Zig Zag Education

Drama

AS & A Level

2016 specification
first exams in 2018 (2017 for AS)

Waiting For Godot

A Complete Play Guide for AS and A Level

zigzageducation.co.uk

POD 7779

Contents

Teacher's Introduction

Waiting for Godot is a challenging and rewarding play text, which is rightly considered one of the finest works of twentieth-century literature. The play offers students the opportunity to learn about postmodernism and the Theatre of the Absurd, while exploring a text that is rich with complex themes and philosophical ideas. It is also an incredibly entertaining play that offers many opportunities for fun and play in the classroom. The methodologies of any theatre practitioner can be easily applied to a production of the play.

This resource is intended to teach the text and further students' understanding of theatre practice, in conjunction with any exam board at A Level. More specifically, it can be used to prepare students for the Edexcel A Level examination (*Component 3: Theatre Makers in Practice, Section C: Interpreting a Performance Text*), for which *Waiting for Godot* is a set text.

What's included in this resource:

Section 1: Contexts introduces the key historical contexts required for a full understanding of the play. The playwright is introduced, and his main literary concerns are discussed. This section also covers the key social and historical shifts that occurred in the twentieth century, such as the First and Second World Wars and the advent of nuclear weapons. Key philosophical ideas of Existentialism and the Absurd are also introduced. The handouts and activities in this section may be used as an introduction to the course topic, or they may be used alongside analytical and practical study of the play, to further students' understanding of contextual points in relation to specific moments in the play.

Section 2: Analysis works through the play chronologically, analysing important moments and offering a range of practical and written activities to explore key ideas. Key narrative and thematic points are grouped together to facilitate a more complete discussion, and important aspects of performance and design are introduced. This section includes an even spread of practical performance activities, design focused exercises, and exam practice questions.

Section 3: Developing a Production Concept deals more closely with aspects of direction and design across the play as a whole. It is here that students' ideas and design concepts can be honed and practised in readiness for an exam. This section includes an example production concept, as well as key questions for each aspect of a production, including performance, lighting, sound, set design, and costumes and props. This section ends with a focus on two theatre practitioners, Kneehigh and Antonin Artaud, which can be used as a springboard for discussion about integrating the methodologies of a practitioner into a production concept.

How to use this resource:

The analysis and activities in this resource may be used as student handouts, or as a prompt for teacher-led sessions.

Each activity is labelled as being a ***written***, ***practical***, ***research*** or ***discussion task***, offering a range of learning, assessment and feedback opportunities. Some activities invite students to think about the methodology and practice of a theatre practitioner.

The teacher's notes and answers section of this resource includes short answers to comprehension questions and example answers and content for essay questions. For certain practical activities, it outlines the purposes of the task, and how to draw out key knowledge and understanding from practical work.

August 2017

Assessment Objectives AS and A Level Drama and Theatre Studies

Assessment Objectives set by Ofqual apply to all AS and A Level Drama and Thea
used by all exam boards. Exam and class assessments will determine how succes
following AOs:

- **AO1** – Create and develop ideas to communicate meaning as part of the theatre-making process, making connections between dramatic theory and practice.
- **AO2** – Apply theatrical skills to realise artistic intentions in live performance.
- **AO3** – Demonstrate knowledge and understanding of how drama and theatre are developed and performed.
- **AO4** – Analyse and evaluate students' own work and the work of others.

Edexcel A Level Drama and Theatre

Waiting for Godot is a set text for **Section C of Component 3: Theatre Makers in** syllabus. This section asks students to interpret a performance text in the light o practices of one of the following theatre practitioners:

Constantin Stanislavski	**Antonin Artaud**	**Bertolt Brecht**
Steven Berkoff	**Kneehigh**	**Complicite**

The weighting of assessment objectives for this unit in relation to the rest of the c

Table 1: Weighting of the Assessment Objectives – Edexcel A Level Drama and T

Component	AO1 %	AO2 %	AO3 %	A
Component 1: Devising	20	10	0	
Component 2: Text in Performance	0	20	0	
Component 3: Theatre Makers in Practice	**0**	**0**	**30**	
Total for GCE A Level	20%	30%	30%	

This resource prepares students for the demands of these assessment objectives content and activities:

AO3: The historical and performance contexts in which Beckett was writing are d students an understanding of the contexts in which this play was developed. Stu about their own design and directorial ideas in both a creative and logistical way understanding of how theatre is made. Students are also prompted to apply the practitioner to their practical and written work throughout the resource.

AO4: Students are encouraged to evaluate and justify the directorial and design d practical exercises, through peer feedback, group discussions and written tasks.

The Playwright

Samuel Beckett (1906–1989)

Samuel Beckett was born in Dublin, Ireland, to a construction worker and a nurse. He was raised in a Protestant home, and went on to study Romance Languages at Trinity College, Dublin. After receiving his degree in 1927, he moved to Paris, where he met the Irish writer James Joyce, whom he admired greatly.

In 1930, he returned to Dublin to teach French at Trinity College. He left the job after just four terms, and began a six-year period of wandering travel around Britain, France and Germany. While on the road, he met many of the eccentric characters who would feature in his work.

In 1937, Beckett decided to move to Paris. One night the following year, he was walking home when he was stabbed in the chest by a pimp. He was in hospital for two weeks. When he got out of hospital, he visited the pimp in prison to ask why he stabbed him. The pimp said only 'Je ne sais pas' (I don't know). This idea of pointlessness and not knowing became another important theme in Beckett's work.

When World War II began, Beckett was allowed to stay in France because he was from Ireland, which was a neutral country. During the war, Beckett became involved in the French Resistance, until some members of his group were arrested in 1942 and Beckett fled across the border i the war was over, he was awarded the Croix de Guerre for his bravery.

Following the war, Beckett entered a highly creative period, during which he wro works, including the trilogy of narrative prose novels *Molloy* (1951), *Malone Dies* (1958), as well as *Waiting for Godot* (1952) and *Endgame* (1957). All of these wo French, before being translated into English by Beckett himself.

Beckett became famous for his minimalist style, in which language and form are b structure subverted. Beckett was an important writer of the Theatre of the Absu and disorientating dramatic devices to comment on the meaninglessness of life. literary world, inspiring a generation of poets and playwrights, including Harold P Mamet. In 1969, Beckett won the Nobel Prize for Literature. He did not accept t prize money away in order to guard his privacy. Beckett died in Paris in 1989.

Activity 1: Becoming Beckett

The best way to learn about a playwright's life is through performance! Split int retelling of Beckett's life story in one of the ways below. After some rehearsal ti to the class.

- **Group 1: Children's story.** Tell the story as if you were performing to a
- **Group 2: Puppet show.** Draw some simple 2D puppets on paper and r performance.
- **Group 3: Tableaux.** Create 6–10 freeze frames that tell his story. One to caption each frame. Practice smooth transitions between each frame.

Activity 2: Beckett's Other Plays

It is useful to know about Beckett's other works in order to understand the k
was interested in. An understanding of Beckett's literary concerns will help
Waiting for Godot. Research Beckett's other plays online and fill in the fac

Endgame

First Performed: .....

Summary:.....

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Main Themes:.....

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First Performed: ...

Summary:.....

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Main Themes:.....

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Happy Days

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Main Themes:.....

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First Performed:...

Summary:.....

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Main Themes:.....

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The Play

Samuel Beckett wrote *Waiting for Godot* in 1949. He wrote the original manuscript in French. Beckett wrote many of his works in French because it allowed him to remain distant and detached from the language. By writing in French he avoided the trappings of style that he had absorbed as an English speaker. He later translated his play into English, adapting phrases and references for an English-speaking audience.

He and his partner, Suzanne, spent much of 1949 offering the play to various dire passed to Roger Blin, and he and Beckett met in early 1950. Blin was enthusiasti agreed to let him direct it. Blin spent the next three years trying to find a theatre theatres, this groundbreaking play in which nothing really happens was seen as a early and lose a great deal of money. Blin had little success in selling it to theatre

However, in February 1952, an abridged version of the text was performed on ra this version led to Editions de Minuit publishing the text in October. The followi with the Théâtre de Babylone. The play would be staged in early 1953.

Activity 1: Economy of Expression

When writing in your own language, you have access to long words and compli make the story less clear. In another language, you must work with your limited of his plays in French as it made his language simpler and more direct.

To illustrate this principle, write a summary of the text above, but using **words o** these constraints do to your writing style? Is your summary more clear and direc

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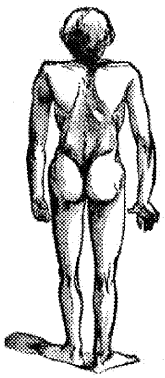
Twentieth-century Suffering

The twentieth century saw intense human suffering on a massive scale. The First World War (1914–1918) was characterised by technological advances that made weapons more efficient and more brutal. Aeroplanes could drop bombs from above while submarines wreaked havoc from below. Chemical weapons such as gas bombs were also used, causing pain and suffering long after the fighting had ceased. Over 38 million people died during the First World War.

The defeat of Germany and the subsequent harsh reparations that were enforced on the country led to the rise of Adolf Hitler and the Nazi Party. Hitler stirred up a nationalist fervour in Germany, called for a new German-led world order, and began invading surrounding countries. Following the German invasion of Poland, Britain and France declared war on Germany. The Second World War (1939–1945) had begun.

A state of total war existed for six years all across the globe. The lines between m broken down, and both sides led bombing raids on civilian populations. Many pe forced to flee across Europe, existing in terrible conditions with little food and sh



Alongside these military campaigns, the Nazis took their racial p organised extermination of Jewish people known as the Holocau taken to concentration camps, where they were imprisoned in h murdered in their millions.

In 1941, following a Japanese attack on Pearl Harbour, the Unite war. In August 1945, the United States dropped atomic bombs o Hiroshima and Nagasaki. These new weapons caused destructio buildings and people alike were entirely obliterated. The fact th city and kill tens of thousands of people would change the face o 60 million people were killed during the Second World War.

When the war was over, the world was in a state of shock. The Holocaust had prove human beings, while the atomic bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki showed the in technology. In such a world, the world that Beckett was writing in, human existence

Activity 1: Living Museum

Split into three groups and make a five-minute living museum exhibit, using the in research. Your exhibit should offer both factual information and an artistic reacti group should focus on one of the following: **The First World War, The Second W Nuclear Weapons.**

Focus on a small area (don't try to tell the whole story of WWII!) that Beckett wo *the destructive power of nuclear weapons*. Use a variety of performance techniqu *theatre, monologue, puppetry*. After some rehearsal time, show your exhibits to th learn from each exhibit?

EXAMPLE: You might make a living museum exhibit about the death toll in World W facts through a dialogue between actors representing the two opposing sides. You m these deaths on those left behind through a tableau of upset families.

Twentieth-century Philosophy

The horrors of the Second World War left many people disorientated and disillus
away so easily and arbitrarily, the meaning of life was called into question. Wha
involves so much suffering?

Many could no longer take any comfort in religion, because scientific advances h
of religious thinking. However, science was ultimately dissatisfactory because it o
existed, not *why* things existed.

For this new world, a new set of philosophical beliefs was required.

Existentialism and the Absurd

Existentialism is based on the principle that life is essentially meaningless. It reje
bring meaning to life, and encourages mankind to stop waiting around for God t
existentialists, the only meaning in life is the meaning that the individual creates

Developing alongside Existentialism was Absurdism, which argued th
lives trying to find the meaning of life when, in fact, there is none.

Albert Camus summarised the Absurdist position in his essay *The My*
human existence to the fate of Sisyphus, a character from Greek my
boulder up a mountain for all eternity. Each time he reaches the top
and Sisyphus has to start again.

Like Sisyphus and his boulder, human beings spend their lives trying to ascribe m
discover, ultimately, that life is meaningless. However, Camus' view of life is not
argues that the search itself is what gives life meaning, just as Sisyphus has a pur
boulder up the hill.

The idea of an individual struggling to find meaning in a meaningless world is an
Godot.

Activity 2: The Meaning of Life

In groups, discuss the following questions:

1) What is the meaning of life? Why are we here, what is our purpose?
2) How does the thought of life being meaningless make you feel?
3) Why is it important to have a sense of purpose in our lives?

Take notes below:

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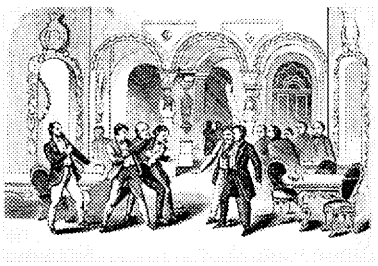
Performance Context

Twentieth-century Theatre

The early twentieth century was a period of extraordinary theatrical innovation. S
had remained practically unchanged for hundreds of years were suddenly questio



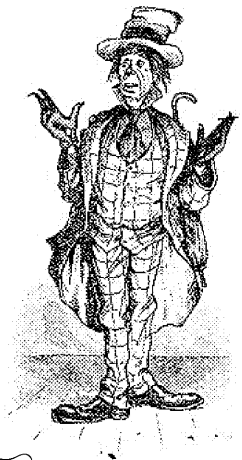
Psychological Realism was developed in Russia
and sought to capture and reproduce everyday
The plays of Chekhov and Ibsen, along with the
Konstantin Stanislavski, popularised this new fo
artifice of the stage and created a realistic and
world. It remained the most popular form of th
twentieth century.

