it
- Read and annotate a script excerpt and consider how different audiences might receive the language and action of the scene
- Students keep a reflection journey of their dramaturgy and production processes

# Unit 2 Assessment

## Outcome 2

On completion of this unit, the student should be able to work in production roles to interpret scripts from theatre styles **or movements** from 1945 to the present day.

## Outcome 2 Assessment Task example

Part 1: Students create detailed posters of their production process across the development of their work in two production roles:

- Annotated mood boards and scripts
- Rationales for different interpretations
- Developing an idea to fruition, the challenges and decisions being made
- How the features of a movement influenced their work
- The dramaturgy they used

Part 2: A design pitch or a realised performance of a script excerpt from a contemporary theatre movement

# Unit 2 Area of Study 3 – Key Changes

2019-2024 Theatre Studies	2025-2029 Theatre Studies
<b>Analysing and evaluating a theatre production</b>	<b>Analysing and evaluating a theatre production</b>
<p>In this area of study students focus on analysis and evaluation of a professional theatre production of a script. They study the nature of theatre production analysis and evaluation, including the application of acting, direction and design and their effect on an audience. Students study the use of theatre technologies and elements of theatre composition in professional theatre performance. Where possible, for this area of study students should analyse a modern play in performance.</p>	<p>In this area of study, students <b>attend a performance</b> and focus on analysing and evaluating a professional theatre production of a script. They study the nature of theatre production analysis and evaluation, including the application of acting, direction and design and their effect on an audience. Students study the use of theatre technologies and elements of theatre composition in professional theatre performance, <b>and they study the relationship between contexts of the script and the use of production roles</b>. Where possible, for this area of study students should attend and analyse a play in performance from the period of <b>1945 to the present day</b>.</p>

# Unit 2 Area of Study 3

## 2019-2024 Theatre Studies study design

## 2025-2029 Theatre Studies study design

### Analysing and evaluating a theatre production

### Analysing and evaluating a theatre production

#### Outcome

On completion of this unit, the student should be able to analyse and evaluate a theatre production.

#### Key Knowledge

- the nature of theatre production analysis and evaluation
- how application of acting, direction and design enables an audience to construct meaning from a performance
- the ways in which theatre styles are interpreted by work in selected production roles
- how the application of acting, direction and design can be informed by the contexts of the script
- approaches to using elements of theatre composition evident in a theatre production
- approaches to using technologies in theatre production
- theatre terminology and expressions.

- analysing and evaluating a theatre production
- how the application of acting, direction and design enables an audience to construct meaning from a performance
- ways in which contexts and/or recontextualisation possibilities are interpreted through selected production roles
- audiences and audience culture
- how theatre styles and their associated conventions have been applied to construct intended meaning for an audience
- how elements of theatre composition are evident in a theatre production
- approaches to using technologies in theatre production
- theatre terminology.



# Unit 2 Area of Study 3

## 2019-2024 Theatre Studies study design

## 2025-2029 Theatre Studies study design

### Analysing and evaluating a theatre production

### Analysing and evaluating a theatre production

#### Outcome

On completion of this unit, the student should be able to analyse and evaluate a theatre production.

#### Key Skills

- analyse and evaluate a theatre production
- analyse the application of acting, direction and design in a theatre production
- analyse ways in which acting, direction and design are used to interpret theatre styles evident in a production
- analyse connections between contexts of the script and the use of acting, direction and design
- evaluate the ways in which acting, direction and design enables an audience to construct meaning
- analyse the use of elements of theatre composition evident in theatre production
- analyse the use of technologies in theatre production
- use theatre terminology and expressions appropriately.

- analyse and evaluate a theatre production
- analyse ways in which acting, direction and design are used to **interpret the selected theatre styles evident in a production**
- analyse connections between contexts of the script and the use of acting, direction and design
- evaluate the ways in which acting, direction and design enable an audience to construct meaning
- **evaluate how any recontextualisation(s) enable an audience to construct meaning**
- analyse the use of elements of theatre composition evident in theatre production
- analyse the use of technologies in theatre production
- **apply relevant** theatre terminology.

# Unit 2 Outcome 3 teaching and learning

## Analysing and evaluating a theatre production

**Outcome** On completion of this unit the student should be able to analyse and evaluate a theatre production.

### Teaching and Learning Example

- Read and annotate excerpts from the script
- Generate a list of possibilities based on the script
- Read and annotate any interviews for the show
- If possible, research past productions of the show to inform expectations
- Develop an understanding of the difference between analysis and evaluation
- Building a vocabulary bank for evaluation
- Jigsaw activity on production role terminology
- Practice analysing and evaluating through viewing official clips of theatre productions

# Unit 2 Assessment

## Outcome 3

On completion of this unit, the student should be able to analyse and evaluate a theatre production.

## Outcome 3 Assessment Task example

### Responses to structured questions

A range of questions covering key knowledge and skills

A range of marks allocated to the questions to represent higher and lower order thinking

### Essay

A personal essay about three moments the student enjoyed in the performance, incorporating analysis and evaluation of two or more production roles

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