Expressionism developed as a reaction to realism in the early twentieth century.
naturalism and aimed to portray the subjective emotional perspective of a protag
distortions and exaggerated characters. The aim was to create a more accurate
world of an individual in relation to society and authority. Expressionist theatre
stereotypes to criticise sections of society, and staged self-contained scenes with
to undermine the causal progression of realistic plays.

Alongside these new types of theatre, another mode of performance became incr
in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. **Music Hall** combined variet
comedians and circus acts. It was performed in intimate settings, and was a hug
silent film comedy and later comic double acts. Music Hall was especially po
Britain and France, and was an important morale-boosting force during the wars

Samuel Beckett's *Waiting for Godot* was yet another innovation for theatre. It
humanity of realism, the grotesque characters of expressionism, the quick-fire c
of music hall, and yet it was something entirely different – a brand new theatrica

The Theatre of the Absurd



The Theatre of the Absurd was not an organised movemen
playwrights who began writing about similar themes in a s

Absurdism was a reaction to the horrors of the twentieth c
ways of understanding life were undermined by pointless a
Absurdist playwrights' view of the world was in line with th
of Sisyphus: human beings struggling to find meaning in a

Samuel Beckett was a pioneering Absurdist writer, along w
Adamov. Their plays presented illogical and unexplained s
actions were without rational consequence. The plays def
non-linear and circular time and presenting action with no

Activity 1: Making the Absurd

Write out a brief synopsis of your favourite film, including the main characters, l
the synopsis in an Absurd manner: change the location of the film, swap around
remove the plot twists and climax.

Present your revised synopsis to the rest of the class. Can they guess which film i
Absurd changed the atmosphere and meaning of the film?

Performance History

There are three important productions of *Waiting for Godot* to consider when deal with the play: the first ever production in Paris in 1953, the first production in Engli in London in 1955, and a production directed by Beckett himself in Berlin in 1975.

Théâtre de Babylone, 1953

The first ever production of *Waiting for Godot* was directed by Roger Blin in Pa The Théâtre de Babylone was a small venue in a converted shop, one of many sm 'pocket theatres' that sprang up around Paris in the early 1950s. The theatre h very little money and had to borrow everything that they needed. They had a repu experimental work, and so the audience would have been prepared for somethin *Godot* caused such a critical storm in such an experimental venue is a testament was. The production was basic, with only a minimal set and a few lights. The pe something Blin ascribed to the lengthy rehearsal process that allowed the actors Despite the success of *Waiting for Godot*, the theatre closed down in 1954.

Arts Theatre, 1955

The first English production of *Waiting for Godot* was directed by Peter Hall. Hall h director of the Arts Theatre, a company that was known for staging new and uncon had directed a number of new European plays, and gladly took on *Waiting for God* no idea what it was about. He hadn't seen the Paris production and his productio The set design was far more detailed, made up of rocks, mounds, barrels and a rea music to enhance the strange and disorientating atmosphere of the play. The reac was mixed. Some audiences complained loudly as the play was being performed,

Schiller Theatre, 1975

In 1975, Beckett directed his own play for the first time at the Schiller Theatre in B process, Beckett revised and edited the text (in German), and described his origin blamed on his lack of theatre experience when he was writing. Beckett focused o and mapped out how the actors would move onstage to create symmetry and rep He emphasised the pairings of Vladimir and Estragon, and Lucky and Pozzo, and c interdependence through movement and costume design. The production, unlike performances of the past, was very quick and entertaining, mainly a result of his c dialogue between the characters. Critics praised its visual grace and poetic rhythm was paired with moments of haunting anguish.

Activity 4: Recent Godot Productions

You can use previous productions of *Waiting for Godot* to inspire your own ideas productions of the play. Look up reviews, pictures, video trailers, etc. Draw and c following headings:

Date of Production	Theatre/Director	Design Notes

Synopsis

'A play in which nothing happens, twice.' (Vivien Merci

Act I:

The play begins with Estragon on a country road trying to remove his boot, which enters and says it is good to see him again. Estragon says he slept in a ditch and h to take his boot off and Vladimir speaks about the two thieves who were crucified was saved and one was damned. He remarks that it is strange that only one of th yet it is the version that people choose to believe. Estragon suggests that they go because they are waiting for Godot. The pair discuss whether this was definitely supposed to meet Godot. They argue over whether they were here yesterday as about dreams and jokes but Vladimir doesn't want to hear about either. Then the but decide against it as the branch may break before they both had chance to do wonder what will happen when they see him. Estragon says he is hungry and Vla

Suddenly there is a great cry offstage and Lucky and Pozzo with baggage, while Pozzo holds a whip and a length of ro neck. Lucky crosses the stage and exits, only to be pulled Vladimir whether Pozzo is Godot but Vladimir says he is n perplexed when they do not know who he is. Pozzo make bring him some chicken and wine. Pozzo eats the chicken Vladimir and Estragon inspect Lucky. They see that the ro Estragon asks whether he may eat the chicken bones and Vladimir is outraged by the way Pozzo treats Lucky. Estrag put down his bags. Pozzo says that Lucky is trying to impr him. Pozzo says that he is taking Lucky to the fair to sell him. Lucky begins crying a handkerchief, only to get kicked in the shins by Lucky. Pozzo says Lucky is making h speech about the night and asks the others how his performance was. In return for have Lucky perform for them. Lucky first dances a strange dance and then launches doesn't stop until he is physically restrained by the others. Pozzo gets ready to dep quite bring himself to leave. He eventually manages to leave with Lucky. Night falls boy enters with a message from Godot. He says that Godot will come tomorrow. V Godot. After telling him to tell Godot that he saw him, the boy runs off, leaving Est Estragon decides to leave his boots on the roadside for someone else to find. Vladi be better off apart but they decide it is not worth it. They decide to leave. They do

Act II:

It is the next day, same time and same place, the only difference being that the tre enters and sings a song. Estragon enters barefoot and says he was beaten again. the previous day but Estragon can hardly remember. The pair try desperately to th to pass the time. Estragon finds the boots he left the previous day but he is convin them on and they fit. Estragon lies down to sleep and Vladimir soothes him with a start and Vladimir finds Lucky's hat from the day before. Vladimir and Estragon be exchanging hats. Vladimir asks Estragon to pretend to be Pozzo, while he pretends rushes back on panicking saying *'they're coming!'* Vladimir and Estragon rush over small. No one comes and Vladimir and Estragon begin insulting each other to pass exercises. Eventually, Lucky and a blind Pozzo enter. They fall to the ground and a Estragon discuss whether they should help them. When they do help them, they f characters are on the floor. They get up and help Pozzo and Lucky. Vladimir asks P Pozzo says that he is dumb. They leave and Vladimir and Estragon are alone. Vlad circumstances. A boy enters with a message from Godot. He will not come until t boy, who says he does not recognise him. The boy exits, night falls, and Vladimir a themselves on the tree. They test the strength of the branch with Estragon's belt. they will come back tomorrow with some rope. They decide to leave. They do no

Act I

Part One: The Setting

'A country road. A tree. Evening.'

Beckett's description of the setting of *Waiting for Godot* is brief but telling. A sp landscape with no distinguishing features. This could be any country road anywh The bleak setting mirrors the bleak themes of the play, where life is nothing mor waiting and repetition.

While the stage directions may be brief, a designer may interpret them in a numb stage in the 2009 Theatre Royal Haymarket production was made to look like an theatre. In 2007, a production in New Orleans was performed in neighbourhood damaged by Hurricane Katrina.

The first thing to decide when planning a design for the play is how the play will impact your design choices and the way the actors interact with the space. The fi production of the play in 1953 was performed in a small 233-seat theatre in Paris de Babylone. The stage was small and the audience watched the action end on. stage your production of *Waiting for Godot*?

Activity 1: Types of Staging

Label the types of staging below, using the terms provided.

Site-specif
- **Arch**

- The stage extends out into the
- The audience sits on three side
- The proximity of the performe a strong actor/audience relat

- The audience faces the stage
- The framing of the space allo pictures
- The Théâtre de Babylone in P production of *Waiting for Go* example of this staging

- The audience sits on all sides
- The enclosed space supports
- Set pieces must be carefully everyone can see

- Non-theatre and outdoor sp
- The space is chosen to reflec
- The audience can be set up i
- Immersive productions often

- The audience is split by the st
- The audience face each other
- This staging creates a sense o
- Minimal set must be used to e

Activity 2: Choosing a Venue

Individually or in groups, consider the venues and stage spaces listed above. W
your production? Keep in mind the atmosphere you want to create. Draw a sim
audience set-up. Present your ideas to the class.

Sketch

Description

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Good to Know

When Beckett was advising the director of the 1956 American premiere of W
that he did not want the play to be staged in the round because the play need
What did he mean by this? How could you create a sense of a closed box in yo

Designing Set

Once you have chosen a type of staging, you can begin designing the set for your

Beckett describes two pieces of set in his stage directions. The tree, which is lea
Estragon sits at the opening of the play. The original production in the Théâtre d
these directions to the letter. A plain cloth backdrop, a thin tree made from coa
low mound were all that decorated the small Parisian stage.

A modern production might use a more elaborate set, so long as it can be justifie
designing a set for a production of *Waiting for Godot,* a set designer should cons

- Will the design be realistic or abstract? A 2011 production of the play at the Burg Theatre in Vienna set the production on an enormous seesaw that moved up and down during the production. Could you design something equally abstract?
- What does the tree look like? What type of tree is it? Does it have a thick trunk or a thin trunk? What colour is it? Is it realistic?
- What is the low mound? Are there other mounds?
- Will you include any other items of set that are not described in the stage directions?
- What will the background look like?
- What period is your production set in? Are there any signifiers of the period on the stage? *For example, there may be a speed limit sign on the side of the country road if the production is set in modern times.*
- How can you reflect the themes of the play through your set design? (Your design ideas may develop as you study the play and gain more understanding of the play's themes – you can always come back and update your designs later!)
- Are these ideas practical and achievable in your chosen staging? (An enormous tree won't be possible in the round as it will block the audience's view!)

Activity 3: Initial ideas

Jot down your initial responses to the questions above. Then discuss your ideas
with the same ideas? Can you justify your decisions? Make sure you ask other p
these designs.

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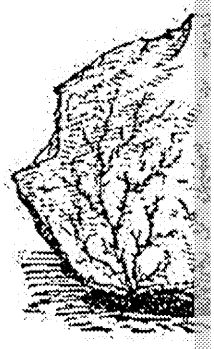
Getting Technical

It is very important to explain specifically how your designs will be realised on a stage. In order to fully explain your set design ideas you will need to use appropriate theatre terminology.



Below are some ways of communicating setting through theatre design:

- **Flats.** Flats are painted 2D scenery that can be used as background. Flats can remain in position throughout the performance or be flown in and out as required.
- **Minimal Scenery.** A setting can be indicated with a basic piece of scener*potted plant could suggest a garden.*
- **Props.** Personal properties can suggest time and place, e.g. *an open umbrella*
- **Projection.** Images can be projected onto the stage to create a backgrou
- **Lighting.** Lighting design can indicate time and space.
- **Site-specific.** A site-specific performance will make use of the existing su Where might you put on a production of *Waiting for Godot*?

Activity 4: Describing Set Design

In pairs, look up images of *Waiting for Godot* set designs online. Pick one image questions: How have they communicated setting? What theatrical devices have th the class using specific theatre terminology.

Activity 5: Set Design Sketch

Sketch a set design for your production of *Waiting for Godot*. Bear in mind the staging. Label your sketch with appropriate theatre terminology. Present your sk decisions.

Thinking about Practitioners

Alongside your own creative ideas, your production concept for *Waiting for Godo* methodologies of a well-known theatre practitioner.

As you consider each aspect of direction and design you should keep in mind what y

When it comes to staging and set design, theatre practitioners have a wide range selection:

Stanislavski preferred the end on set up as it supported his concept of the fourth lives of the characters onstage. His sets were three-dimensional and historically a environment for the actors to inhabit.

Bertolt Brecht's Epic Theatre breaks down the fourth wall, to detach the audienc the scene and encourage them to think. A thrust stage might achieve this effect with only necessary props. Set might support political thinking through use of pl

Antonin Artaud theorised that the audience should be encircled to create an ove He rejected painted flats and argued that setting should be communicated throug performance.

Activity 6: Staging Your Practitioner

Make notes of the main principles of your chosen practitioner. How might you s staging and design?

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Activity 7: Exam Practice

QUESTION: As a designer, how would you communicate setting through design f *Godot*? Your response should be inspired by the original performance conditions known theatre practitioner.

Answer Checklist

In my answer I have:

- ✓ demonstrated understanding of the original staging of the play in 1953
- ✓ explained my choice of staging and audience set-up
- ✓ made at least two design choices
- ✓ used appropriate theatre terminology
- ✓ justified my decision in relation to the practices of a well-known theatre p

Part Two: Vladimir and Estragon

Estragon, known affectionately as Gogo, and
two characters who wait for Godot in Becke

We never learn exactly who they are, althou
Estragon says he was once a poet. Vladimir
suggested they were once in a better positio
says, 'We were presentable in those days. N

Indeed they both appear to be down on thei
sleeps in a ditch and his shoes don't fit. They are commonly presented as tramp
text. Roger Blin, the director of the first production in 1953, made this decision a
ever since.

In some ways they are complete opposites of one another. At times during the p
and yet the few moments that they do, they are at a loss. It becomes clear that
two halves of a whole.

As a director, it is necessary to form a clear interpretation of the characters in th
the performances of actors and understand the meaning of the narrative as a wh
are never explicitly described, there are a number of clues in the text that indica

Activity 1: Vladimir vs Estragon

1) Read the opening of Act I, until Estragon's line '*People are bloody ignorant*
adjectives by whether they best describe Vladimir or Estragon:

Philosophical ● *Grumpy* ● *Talkative* ● *Sceptical* ● *Positive*
Helpless ● *Slow* ● *Interested in Intellectual Things* ● *Intere*

Vladimir	

2) Samuel Beckett once said that 'Estragon is on the ground; he belongs to the
orientated towards the sky.'

What did he mean by this? How could you communicate this idea to an aud

Performing Didi and Gogo

Once you have a basic understanding of the personalities of Vladimir and Estragon, you must then decide how to portray them onstage.

One of the basic tools an actor has at their disposal when performing a character is their physicality. The way a performer inhabits a stage physically can communicate a huge amount of meaning to an audience without a single word being spoken. When directing physical performance, you should consider the following:

- **Posture:** How do the characters hold themselves? Are they upright or st
high? Estragon says he was beaten. Will you show him in physical disco
- **Movement:** How do the characters walk? Which part of their body do th
quickly or slowly?

Activity 2: Get Moving

Walk around the space. As you walk, focus on each of the following in turn:

Posture

a) Begin walking with a stiff posture: head held high, chest raised and legs s
b) Then relax your shoulders and let your legs bend
c) Then drop your head so your chin is on your chest
d) Then bend at the waist and walk with your arms dragging on the floor

How did each type of posture feel? What sort of character did it suggest? Choose
Estragon. How and why are they different?

Walk

Walk around the space in the following ways:

a) Leading with your chin
b) Leading with your right shoulder
c) Leading with your groin
d) Leading with your toes

How did each type of walk feel? What sort of character did it suggest? Choose a
Estragon. How and why are they different?

Activity 3: Describing Performance

In your exam, you may need to accurately describe your ideas for directing per
characterisation of Vladimir and Estragon using appropriate theatre terminolog
to the text.

Vladimir:.....

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Estragon: .....

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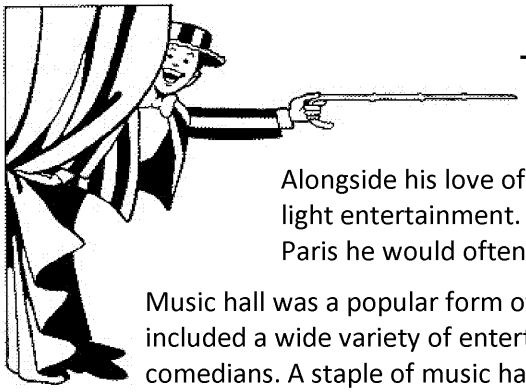
Activity 4: Getting Physical with Practitioners

Different practitioners have different ideas about how physicality should be usec
highly stylised movements to indicate character. **Punchdrunk** incorporate choreog
productions.

Research the movement ideas of your chosen theatre practitioner. How could you
portrayal of Vladimir and Estragon?



The Music Hall Tradition

Alongside his love of literature, Beckett was also passiona
light entertainment. He was a big fan of Charlie Chaplin, a
Paris he would often visit music halls and watch the varie

Music hall was a popular form of entertainment that originated in Lo
included a wide variety of entertainment including singing, mime, im
comedians. A staple of music hall was the comedy double act. Two p
often sing and dance as well as tell jokes, would produce well-rehear
to entertain the crowds.

Vladimir and Estragon's dialogue is highly reminiscent of music hall comedy. The
misunderstandings and frustrations were all standard routines on the music hall
factor that elevates *Godot* from a play where 'nothing happens' to a play that is,

Activity 5: Watch it!

Look up videos of these famous double acts: Laurel and Hardy, Abbott and Cost

What relationship do the characters in each double act have with each other? D
created?

Activity 6: Double Acts

1) Get into pairs and rehearse the following well-known routines:

Routine 1

A: My dog has no nose.
B: How does he smell?
A: Terrible.

Routine 2

A: Doctor, Doctor, I think I'm a bridge.
B: What's come over you?
A: Three cars, a bus, and a lorry.

Try the routines out in a number of different ways. Who are the characters that
know each other? Are the characters trying to tell a joke or are they being seri
they laugh? Do they play any lines to the audience? Think about the performan

Show your scenes to the class and discuss your choices.

2) In your pairs, rehearse the dialogue at the beginning of Act I from Estragon's
help me off with this bloody thing' to Vladimir's line '*Never neglect the little thi*

Bring the same sense of play and banter to these lines. How can you extract
Show your scenes to the class and take notes on what you found interesting.

Activity 7: Exam Practice

QUESTION: As a director, how would you direct performance in the opening of V
line 'one daren't even laugh any more')? Your decisions should be inspired by th
of the play, and the practices of a well-known theatre practitioner.

Answer Checklist

In my answer I have:

- ✓ shown understanding of the context in which the play was written and p
- ✓ referred to at least two specific moments in the text
- ✓ used appropriate theatre terminology to describe specific performance
- ✓ justified my decision in relation to the practices of a well-known theatre

Part Three: Enter Lucky and Pozzo

The idle chatter of Vladimir and Estragon is disturbed by the entrance of Lucky a
Pozzo. Lucky enters first, a rope around his neck, weighed down by baggage, fol
by Pozzo, who holds the end of the rope and a whip. He yanks on the rope when
wants Lucky to stop.

The appearance of Lucky and Pozzo raises a number of questions about status ar
authority. Pozzo evidently thinks quite a lot of himself and is shocked when Didi
Gogo do not recognise him: '*Does that name mean nothing to you?*' He also trea
Lucky as something less than human. He calls him '*pig*' and orders him around, t
on the rope to make him move. It is unclear whether Lucky objects to this treatm

Status relationships are an important aspect of performance. The relationships b
communicated to an audience through casting, performance and staging.

Activity 1: Performing Status

Shuffle a pack of cards. Each member of the class should secretly draw a card, r
their pocket. The cards represent a social scale from Ace (lowest status) to King (
room as a character of that social status. Think about your posture, walk, and fa
As you walk around the room, look at other people in your class. Do you think th
you? How can you tell? How does their presence affect your character? Try inter
speak to those you think are above you versus those you think are below you?

After five minutes of walking and interacting, get in a line in order of status. **You**
use your instincts based on the performances of others.

Going up the line from lowest to highest, reveal your cards. Did you get it right?

Discuss what you found interesting as a class.

Activity 2: Casting Godot

Casting is a crucial decision for a director, as different actors inhabit the space i
important to consider how different actors will relate to each other. For example,
one very short actor will affect the relationship before they even begin speaking!

1) What will Vladimir and Estragon look like? Tall, short, fat, thin? What sc
character? How will they compare with each other?

2) What will Lucky and Pozzo look like? Will Lucky appear big and anima
How will Pozzo compare?

3) The race and gender of actors can affect meaning and even make a po
casting a black actor as Lucky and a white actor as Pozzo might make a
slavery and oppression. Casting a female actor as Pozzo and a male a
statement about gender politics. Alternatively, your production might be
which case the casting of your production is not intended to make a stat
production of *Waiting for Godot* so that it is relevant for a twenty-first-c

4) Who would you cast in each role if you could cast anyone from the worl

Status through Staging

A director can communicate a great deal about characters through the way they are positioned onstage. A director must consider where characters are in relation to one another and to the audience, and how they interact with one another from those positions.

When directing performance onstage you should think about the following:

Proxemics – Proxemics, or spatial relationships, concern the way characters are positioned on the stage. The distances between characters can be telling.

Levels – Differing heights can also communicate meaning. Characters who are higher than other characters can appear superior to those below them.

Gaze – Where characters look is also telling. Intense eye contact can show love or hate. Avoiding eye contact is equally powerful.

Activity 3: Directing Staging

In groups, rehearse from Pozzo's line '*Let's say no more about it*' until Estragon's

Work on the following as you rehearse:

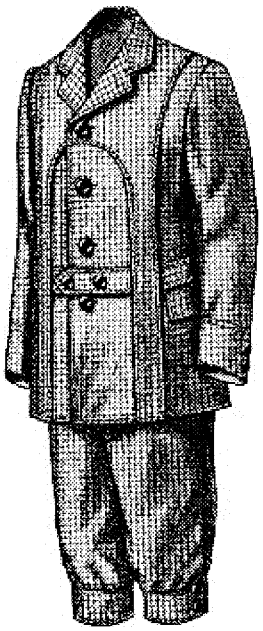
- Positioning: where will each character stand onstage? Make sure to dec
  going to perform before you begin (end on, in the round, etc.). Do the c
  downstage, stage left or stage right?
- Will you use levels to communicate status? How?
- How much distance is there between characters? How far does Lucky sta
  has to walk a long way to and from him when he gives Pozzo his things?
- Where does Lucky look? At the ground, straight ahead, or towards the s
- Do Pozzo and Lucky ever look at each other? Do they ever hold eye co
  away from one another?
- Where do Vladimir and Estragon stand in relation to Lucky and Pozzo?
  more? Who are they more frightened of? How can you show this throug
- How close do Vladimir and Estragon get to Lucky when they inspect him?

Show your scenes to the rest of your class. Discuss which staging decisions were

Extension Task:

Pozzo suggests he is someone important and that the country road Vladimir and
land. However, there is something not quite right about him.

Do you believe that he is someone important? How does it change things if Pozz
show this onstage?



Costume Design

Costume plays an important role in communicating mean
clothing can signify the status, wealth and ambitions of a
character wearing a shabby suit and tie might signify a cl
luck but hoping to better themselves. **Bertolt Brecht** use
social status of a character in order to support the politic

Costume can also be used to communicate the broader t
For example, costumes can establish links between chara
directed *Waiting for Godot* in Berlin in 1975, he planned

> *Vladimir is going to wear striped trousers which f*
> *jacket, which is too small for him; the jacket belo*
> *Estragon. Estragon, on the other hand, wears bla*
> *him, with a striped jacket which is too big for him*
> *belonged to Vladimir.*

This costume design emphasised Vladimir and Estragon's
they literally wear each other's clothes. Beckett also esta
Pozzo through using similar colours and materials in their costumes.

Some productions may use costumes as a theatrical device to distance their audi
extravagant costumes in combination with heavy white make-up to create a star
Antonin Artaud employed masks and puppets to move his productions away fro
ritual.

Activity 4: Costume Mood Board

1) Look up images of the original production of *Waiting for Godot* at the Thé
look up images of more recent productions. What kinds of costume have b

2) Look up images of productions directed by / inspired by your chosen thea
bring these styles into your costume design for *Waiting for Godot*?

Gather some images together and make an A4 mood board / collage to inspi
notes on your mood board below.

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Designing Costume

When designing a costume you must consider:

- **Colour –** Colours are powerful visual cues that are packed with associate purity, red is associated with blood and danger, green is linked to the na associated with death and the unknown.
- **Material –** Different materials create different visual effects. Material is Poorer characters will not be able to afford expensive materials.
- **Lighting –** Costume designers must work closely with lighting designers a under certain lights.
- **Period** – When is your production set? Be sure to use era-appropriate m
- **Theme –** Is there any way you can reflect the broader themes of the play

In addition, a costume designer for a production of *Waiting for Godot* should con

- When is the production set? Are the costumes era-specific or abstract?
- It was Roger Blin, the director of the first ever production of *Waiting Godot,* who decided to dress Estragon and Vladimir as tramps. Will yo the same?
- How will you show that Vladimir and Estragon would once have been le the Eiffel Tower, but not now?
- What materials will communicate their social position in life?
- Will their costumes fit? Will their costumes be too big/small?
- How will you show Estragon's *'rags'*?
- Will you reflect Vladimir and Estragon's codependence through costume?
- The characters often produce things from their pockets. Where will t pockets be?
- What will Lucky and Pozzo wear?
- How can you communicate Lucky and Pozzo's status relationship thr costume?
- What will the rope be like? Long, short, thin, thick, light, dark?
- What will Lucky's baggage look like? How will he carry it? What communicate his suffering most effectively?
- How will costumes support the performances of actors?

Activity 5: Costume and Performance

Costume can have a big effect on how an actor performs a role. The way a costu communicate a great deal to an audience. In this way, costume design not only su play, it can also affect the performances of an actor.

As a class walk around the space:

- Half the class wearing jackets/coats, half the class without
- Half the class wearing shoes, half the class without
- Half the class wearing just one sock, half the class wearing no socks

How did these different costumes make you feel as you walked around the space shoes / without shoes? Did different costumes make you feel superior to / more v

Discuss what you found as a class, and decide how you might use costume to supp production of *Godot*.

Activity 6: Designing Costume

Make notes/sketches of costume designs for Vladimir, Estragon, Lucky and Pozzo. Share with class and justify your decisions.

VLADIMIR	ES
LUCKY	

Part Four: Comedy and Cruelty

The Theme of Suffering

When Samuel Beckett wrote *Waiting for Godot* in the middle of the twentieth century, the world had known suffering on a massive scale. Two world wars had killed somewhere between 60 and 100 million people, and the horrors of the Holocaust had proved how barbaric human beings could be. Once the wars were over, the world lived under the shadow of nuclear weapons, something that could wipe humanity off the face of the earth.

Suffering is a constant presence in *Waiting for Godot.* Estragon was beaten in the night and his boots are too tight for him. Lucky is abused by Pozzo and his rope causes a '*running sore*' on his neck. Furthermore, all of the characters seem to suffer from a general weariness and unhappiness caused by their lack of certainty and purpose.

Activity 1: Twenty-first-century Suffering

Your production of *Waiting for Godot* must be relevant for a twenty-first-century
the questions below.

- How do people suffer today?
- How could you communicate the contemporary relevance of the sufferin
century audience?

Come back as a class and share your thoughts.

Suffering and the Absurd

The Theatre of the Absurd developed as a reaction to the meaningless horrors of
writers of the Absurd, the world was an inexplicable place of suffering where hu

However, in spite of this visi
by no means entirely bleak.
humour in everyday sufferin
of Beckett's plays, *Endgame*
unhappiness… it's the most

The Theatre of the Absurd t
tragedy. Pozzo's treatment
the same time it is so exagg
Similarly, when Lucky kicks E
unexpected that it provokes

Activity 2: Suffering and Laughter

Have you ever laughed at something you shouldn't? Has anything upsetting eve
made you laugh? As a class, discuss the fine line between comedy and tragedy.

Exploring Comedy

Getting onstage comedy right is a difficult skill. Timing, delivery and character m
throughly rehearsed and yet retain an element of spontaneity to preserve the se
and irreverence. Actors and directors must work together closely to identify mo
comedy in scripts and discuss how best to convey humour to an audience.

Types of humour

The following types of humour can be found in *Waiting for Godot:*

- **Hyperbole –** humorous over-exaggeration.
- **Low Comedy –** bawdy humour often involving sexual or scatalogical (toil
references.
- **Parody** – over-the-top imitation of somebody or something.
- **Black Comedy** – jokes about subjects that are usually serious or distastef
- **Reversal** – setting up an expectation for one situation and then undermi
expectation with the reality.
- **Repetition** – repeated words and actions can become humorous. Think s
catchphrases.
- **Slapstick –** Physical comedy, often involving clumsiness or pain.

Activity 3: Identifying Comedy

Individually or in groups, read Act I from Pozzo's line 'He wants to impress me, s
line 'I'll carry you. (Pause.) If necessary'. Make a note of each type of comedy y

Once you have identified the different forms of comedy in a scene, you can then
onstage. When approaching comedy in a play it is useful to keep in mind the foll
performance:

- **Characterisation** – arguably the most important thing to work out is the
How do they speak? How do they move? Why are they funny?
- **Gestures –** gestures can bring comedy to lines that may not otherwise be
thrust can make the sexual connotations of a line clear.
- **Vocal delivery** – pitch, pace and diction can all make lines funny. It is oft
vocal delivery and the content, e.g. a deadpan delivery of a frightened lin
- **Non-verbal communication** – funny noises are funny for a reason! Little
are not in the script can add humour to a scene.
- **Rhythm** – it is important to pay attention to the rhythm of the scene to e
right place. Pauses can often build tension and laughter.

Activity 4: Performing Comedy

In groups, rehearse Act I from Pozzo's line 'He wants to impress me, so that I'll kee carry you. (Pause.) If necessary'.

As you rehearse, work on the following:

- How can you make Vladimir's repeated 'You want to get rid of him?' funn frustrated? Will you deliver his line 'you waagerrim?' in a funny voice?
- What will the 'childish gestures' be?
- How will you build tension before Lucky kicks Estragon in the shins? Is it fu Lucky nervously or confidently?
- How will you stage Lucky kicking Estragon in the shins? How can you mak
- Where will all the characters be positioned while Estragon is in pain and to Pozzo?
- Will Pozzo's treatment of Lucky be funny or disturbing? Or both?
- Will Estragon's pain be humorously over the top?
- How can you make a joke out of the pause between 'I'll carry you' and 'i physically during that pause?

Show your scenes to the rest of the class. Which performance decisions are funnie notes! You'll find these useful when preparing for your exam.

Practitioner Laughs

Different theatre practitioners use comedy in different ways. **Punchdrunk** create comedy may be derived through a performer's interaction with the audience. **Be** 'spass' was integral to a production, because it threw the play's more serious the **Littlewood** encouraged improvisation and teamwork to create a sense of comed

Activity 5: Comic Practitioners

Research your chosen practitioner's attitude towards onstage comedy. How can your production concept?

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Performance in *Waiting for Godot*

Performance is an important idea in *Waiting for Godot*. Estragon and Vladimir p
order to pass the time, Pozzo requires an attentive audience when he speaks, an
to perform for Vladimir and Estragon in return for their services to Pozzo.

There are also a number of moments where the play self-referentially highlights
theatre performance. For example, at the opening of the play, Estragon describe
'*inspiring prospects*' and Vladimir indicates towards the auditorium when he says
humorous moments of **metatheatre** remind the audience of the theatrical natur

This is taken one step further after Pozzo and Lucky appear. Vladimir and Estrag
as follows:

> VLADIMIR: Charming evening we're having.
> ESTRAGON: Unforgettable.
> VLADIMIR: And it's not over.
> ESTRAGON: Apparently not.
> VLADIMIR: It's only beginning.
> ESTRAGON: It's awful.
> VLADIMIR: Worse than the pantomime.

Such words could be spoken by the audience themselves as they watch this play
The pair then exchange these words:

> VLADIMIR: I'll be back.
> ESTRAGON: End of the corridor, on the left.
> VLADIMIR: Keep my seat.

Here, Estragon gives Vladimir directions to the theatre toilets! In some productio
changed to match the correct location of the toilets in the theatre in which the p

By continually reminding the audience that they are watching a play, Beckett em
meaning in a meaningless world. Just like Vladimir and Estragon, the audience is
distractions and entertainments. The experience, as with anything in the world,

Keyword

Metatheatre – *A moment that draws the audience's attention to the fact that they c*

Lucky Dances

We are given little indication of what Lucky's dance is like or how long it goes on
lines that follow the dance suggest that it was not particularly impressive. Estrag
Vladimir and Pozzo all suggest names for the dance, which might also give some
What kind of dance do '*The Scapegoat's Agony*', '*The Hard Stool*' and '*The Net*' su
to you?

As always, how the dance is performed is down to the director and performer.

Activity 1: Thinking about Lucky's Dance

One way to think about and interpret movement is through **Laban Movement A**

Laban was a well-known dance practitioner who developed many theories abo performance. One aspect of movement that he analysed was Effort, which rela movement. According to Laban, there are four factors that determine effort: **Sp**

- **SPACE** refers to the direction and quality of movement in the space. A (like a punch) or ***indirect*** (like a slash).
- **WEIGHT** refers to the force of a movement. A movement can be ***heavy***
- **TIME** refers to the speed of movement. A movement can either be ***quic*** (like wringing a wet towel).
- **FLOW** refers to the progression of a movement. A movement can either room) or ***bound/controlled*** (like pressing a button).

1) Mime the following movements and complete the table below, categorising accordance with Laban's theories.

Movement	**Space** *(direct/indirect)*	**Weight** *(heavy/light)*	**Time** *(quick/susta*
Punching someone			
Brushing dust off your coat	*Indirect*		
Wringing a wet towel			
Gliding through a room			*Sustaine*
Pushing a heavy door open		*Heavy*	

2) Individually or in groups, choreograph four distinct movements that make u movement using the terminology above and try to include a range of diffe and then indirect and light).

3) **Joan Littlewood** was a theatre practitioner who combined Laban moveme psychological naturalism. In her productions, movement was used to suppor psychological state. Think about Lucky's state of mind. Does he enjoy perfo will? Is this a chance to prove himself to Pozzo? How can you communicate

Activity 2: Describing Lucky's Dance

Describe how you would direct Lucky's dancing using Laban Movement Analysis
justify your decisions in relation to the text and the desired effect on the audien

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Swap your responses with a partner and mark each other's work based on the f

- Have they used correct and appropriate terminology to describe move
- Have they justified their decisions in relation to the text? Mark out of 3.
- Have they described the desired effect of this movement on the audien
- BONUS MARK: Have they referred to a well-known theatre practitione conditions of *Waiting for Godot*? Mark out of 1.

Activity 3: Applying Laban Movement Analysis

You can use Laban Movement Analysis to describe movement other than dancin way the following characters move? Why do they move in this way?

Estragon	
Vladimir	
Pozzo	
Lucky	

Lucky Thinks

Lucky speaks just twice in the whole play, and only when he is commanded to. T
Pozzo. Then he speaks a long, rambling speech that doesn't end until he is physi
removed.

Lucky's speech is highly complex and can be interpreted in a number of ways: it i
relationship between God and man, it is a parody of bombastic scholarly thinking
inadequacy of language in expressing complex questions of existence. As a direc
understand the content and theatrical aims of the speech in order to direct effec

Activity 4: Watch It!

Lucky's speech can be difficult to understand, partly because it is not really mean
best experienced as a whole. Look up videos on YouTube of actors performing th
understanding of the effect of this speech as an audience member.

Activity 5: Breaking Down Lucky's Speech

In the notes he made while directing his 1975 production of the play, Beckett br
sections along with the following descriptions:

Section 1 – Indifferent Heaven: From '*Given the existence uttered forth*' unti
Section 2 – Dwindling Man: From '*and considering what is more*' until '*defe*
Section 3 – Dwindling Man (2): From '*waste and pine*' until '*matter what ma*
Section 4 – Earth Abode of Stones and Cadenza: From '*and considering w*
Section 5 – New Elements and Last Straw: From '*I resume alas alas*' until '*s*

1) Break down the speech as above and split into five groups. Each group sho
speech, considering the following questions:
   - What is this section of the speech about?
   - How is language used to undermine the communication of meaning?
   - TIP: Try removing repeated words and nonsense references to get a b

2) Each group in order (1–5) should present what they found to the rest of the

3) As a class, discuss the speech overall.
   - What makes the speech so complicated to understand?
   - Does the speech have an overall meaning?
   - What is the significance of this meaning being so scrambled and incon

Lucky's Speech: Key Definitions

Apathia – *Lack of concern*
Athambia – *Remaining calm / disinterested*
Aphasia – *A medical condition characterised by the inability to produce language*
Divine Miranda – *Prospero's daughter from William Shakespeare's* The Tempest
Succedanea – *Substitute medication*
Connemara – *A rugged area on the West Coast of Ireland*

Activity 8: Exam Practice

Reread the middle of Act I, from Lucky's line 'On the other hand with regard to' to his thinking' and answer the question below.

QUESTION: As a director, how would you direct performances during this sectio refer to the original performance conditions of the play and justify your directo the practices of a well-known theatre practitioner and your overall production c

Answer Checklist

In my answer I have:

- ✓ shown understanding of the context in which the play was performed
- ✓ referred to at least two specific moments in the text
- ✓ used appropriate theatre terminology to describe my direction of perfo
- ✓ justified my decision in relation to the practices of a well-known theatre
- ✓ explained how my performance choices fit into my wider production co

Performing Lucky's Speech: Vocal Delivery

The way in which lines are spoken can have a great influence on the way they're understood by an audience. Subtle variations in vocal delivery will produce an entirely different interpretation of a character's motives and emotions.

The main things to consider when directing vocal performance are:

- **Pace.** A slow speed of delivery could suggest a dim-witted character. High speed might suggest excitement/anticipation.
- **Pitch.** Different pitches can suggest different emotions. Panic is associated with a high pitch, for example. Extremes of pitch can put an audience on edge.
- **Tone.** Does the character speak in an assured way or does their voice quaver?
- **Diction.** How well does the character enunciate their words? **Steven Berkoff** used exaggerated diction to unsettle the audience.
- **Volume.** How loud does the character speak? Do they get louder or quieter at a particular moment?
- **Delivery.** Are any particular words stressed? Why?

All these qualities can vary and change within a scene to emphasise certain mom
engaged.

The First Lucky

In the first production of *Waiting for Godot* in 1953, Lucky was played by Jean M
and his Lucky was continually shaking and drooling. During his speech, he began s
and quicker, his words delivered in time with the rhythmic shudders of his body. H
speech evenly, with no phrasing or stressed words, which further removed the w
performance was so powerfully tragic that the costume designer sobbed and vo

Activity 6: Lucky Speaks

In pairs (one actor, one director), rehearse any 10-line section of Lucky's speech
vocal delivery discussed above. How does Lucky speak? How does he deliver hi
time, perform to the rest of the class, and discuss why you made each performa

Activity 7: Reacting to Lucky

Before Lucky's speech, Beckett lists a series of four reactions to be made by Vla

1) In groups, decide when these reactions will come during Lucky's speech.
2) Rehearse these four moments of reaction individually (don't speak Lucky
reactions). Try the reactions first without and then with making noise.
3) Rehearse the final section of the speech (with Lucky speaking). How will
vociferations'? How is Lucky stopped?

Perform your scenes to the rest of the class and discuss which performance decis

Part Six: The Boy

Who is the Boy?

The fifth and final character to enter in the play is a boy sent by Godot. Unlike th characters, who all come in pairs, the boy enters alone.

The boy is wary of Estragon and Vladimir, and speaks in very short sentences. He has a brother whom Godot beats, while he himself is treated well. After deliverin message he runs away, leaving Vladimir and Estragon alone again.

As a director, you will have to decide who this boy is, what he looks like and how performs onstage.

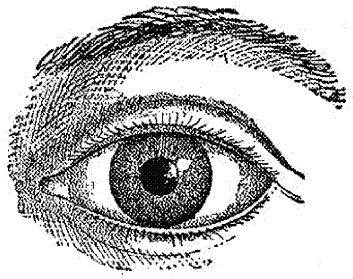
Activity 1: Puppets

Some theatre practitioners, such as **Kneehigh** and **Artaud**, include puppetry in t Puppetry can be used to create a sense of magic realism or to unnerve the audi Puppets also raise thematic questions of control and free will, because the pupp manipulated by others. Could the Boy in *Waiting for Godot* be portrayed by a questions below.

1) Could you use puppetry in your production of *Waiting for Godot*? Wh presented as puppets?
2) What style of puppetry might you use? Marionettes? Shadow puppets manipulated by onstage performers? What would the puppets be ma
3) What effect would the use of puppets have on the audience?

After some discussion time, share your responses with the rest of the class. Will y your production concept?

Being Seen



The boy doesn't recognise Vladimir, even thoug may have come the previous day. When the boy Godot, Vladimir says, *'tell him that you saw us...*

In this strange world where nothing happens an vitally important for Vladimir. If he can't be seen sure that he really exists?

Activity 2: To be Seen

In the twenty-first century, being seen is especially important. Everything that hap media, and the way people perceive us is shaped by the way we present oursel existence is validated and confirmed by our social media presence, and by the li online.

As a class, discuss the way being seen is important in the twenty-first century. Ho you? How would you feel if no one responded to your posts? What if no one eve carry on posting anyway?

How could you use these ideas to make a production of *Waiting for Godot* relev audience?

Lighting Design

In most theatre productions, lighting is used to suggest different times and locations, to support smooth transitions between scenes, and to enhance the action on the stage. In *Waiting for Godot,* however, the action all takes place in one location and one time, and there are very few lighting changes indicated in the text.

One exception for this is when the boy leaves at the end of Act I. The stage direction reads:

> *'The light suddenly fails. In a moment it is night. The moon rises at the back, mounts in the sky, stands still, shedding a pale light on the scene.'*

Lighting in *Waiting for Godot* should be used sparingly but to powerful effect. Alt
the script in a more creative way, and use lighting to match the disorientating an

Lighting at the Théâtre de Babylone, 1953

Roger Blin, the director of the first ever production of *Waiting for Godot,* had ver
lighting. The Théâtre de Babylone was a small 'pocket' theatre set up in a conver
afford much in the way of modern theatre lighting, and the production had to m
equipment.

For his production of *Waiting for Godot*, Blin had three spotlights above the stage
cloth backdrop. This cloth was illuminated from below by a row of lights on the gr
Blin used improvised lights made from light bulbs inside oil cans. These were held
theatre and directed at the actors' faces. Blin sidelit the tree from the wings with
through a yellow gel, to create the effect of the setting sun. When the moon rises
was shone on the cloth backdrop, rising from the bottom to the middle like an un

For a modern-day production, a director will have access to much more sophistic
may decide to reflect the original performance conditions of the play by using sim

Types of Light

Profile/Spot – Used to direct attention to a particular point onstage. Edges of lig
be tightly controlled.

Fresnel – Provides a wider wash of light with softer edges. Can be used in combi
to light the entire stage.

LED Strips – Strips of small LED lights can be attached to the stage or the set to p
some illumination, or to attract attention to a certain shape.

Strobe – Rapid flashes of bright light can create a slow-motion effect. Should be
with care as the light may have a dangerous effect on some audience members.
Artaud used flashing lights to disturb the audience.

Projection – Stages can also be illuminated by projected images or films for mor
abstract technological effects. **Complicite** often use projection in their productio

REMEMBER: You can use a combination of all these lights to achiev

Designing Light

Once you have decided which lights you will use in your production, you will nee
used. You should consider the following when making your decisions:

- **Level** – How bright should the lights be? Light levels can be controlled fr
down between 0% and 100% brightness. Lower lighting levels may sugge
bright lights appear harsh and clinical. **Brecht** used bright lights to aliena
auditorium lights on to remind them that they were watching a play.
- **Position –** Which way are the lights facing? Lighting a performer from be
interesting shadows on their face. You must also take into account how y
don't shine light into anyone's eyes, or light a row of seats rather than th
- **Colour** – Coloured gels and **gobos** can change the colour and shape of lig
a time of day and place, or emphasise themes.
- **Focus** – Do the lights wash across the stage, or focus on a particular poin
hard edges?
- **Shadow** – Which areas of the stage should remain dark? Why?

Keyword
Gobo – *A patterned template that can be placed in front of a light to make a shap
onstage, e.g. a thin cross across a square light could suggest sun streaming through*

Activity 3: Identifying Lights

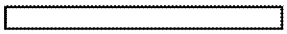
Look up images of theatre productions in performance. Why are these designs e
states created? Can you tell what kinds of light have been used? Pick your favou
it using specific theatre terminology.

Activity 4: Lighting Plot

Sketch out your venue and audience set-up. Add the following symbols to your
you will use in Act I of *Waiting for Godot*. Colour in the symbols if you are usin
with the level of intensity you require (0%–100%). Describe your set-up benec

PROFILE

FRESNEL



LED STRIP

STRO

Activity 6: Practitioners and Lighting

Research the ideas and theories of your chosen theatre practitioner in relation to li
table below with your findings.

Lighting Theories	According to my practitioner, lighting should be
•	
•	
•	
Types of Light	My practitioner would use the following types o
•	
•	
•	
Examples	Some examples of my practitioner's lighting ide
•	
•	
•	

Activity 7: Exam Practice

QUESTION: As a lighting designer, how will you use lighting at the end of Act I (fro
the end of the act)? Justify your decisions in relation to the original performance co
theatre practitioner. **(300 words)**

In your answer, consider the following:

- What will the lighting state be when the boy enters?
- How will this lighting state change when the boy exits?
- How will you light the performers? From above / in front / the side, etc.?
- Will you use any creative lighting effects that are not found in the text?
- Will you reflect the original performance conditions in your use of light?
- How can you apply the methodologies of your chosen practitioner to your

Part One: Same Time? Same Place?

Time in *Waiting for Godot*

While the stage directions may indicate that Act II takes place the '*Next Day. Same Time. Same Place*', the characters seem far from sure of when and where they are in time. Estragon has no recollection of the previous day's events, in spite of Vladimir's reminders, and even Vladimir eventually doubts himself and decides *'we weren't here yesterday evening'*.

Certain things suggest that it is the next day: Estragon's boots remain where they were left at the end of Act I, and Lucky's hat still lies where it fell. However, the tree now has '*four or five leaves*', suggesting a dramatic change in season and when Pozzo enters later in the act, he is blind – a big and unexplained change from Act I. Even Estragon's boots fit him now, and Vladimir decides that someone must have come and exchanged his boots for them.

In *Waiting for Godot,* time doesn't exist as we understand it. It is as if, as Vladimir says in Act I, *'time has stopped.'*

Beckett's presentation of time is a feature of **Postmodernism.** The postmodernist that is, the traditional and conventional ways we explain and order our existence, is constructed by human beings. Minutes, hours, weeks and years are all invented our lives. They do not exist physically or objectively.

Keywords

Postmodernism – *An artistic movement in the second half of the twentieth century questioningof the conventional theories of existence and the world.*

Grand Narratives – *The overriding narratives that describe and explain existence. metanarratives.*

Activity 1: What is Time?

In groups, discuss the following questions:

- If clocks did not exist, how could you tell that time was passing? Suggest
- Why is it important for us to know and to be able to describe the time?
- How does our understanding of time bring meaning to our lives?

The passage of time can be broadly interpreted as the *Waiting for Godot* nothing really changes. The same with just minor differences. Lucky and Pozzo enter and Estragon wait for Godot. Without a sense of change achievement, no climax, no meaning to their existen *happens, nobody comes, nobody goes, it's awful!'*

Sound Design

The passage of time is often indicated through sound. The ticking of a clock, the heart, all of these suggest the forward-moving rhythms of time.

There are several types of sound you can use in a production:

- **Music** – Music is highly emotive and quickly establishes the atmosphere a scene. Music is also linked with certain time periods, and modern or traditional music may be used to support or juxtapose a period setting.
- **Sound effects** – May be realistic or unrealistic.
- **Live sound** – Onstage musicians can create a joyous atmosphere and become a part of the performance experience. Sound effects performe actors support a more stylised production. **Kneehigh** use live music to create a charged, festival atmosphere. Sound effects in a **Steven Berko** production should be performed by the actors.
- **Prerecorded sound** – Prerecorded sound can create effects that are no possible through live performance. It can also be used to support the realism of a play. **Complicite** use technology to create innovative sound design, while **Stanislavski** used realistic sound effects to create a believa onstage world.
- **Diegetic –** Sound that exists in the world of the play, *e.g. a gunshot.*
- **Non-diegetic** – Sound that doesn't exist in the world of the play, *e.g. at a scene*.

Good to Know

When Peter Hall directed the first ever English production of the play at the Arts T used background music composed by Bartók to create a disconcerting atmosphere mistake. Would you use music in your production of *Waiting for Godot*? If so, wher

Designing Sound

Once you have decided how you will produce sound in your production, you will will be. You should consider the following when making your decisions:

- **Pitch** – Will you use high- or low-pitched sound? High-pitched sound ca low-pitched sound can indicate a sense of foreboding.
- **Volume** – How loud will the sound be? Will the volume increase or dec
- **Rhythm** – Will the sound be continuous or broken up? How frequently
- **Timing** – When will sounds be played and how long will they last? Shou line? Does it fade in, or come in immediately?
- **Direction** – Where will the sound come from? In front of or behind the venue support these decisions? (The sound system in a non-theatre spa power outlets are, etc.)
- **Silence** – Silence can be just as powerful and haunting as sound.

Activity 2: Vladimir's Song

1) In groups, read Vladimir's song at the opening of Act II ('*A dog came in the* Contemplative? Upbeat?

2) What sort of music should the song be? Folk? Blues? Pop? How does this cho overall production concept?

3) Fit an appropriate tune to the words. You can use a well-known song or a s

4) How should Vladimir perform this song? Discuss how you would direct his vo in this scene. Fill in the list below.

Volume: .....

Pace:.....

Pitch: .....

Stressed words: .....

Silence in *Waiting for Godot*

In many people's minds, *Waiting for Godot* is synonymous with silence. Nearly e direction *'Silence'* or sometimes *'Long silence'*. These silences are an important a it or not, not all silences are the same!

Activity 3: The Sound of Silence

1) Spend three minutes in silence as a class. What noises do you hear around y note down in detail what you heard.

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2) Spend another three minutes with your hands over your ears. What do you up, note down in detail what you heard.

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3) Look up an online video of *4'33"* by John Cage. Does this performed silenc What does silence sound like coming from a speaker?

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The Original Performance

Part of the reason why *Waiting for Godot* was so groundbreaking was because th established dramatic convention. Audiences were used to naturalistic performan long pauses uncomfortable to the point of embarrassment. In England in 1955, m noisily during these silences, or even made comments out loud, making jokes ab

Today, silences are a common part of theatre language, mainstreamed by playw Audiences enjoy the tension created by silence and the non-vocal performances t silence.

A theatre director hoping to recreate the original shock of these silences for a tw would have to produce silence in a different way, or even completely subvert the

How might you create silence in a non-traditional manner? Could you create a si white noise to call attention to the lack of conventional sound?

Activity 4: Performing Silence

Rehearse the following moments and work on how you can use silence to powerfu

Moment A: Act I. Just before the exit of Pozzo and Lucky, from Pozzo's line until Estragon's line '*Such is life.*'

Moment B: Act II. From Estragon's line '*In the meantime let us try and conver trying.*'

For moment A, use the silences for comic effect. For moment B, use the silences to

How do you achieve this? Do the sounds of silence change when they are comic o

How long can you push the silences before they become undramatic?

Activity 5: Practitioners and Sound

How does your chosen practitioner use sound in their productions? How could yo sound design for *Waiting for Godot*? Make notes as you research.

Activity 6: Exam Practice

QUESTION: In the light of the methodology of your chosen practitioner, how wo
opening of Act II of *Waiting for Godot* (until Vladimir's line 'The tree, look at th

Answer Checklist

In my answer I have:

- ✓ explained the atmosphere I want to create with sound
- ✓ explained the type of sound I want to use
- ✓ explained specific design elements of sound (pitch/volume, etc.)
- ✓ explained how and where sound will be used in the space
- ✓ referenced at least <u>two</u> specific moments in the text
- ✓ referenced the methodologies of a well-known theatre practitioner

Part Two: Distractions, Diversions, Repetitions and Routine

In Act II, waiting seems even more agonising for Estragon and Vladimir than it did in Act I. In desperation, they fill their time with mindless entertainments such as arguing, swapping hats, insulting one another, doing exercises and doing impressions of the tree, their only other companion in their waiting.

Through these distractions, Beckett questions the nature of existence. In his absurd reading of the world, the things that make up our lives (school, work, friendships, hobbies, etc.) are just distractions from the inevitable: death. In many ways, we are all Vladimir and Estragon, filling time as we wait for something to come.

Repetition

Waiting for Godot is a play in which events and characters repeat themselves. Th altered, occur in Act II as in Act I. It is also suggested that these things have happ again outside the stage time of the play. In this way, Beckett presents a world in and over again.

Activity 1: Repeated Time

'Life is just the same thing happening over and over again until you die'

Do you agree? Why / why not? Discuss your responses as a class.

As a director, it is necessary to communicate Beckett's idea of repetition while st While to a certain extent the audience should be struck by the repetitiveness of they should be bored!

Activity 2: We're Waiting for Godot

In pairs:

1) Rehearse the following dialogue:

   ESTRAGON: Let's go.
   VLADIMIR: We can't.
   ESTRAGON: Why not?
   VLADIMIR: We're waiting for Godot.
   ESTRAGON: Ah!

   Play the exchange 10 times in a row. Each time you do it, speak the lines

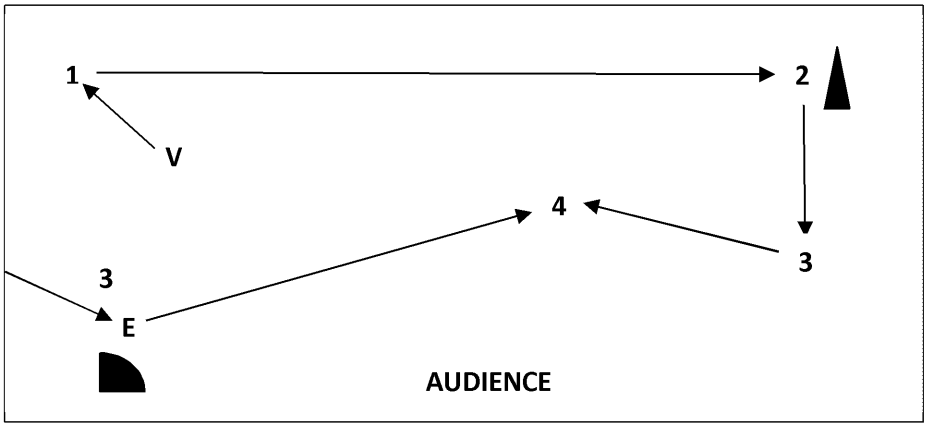
2) Add a movement for each character that occurs during the dialogue. Play different emotions but the same movement each time.

   Show five repetitions to the class. What effect does the repeated moveme

Poetic Staging

While directing his 1975 production of *Waiting for Godot*, Samuel Beckett made s
should move onstage. In this way, he could plan the visual balance and mirroring
could also echo previous movements to create a sense of repetition and rhythm.

Making sketches in this way is a useful way to visualise movement. A sketch for t
Vladimir's song until he and Estragon embrace, might look like this:



Justification: *Vladimir's feverish movement takes him on an almost full circle of*
of the space, but not exiting, we get a sense of his entrapment. When Estragon
by the mound, showing his vulnerable state of mind at the opening of the play.
together in the centre of the stage for their embrace, suggesting that things are
movement could then be used at another moment in the play – for example, wh
from a nightmare later in Act II – to mark another moment of fear and reuniting

Activity 3: Sketching Onstage Movement

1) In groups of three (two performers, one director), reread the following two m

   - **Act I:** From '*A terrible cry, close at hand*' until the entrance of Pozzo and
     need to actually appear in the scene).
   - **Act II:** From Vladimir's line '*It's Godot! At last!*' until Vladimir's line '*Deci*
     of the slightest use to us.'

   Plan and sketch out movements for both of these moments using the sketch te
   resource. Sketch out your chosen stage set-up (end on/in the round, etc.) bef
   following points and remember to justify each of your decisions.

   - How can you create a sense of chaos and panic through movement? Thi
   - How might you echo the movements from the first section in the second s
   - Does this set up an expectation for Lucky and Pozzo to appear?
   - How is the tension undermined when they do not appear?

2) Once you have planned movement for both extracts, get the scenes on their
   practice. Follow your sketches exactly. Then present your extracts, one after
   What is the visual effect of these movements? Do they create a sense of rep
   else in the play could you use repeated movements?

Extension Task:

In your exam you won't be able to use sketches! Once you have sketched and pe
and justify your stagings in 100–200 words. Swap your descriptions with a partn
accurately and succinctly you have described and justified the movements.

Activity 3: Sketching Onstage Movement

Moment 1:

Justification:.....

.....

.....

.....

Moment 2:

Justification:.....

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Caring for Estragon

In a rare moment of tenderness, Vladimir sings and tend
('*bye bye bye*'). He then comforts him when he wakes fro
frequently mentioning that they would be better off with
Estragon appear not only to rely on one another but also
for one another.

As a director, you must establish Vladimir and Estragon's
their affection for one another. After all, at the end of th
have is each other.

The Hat Routine

Hats have a special importance in *Waiting for Godot*. Vladimir is continually remo
and searching inside it, while Lucky can only think when he is wearing his hat and
soon as it is taken off. When Vladimir finds Lucky's hat and wears it, he then beg
like Lucky, adopting his posture and asking Estragon to insult him.

Hats, therefore, seem to be intrinsically linked to the person who wears them. Th
sequence of exchanging hats performed by Vladimir and Estragon represents a flu
identity in the play. Individual identity, something we think of as incredibly impo
life, is reduced to something as meaningless and disposable as a hat, something
be changed at the drop of a, well, you get the picture…

Once again, Beckett deconstructs our basic understanding of the world around u
us questioning everything we thought we knew about life and our existence.

Activity 4: Hats

1) In pairs, read through the hat-switching stage directions in Act II. How many
switch hats? Which hats do they end up wearing?

2) Do it yourselves. Run it through slowly and then try to speed it up. How quic
you start off slowly and then build up to a frenzy? What expressions will th
faces?

Activity 5: The Tree

There is a comic moment when Vladimir and Estragon try to hide behind the tree
hidden and Vladimir says '*Decidedly this tree will not have been of the slightest us*

The comedy comes from how poorly the tree covers them. As a designer, you mu
like. Is it too short? Too thin? Why does it not hide them? In groups, discuss desig
below.

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Part Three: Lucky and Pozzo Return

Just when Vladimir and Estragon thought they could stand the waiting no longer, P
offer some distraction. Vladimir is relieved: '*We were beginning to weaken. Now w*

In Act II, Pozzo and Lucky have changed. Pozzo is blind and holds onto Lucky with
that Lucky is dumb. No explanation is given as to why such a drastic change has o
to doubt whether there can possibly be just one day between the two meetings.
characters' understanding of time is continually undermined by the absurd even

Bathos in *Waiting for Godot*

Lucky and Pozzo enter in stately fashion just as in Act I. However, once they enter, they both fall to the ground. This is an example of **bathos,** a device that is used to undermine serious moments with something ridiculous. Another example occurs when Vladimir and Estragon discuss travelling to the Pyrenees. This dreamy dialogue is undercut by Estragon's line '*who farted?*' which immediately brings the scene back to the base themes of the play.

Beckett uses bathos to undermine anything that might elevate the characters fro
their situation. In this way, he reminds the audience of the bleak nature of the m

Keyword
Bathos – *An anticlimactic descent from elevated subject matter to silliness*

Activity 1: Four on the Floor

In groups of five (four actors and one director), read Act II, from Estragon's line
Vladimir's line '*Simple question of will-power*'. For nearly all of this section, all fo
floor!

Rehearse the scene, working on the following points (remember to think about ho
positioned before you start!):

- Will the characters be on their backs or their fronts?
- Will they move or lie still?
- How can you make Vladimir kicking Pozzo funny/cruel?
- How are the characters positioned in relation to one another? For exa
  Estragon's heads are very close to each other or far away?
- What will happen in the silences? Will Pozzo continue to whimper and
- Will Vladimir and Estragon get up slowly or quickly? Which is funnier?

After some rehearsal time, show your scenes to the class. Discuss which performa

Activity 2: Exam Practice

Read Act II, from Estragon's line '*Are you staying there?*' until Vladimir's line '*Simp*

QUESTION: *As a director, how would you direct performances during this section o
to the original performance conditions of the play and justify your directorial decisi
practices of a well-known theatre practitioner and your overall production concept.*

Suffering without Reason

Before Pozzo leaves in Act II, Vladimir asks him what is in Lucky's bag. He replies '*sand*'.

As so often occurs in *Waiting for Godot,* suffering is presented with no clear cause or reason. Lucky's exertions are for no purpose. He is carrying nothing of use, and his suffering is pointless. Similarly, it is never explained why Pozzo is blind in Act II. In the play, suffering is just an integral, inexplicable part of life.

Through his presentation of meaningless suffering, Beckett reflects the atmosphere in the early twentieth century, when millions of people had suffered in the wars for no reason.

Pozzo and Vladimir on Time

Towards the end of Act II, both Pozzo and Vladimir speak about the passage of ti being asked *when* things happened and asks why it matters. For Pozzo, time is ir overarching cycle of birth and death: '*They give birth astride of a grave, the light once more.*'

Vladimir then questions his own understanding of time. He worries whether he'l tomorrow, and despairs about the unchanging cycle of repetition. '*I can't go on!* he will.

Time, usually a source of comfort and organisation, is an oppressive force in the p depresses the characters onstage. As a director you can heighten this effect thro repetitions onstage. Repeated sounds, lighting states, movement and vocal deliv communicate Beckett's interpretation of time.

Activity 3: Two Speeches

In pairs (one actor, one director), choose either Pozzo's or Vladimir's speech to p

Pozzo: '*Have you not done tormenting me with your accursed time!*' until '*then it's*
Vladimir: '*Was I sleeping while the others suffered?*' until '*what have I said?*'

Rehearse your chosen speech, working on the following points:

- Read through the speech and map the emotional journey of the charac angry / most upset / most despairing / most afraid?
- Once you have broken down the speech into these emotional sections, vocal delivery. Think about volume/pace/pitch/diction, etc.
- Begin rehearsing the speech, working on capturing the vocal qualities
- How can you make the transition into each emotion smooth and believa
- What happens in the pauses? Do the characters move? Do their expres non-verbal noises?
- Who are the characters talking to? Themselves? The audience?

After some rehearsal time, come back as a class and discuss effective performa What was most powerful?

Part Four: Who is Godot?

Religion in *Waiting for Godot*

Christianity plays a major role in Beckett's play. At the beginning of Act I, Vladimi
question of the two thieves who were crucified at the same time as Jesus Christ. H
of the thieves was saved. It's a reasonable percentage'. This links to the idea of **s**a
of the thieves was allowed into heaven while one was condemned to hell. Vladim
these 50/50 odds offer him a good chance of being on the side of the saved thief

However, Vladimir also questions this belief in salvation. He notes that, of the fou
(Matthew, Mark, Luke and John) only one mentions that a thief was saved, and ye
version that people choose to believe. This questions why, despite overwhelming
hope for something better after death. Estragon decides that people are '*ignoran*
and Vladimir are doing just the same, waiting for Godot despite all the evidence t
It seems that the tiniest glimmer of hope is all it takes for people to endure the pa

Keyword
Salvation – *being saved from the consequences of sin and welcomed into heaven*

Activity 1: Religious Allusions through Staging

Vladimir and Estragon are visually linked to the two thieves by the set. They star
represents the cross of Christ.

How else might you recreate religious imagery through staging, set or performa
and think about how you might adapt common themes, poses or colour schemes t
ideas as a class.

Is *Godot* God?

The most common identity ascribed to Godot is that of 'God' – after all, it's in t
religious references in the play that support this reading, most notably Godot's b
acts. The Boy in Act II describes Godot as having a white beard, which is similar to
of a Christian god. Moreover, when Vladimir questions the Boy in Act I, he reve
work for Godot, tending the sheep and goats. This links to a Bible passage from M

> *When the Son of Man comes in his glory, and all the angels with him, then*
> *glory. All the nations will be gathered before him, and he will separate p*
> *shepherd separates the sheep from the goats, and he will put the sheep at*
> *at the left.*

Those on the right (the sheep) are '*blessed*', while those on the left (the goats)
Just like the Bible passage, Godot shows one boy mercy and one retribution. Ho
tends the sheep and is good to the boy who tends the goats – the reverse of the
undermined by the fact that the boy is played by the same actor in both acts. Is t
or has he forgotten? The absurd ambiguity of the boy's identity means that we c
who he, and, therefore, Godot, might be.

Perhaps the final say on the matter should come from Beckett himself, speaking
God, I would have said God, and not Godot'. Case closed!

A Tragicomic End

The subtitle to Beckett's play is 'A Tragicomedy in Two Acts'. Comedy and this is never more apparent than at the end of the play. Vladimir another fruitless wait, decide to try to hang themselves. They have n holds up Estragon's trousers. He removes it and his trousers fall dow the cord and it snaps. Humour is found even in the darkest of ideas: the Theatre of the Absurd, in which life is presented as both laughal

Activity 2: Comedy or Tragedy

Will your production of *Waiting for Godot* focus more on the comic or the trag might you support this interpretation through direction and design?

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Ultimately, it does not matter who or what Godot is. What matters is Beckett's n passage of time, and the meaning of existence. We are all waiting for something the weekend, our next holiday or, ultimately, death. For Beckett, life *means* wait meantime that interests him, and the ways we try to give meaning to our wait.

Activity 3: Summary

Spend some time considering the question below and then discuss as a class.

QUESTION: Is *Waiting for Godot* a play about hope or despair?

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Section 3: Developing a Production Co

What is a Production Concept?

A production concept is a director's stylistic and dramatic ideas for a production. interpretation of the play's themes and narrative and then how to communicate There are many possible interpretations for any one text, and many ways to com to an audience. It is a director's job to decide why and how a production concep A director should first ask themselves the following questions when forming a pr

- What is the play about?
- What are the main themes of the play?
- How is this play relevant to a twenty-first-century audience?
- What do I want the audience to feel and think at each moment of the pla

A director should then consider the use of the following theatrical devices:

Performance and Staging

- Vocal delivery
- Non-verbal communication
- Facial expression and gesture
- Posture and physicality
- Proxemics and gaze
- Onstage positioning
- Actor/audience relationship

Design

- Choice of v
- Set
- Lighting
- Sound
- Projection/
- Costume ar

An Example Production Concept

In 2007, two years after the devastation of Hurricane Katrina, a production of *W for Godot* was staged in New Orleans, directed by Christopher McElroen in associ with the artist, Paul Chan. Their production concept was built around the followi

- The production was open-air and site-specific; it was staged in two locat both in neighbourhoods that were adversely affected by Hurricane Katri The first two performances took place on an intersection of two empty r The final two took place outside a flooded house.
- The debris from the hurricane mirrored the bleak and broken-down wor the play.
- Vladimir and Estragon were played by two black actors, wearing shabby
- Pozzo was played by a white actor in a pristine white suite. He held a me Vladimir and Estragon through. He came to represent the authorities and the situation in Katrina.
- The idea of waiting was relevant to the contemporary situation. People i for repairs to their homes, for government intervention and assistance.
- The production was illuminated with simple white floodlights.
- A jazz band played as audiences found their seats, reflecting the city's ric
- Workshops, talks and meals were organised as part of the process to fos

Activity 1: Your Responses

Look up some photographs from this production. Discuss as a class what you like Chan's production concept. What would you do differently? Might you stage a s play? Where?

Activity 2: Director's Interpretation

1) In your opinion, what is *Waiting for Godot* about?

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2) Circle three themes that you will focus on in your production of *Waiting for*

Cruelty ● ***Poverty*** ● ***Social Inequality*** ● ***Repetition*** ● ***The***

Suffering ● ***Meaninglessness*** ● ***Companionship*** ● ***Religio***

3) How is the play relevant for a twenty-first century audience?

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Activity 3: Director's Press Conference

In groups, take it in turns to play a director who has just been given the job of d
Waiting for Godot. The rest of the group are journalists, who should ask the dire
about the play. Take notes about each director's ideas and interpretations.

Performance and Staging

Key questions

- How will you cast the production?
- What style of acting do you want? Naturalistic or stylised?
- How will you use vocal delivery / facial expression / physicality / proxem
  to create meaning at specific moments in the play?
- How will you balance moments of comedy and suffering?
- What will Lucky's dance be like?
- How will you indicate status?
- How will you mark the rhythms and repetitions of the play?
- Do the characters develop or remain the same?
- Will the silences be long or short?
- How will you keep the audience engaged and entertained over the cours
  of the play?
- How can you apply the theories of your chosen practitioner to the perfo

Activity 1: Interdependent Pairings

Beckett presents two pairs of characters who are seemingly entirely dependent o
and Estragon, and Pozzo and Lucky, appear to need the other's company despi
relationships can bring. You can communicate these relationships through perfor

Get into pairs:

- Mirroring: Stand facing your partner. One will be the leader and one
  the follower, you should copy your partner's movements and facial exp
  a mirror. If you are the leader, make slow and simple movements so th
  easily – don't try to throw them off! To an outside eye, it should be unc
  following. A few pairs should perform for the class. Can you guess wh

- Opposites: Face your partner, around 10 paces apart. The leader sho
  taking on a specific character. The character should be clear and highl
  Woman or Clumsy Police Officer. The follower should then walk towar
  opposite way, e.g. Happy Young Man or Crafty Burglar. As a class, d
  intrinsically linked with one another.

Put it into practice:

In your pairs, rehearse one of the following scenes as either Vladimir and Estrag

- **Vladimirs and Estragons:** Act II, before the entrance of Lucky and Poz
  simultaneous line '*Do you-*' until Estragon's line '*That's enough. I'm tired.*'
- **Luckys and Pozzos:** Act I, from Pozzo's line '*Let's say no more about it*

As you rehearse, include three moments of mirrored action and three moments o

Show your scenes to the class. What effect do these moments have? Where else
opposites in the play?

Extension Activity:

Once you have performed your scenes and discussed them as a class, write a pa
decisions and justifying them in relation to your production concept. Keep this pa
useful when you come to revise for your exam.

Space and Set Design

Key questions

- Will your production take place in a traditional theatre space or will it be
- How will your audience be set up (end on/ in the round / thrust / promen
- Why have you chosen this set up (e.g. to create an intimate atmosphere c pictures)?
- What sort of set will you use, if any?
- Will the set be realistic or expressionistic?
- Will there be different levels?
- Will you use projection?
- How does your set design link to your other design choices (e.g. consiste

Projection

Many contemporary theatre directors integrate video projection into their produ or to reflect the internal thoughts of a character. Images, either prerecorded or li onto a specific part of the stage to create a backdrop to the onstage action, or ev further the storyline.

Complicite often use video projection in their productions. For example, maths e the stage in *A Disappearing Number* (2008), and onstage performers were filmed *A Master and Margarita* (2011). Video projection could also be used in productio practitioners. A production inspired by **Brecht** might project scene titles, while a p Theatre of Cruelty might use projection to assault the audience's senses.

How might you use projection to set the scene in *Waiting for Godot*? Would you p example, a tree and a country road – or a more abstract backdrop, e.g. television absence and meaninglessness? Could using technology be too distracting for an a

Activity 1: Designing Projection

In groups, plan a video projection design for *Waiting for Godot*.

- What images will be used? Still images or moving images?
- Will the images reflect or juxtapose the content of the scene?
- Will the images be realistic or abstract?
- How will your projection tie into the wider design concepts of your pro symbolism, etc.
- Will the projection be prerecorded or live streamed?
- How will the actors interact with the projection?
- How can you justify your decisions in relation to a well-known theatre p

Annotate your script with your ideas. Present your ideas to the class and discuss effective. Make notes on your discussion.

Lighting

Key questions

- How can you use colours to create symbolism?
- Will you use bright lights or dim lights?
- Will you use gobos to create shapes onstage?
- How can you use shadows for dramatic effect? Consider side lighting and backlighting.
- How will you create the effect of night falling suddenly and the moon rising?
- Will you use special lighting effects at specific moments in the play?
- How can you apply the methodology of your chosen practitioner to your lighting design?

Beckett's 1975 production of *Waiting for Godot*

When Samuel Beckett directed his play at the Schiller Theatre in Berlin, he used f

1) **Half-evening light:** At the opening of the play, the lights faded up halfwa
2) **Full-evening light:** When Estragon first spoke, the lights came up to full e the exit of Pozzo and Lucky, at which point the lights faded back down to
3) **Moonlight:** When the boy exited, it became night instantly, with moonlig
4) **Darkness:** After Vladimir's final line in the act, the lights faded down to d

This pattern was used for both acts. After the end of the play there was no curta darkness once the play was over.

Activity 1: Writing a Cue Sheet

A good way to plan your lighting design is by writing out a cue sheet for each document used by lighting designers and operators to note when and how ligh a production.

Pick out four moments in *Waiting for Godot* where you might use lighting for d table below.

Cue	Description of Light	

Sound

Key questions

- Will you use sound or make use of natural silence?
- Will you use prerecorded sound or live sound?
- How could you use music to create mood and atmosphere?
- From what period should the music be?
- Which instruments will you include, and why?
- What sound effects do you need?
- Will the sounds be diegetic or non-diegetic?
- How will you use pitch/rhythm/volume/direction for dramatic effect?

Activity 1: Sound Notes

Make a list of music tracks and sound effects that you will need for your produc
each track and sound effect to a specific moment in the play, and detail whethe
prerecorded. Keep in mind the sound design preferences of your chosen practi

Music	Sour
Act I.....	**Act I** .....
.....	.....
.....	.....
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.....	.....
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Act II.....	**Act II** .....
.....	.....
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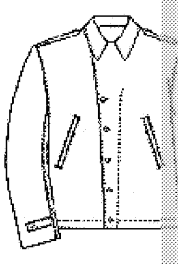
Costume and Props

Key questions



- Will you use realistic or stylised costumes?
- Era-specific or abstract?
- How can you use materials to indicate status?
- How will your costume design fit into the wider design concepts of your production?
- Can you use colour symbolism in your design?
- How might you link characters through costume design?
- Will you use extravagant make-up?
- Will you use puppets in your production?
- What key props do you need?

Activity 1: Exam Practice

Read from Lucky and Pozzo's entrance in Act I until Estragon's line '*Looks at his* question below.

QUESTION: *As a costume designer, how would the practices of a well-known theat costume design for* Waiting for Godot? *In your answer, refer to the original per and justify your design decisions in relation to your overall production concept.*

Answer Checklist

In my answer I have:

- ✓ shown understanding of the context in which the play was performed
- ✓ referred to at least two specific moments in the text
- ✓ used appropriate theatre terminology to describe my costume design c
- ✓ justified my decision in relation to the practices of a well-known theatre
- ✓ explained how my design choices fit into my wider production concept

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Kneehigh (1980–present)

Kneehigh are a UK theatre company that create playful, story-driven productions storytelling techniques, including puppetry, projection and dance. Their producti community event, in which actor and audience share the storytelling experience

1) Before Kneehigh start developing a production they ask 'why?' Why is this st event happen? Why does a character say this? Write out 10 'why' questions a discuss potential answers in groups. Are there any questions which are parti difficulty an inherent part of *Waiting for Godot*?

Notes:

2) Kneehigh have used Cornwall, their birthplace, as an inspiration in their work performances in the natural surroundings of the county. How could you use you stage your production in a found location?

Notes:

3) Kneehigh break down the divide between actor and audience to create an in could you use audience interaction in your production? How can you use the create an intimate actor/audience relationship?

Notes:

Extension Activity

Head over to Kneehigh's digital education website (*www.kneehighcookbook.c* online resources there. How do Kneehigh make theatre? What themes are the

Antonin Artaud (1896–1948)

Antonin Artaud was largely misunderstood and reviled during his lifetime. Howe
have since inspired some of the greatest theatre makers of the twentieth and tw
Theatre of Cruelty outlined a vision of theatre based on ritualistic movement and
that assault the senses of the audience. Artaud's style could be adapted for *Wait*
disorientates and upsets the audience's notions of the conventional theatre expe

1) Artaud liked the idea of enormous puppets to create a sense of distorted an
Could you use oversized puppets in your production? For which character(s)
puppet. What effect would puppetry have on the audience?

Notes:

2) Artaud theorised that gesture and facial expression alone could communica
an audience. For Artaud, gesture could suggest illogical and inexplicable exp
heightened gestures could you use in your production of *Waiting for Godot*?
gestures and facial expressions have on the audience?

Notes:

3) Artaud wanted sound and lighting to overwhelm and disorientate the audie
became sensuous and ritualistic. How and when could you use lighting and s
Godot? Consider bright lights, flashing lights, distorted sounds, loud sounds,

Notes:

Section 1: Contexts

The Playwright

Activity 2: Beckett's Other Plays

Endgame
First Performed: 1957 at the Royal Court Theatre, London
Summary: In a post-apocalyptic world, Hamm, who is blind, is cared for by his servant Cl parents Nagg and Nell live. They discuss matters of existence and identity. They argue ov dies in the bin. Clov decides to leave but ends the play watching Hamm from the doorwa
Main Themes: Identity, repetition, the absurd, interdependent relationships, time

Krapp's Last Tape
First Performed: 1958 at the Royal Court Theatre, London
Summary: Krapp, a 69-year-old man, listens to tapes he has recorded of himself through He records an entry for the current year but has little to say.
Main Themes: Time, memory, identity

Happy Days
First Performed: 1961 at the Cherry Lane Theatre, New York
Summary: Winnie, a 50-year-old woman, sits onstage buried up to her waist in sand. She and tells stories related to these objects. She speaks to her husband, who sits just out of h mound and reading his newspaper. In the second act, Winnie is buried up to her neck. Sh husband hardly says a word until he crawls towards her at the end of the play.
Main Themes: Time, memory, disappointment

Not I
First Performed: 1972 at the Lincoln Centre, New York
Summary: The stage is black apart from a single light which illuminates a mouth. A fema telling the story of several moments in her life. She was once dumb but now speaks in a q 70-year-old woman who has suffered some tragic event which is never revealed.
Main Themes: Memory, suffering

Performance Context

Activity 2: Recent *Godot* Productions

Date of Production	Theatre/Director	Design Notes
May 2009	Theatre Royal Haymarket / Sean Mathias	Set in an abandoned the Tree growing up betwe floorboards of stage
February 2012	West Yorkshire Playhouse / Paul Wills	First entirely black ca production in the UK Blue stage lighting. Mo and clouds projected onstage.

Activity 2: The Meaning of Life

Some example answers:

1) What is the meaning of life? Why are we here, what is our purpose?
The meaning of life: To procreate, to have fun, to make a difference, to help others, t
world better than we found it, to give our children the best future.

2) How does the thought of life being meaningless make you feel?
Scared and insignificant, or liberated and carefree? If there is no meaning, is there r

3) Why is it important to have a sense of purpose in our lives?
A sense of purpose helps us order our lives. It gives us a goal to work towards and he
worth.

Section 2: Analysis - Act 1

Part One: The Setting

Activity 1: Types of Staging

A completed diagram should look like this:

Thrust

- The stage extends out into the audi
- The audience sits on three sides of t
- The proximity of the performers an
strong actor/audience relationship

End on

- The audience faces the stage from o
- The framing of the space allows for
- The Théâtre de Babylone in Paris, w
production of *Waiting for Godot* wa
of this staging

In the round

- The audience sits on all sides of the
- The enclosed space supports intima
- Set pieces must be carefully chorec
can see

Site-specific

- Non-theatre and outdoor spaces a
- The space is chosen to reflect the t
- The audience can be set up in any w
- Immersive productions often take p

Traverse

- The audience is split by the stage
- The audience face each other
- This staging creates a sense of con
- Minimal set must be used to ensur

Activity 7: Exam Practice

QUESTION: As a designer, how would you communicate setting through design for a pro
response should be inspired by the original performance conditions and the methodolog
practitioner. (200 words)

Example Answer
*The first ever production of 'Waiting for Godot' took place in the intimate 75-seat Theatre
simple, following Beckett's minimal stage directions exactly: 'A country road. A tree.' In m
intimacy and simplicity. The audience will be set up in the round, encircling the stage on c
atmosphere of intimacy and also support the theme of entrapment in the play. There is no
characters because they are literally surrounded on all sides. This will also support a politi
practices of Bertolt Brecht.*

*My production will be set in a remote village which has been left behind by the globalised
played by two out-of-work men who cannot escape a cycle of unemployment and govern
setting will be indicated through a 20 mph speed limit sign by the tree. On the tree, a plac
branches, reading 'A country road. A tree. Off the M6.' Brecht used placards to promote p
plays, and this use of a placard will firmly place the play on the political, social and geogr*

- ✓ Shows understanding of chosen practitioner
- ✓ Applies practitioner methodologies to own production concept
- ✓ Makes use of appropriate terminology
- ✓ Shows understanding of original performance conditions

Part Two: Vladimir and Estragon

Activity 1: Vladimir vs Estragon

A completed table should look like this:

Vladimir	
• Philosophical • Talkative • Positive • Clever • Interested in intellectual things	• Grumpy • Sceptical • Gloomy • Helpless • Slow • Interested in physi

Activity 3: Describing Performance

Example Answer

***Vladimir** holds his head high as he speaks about lofty things such as the Gospels. Howeve
difficult life of living on the road. As he walks, he leads with his nose, reflecting his interes
something of a busybody, and wants to know what Estragon is doing, even though it is cl
moves in a quick, restless way to match the quick changes of subject he makes in the dial*

***Estragon** has poor posture. He always looks at the floor, reflecting his fear of those who l
are hunched and he moves in a stiff way, indicating both a poor night's sleep in a ditch an
moves, he leads with the top of his head, so that he is always looking at the floor. He mov
stage. This reflects his slower pace of thinking. For example, he doesn't follow Vladimir w
He moves with a pronounced limp, his left leg having been damaged in the fight.*

Activity 5: Watch It!

Videos may be found at the following:

- Laurel and Hardy: **www.laurel-and-hardy.com**
- Abbott and Costello: 'Who's on First': **zzed.co.uk/7779-who's-on-first**
- Morecambe and Wise: **www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/b03nnrlq/clips**

Activity 7: Exam Practice

QUESTION: As a director, how would you direct performance in the opening of *Waiting fo* daren't even laugh any more')? Your decisions should be inspired by the original perform practices of a well-known theatre practitioner. (200 words)

Example Answer

When 'Waiting for Godot' was first performed, music hall was a popular form of light ente range of variety acts including mime, comedy and song. The dialogue between Vladimir an paced crosstalk of comedic double acts. To support this humorous presentation of charact style of Steven Berkoff, using exaggerated physicality and gesture to communicate charac

When he was directing 'Waiting for Godot' in 1975, Samuel Beckett said that 'Estragon is o stone. Vladimir is light; he is orientated towards the sky.' I will reflect these character desc performance. Estragon will be played by a short and stout actor to reflect his stoniness. W his chin on his chest, his back grotesquely curved as he tries to remove his boot. In this way I will support by having him sitting next to a stone on the stage. His grotesquely bent postu physicality of a Berkoff production, such as his adaption of Kafka's Metamorphosis. By con towards the sky', will walk in an upright manner. His chin will be raised in an exaggerated around the stage, without direction or purpose. This will reflect his concerns with higher, m

- ✓ Shows understanding of chosen practitioner
- ✓ Applies practitioner methodologies to own production concept
- ✓ Makes use of appropriate terminology
- ✓ Shows understanding of original performance conditions

Part Three: Enter Lucky and Pozzo

Activity 1: Performing Status

In this activity it is usually the middle of the range (6s, 7s, 8s) that are most difficult to dis revealed their cards, discuss what makes someone appear higher status. Start with the b move on to the smaller things, length of gaze, subtle facial expressions. As an extension a get into pairs and interact, one playing a '6', one playing a '7'. Work on subtle ways to m

Activity 2: Casting *Godot*

1) Students might suggest that Estragon is played by a shorter, fatter character to refle Vladimir is played by a taller, thinner actor, to reflect his loftier character. This woul reflect their music hall double act style of speech.
2) Students might suggest that Lucky is played by a big actor to make his subservience also make sense of the struggle the other characters have to stop him speaking late played by a fat actor to reflect his apparent wealth and status.
3) Students might discuss all-female productions or all-black productions, and referen their discussion.

Part Four: Comedy and Cruelty

Activity 1: Twenty-first-century Suffering

- Students might raise some of the following issues: wars, refugees, poverty, sickness
- Contemporary relevance might be communicated through modern setting/costume

Activity 2: Suffering and Laughter

Some prompts for discussion might include:

- Embarrassing moments that were horrible at the time but funny afterwards
- Hurting yourself by doing something stupid – simultaneous laughter and pain
- TV's *You've Been Framed* – laughter track while people get hurt!

Activity 3: Identifying Comedy

Students should find the following types of humour:

- Repetition – Vladimir's repeated questions
- Black Comedy – Pozzo's treatment of Lucky is so needlessly severe that it is humorc
- Reversal – Estragon is doing something nice for Lucky but gets kicked
- Slapstick – When Lucky kicks Estragon
- Hyperbole – 'He's crippled me' is an exaggeration

Part Five: Lucky Performs

Activity 1: Thinking about Lucky's Dance

1) A completed table should look like this:

Movement	Space *direct/indirect*	Weight *heavy/light*	T *quick/s*
Punching someone	*Direct*	*Heavy*	*Q*
Brushing dust off your coat	*Indirect*	*Light*	*Q*
Wringing a wet towel	*Indirect*	*Heavy*	*Sust*
Gliding through a room	*Direct*	*Light*	*Sust*
Pushing a heavy door open	*Direct*	*Heavy*	*Sust*

3) Students may use heavy and quick movements to create a sense of urgency to Lucky reflect Lucky's uncertainty and doubt. Bound movements might recreate Lucky's ser movements might be punctuated by light or free movements, as if Lucky achieves a

Activity 2: Describing Lucky's Dance

Example Answer

Lucky's dance will be divided into four distinct moments or moves. First, Lucky will punch h manner, while slowly crouching with a sustained and bound movement. After a pause, Luc his arms above his head. This free and indirect explosion of movement is like a bid for free the bound movements of before. In the third movement, Lucky will doubt his bid for freed shaking of the head. He will then withdraw into himself with a bound and sustained curli chest and his shoulders hunching about his ears. He will then relax and resume his usual s

Activity 3: Applying Laban Movement Analysis

A completed table might look like this:

Estragon	*Indirect/heavy/sustained/bound*
Vladimir	*Direct/light/quick/bound*
Pozzo	*Indirect/light/sustained/free*
Lucky	*Direct/heavy/sustained/bound*

Activity 4: Watch it!

Lucky's speech may be found at the following:

- 1987 TV production: **zzed.co.uk/7779-lucky1987**
- 2001 film**: zzed.co.uk/7779-lucky2001**

Activity 5: Breaking Down Lucky's Speech

Section 1 – Indifferent Heaven: From '*Given the existence uttered forth'* until '*but not so f*

What is this section about?
Lucky introduces the idea of a god who is indifferent to us and yet loves us. He comment
hell for 'reasons unknown'.

How is language used to undermine the communication of meaning?
Lucky speaks nonsense words such as 'quaquaqua' and speaks in one long sentence with
hard to grasp. His flow of thoughts is rapid and illogical.

Section 2 – Dwindling Man: From *'and considering what is more*' until '*defecation is seen*

What is this section about?
Lucky says that man is destined to 'waste and pine' – i.e. die.

How is language used to undermine the communication of meaning?
Lucky takes a long time to get to the point. He frequently diverts from the point by refere
academics, such as 'Fartov and Belcher'. He struggles getting through words such as 'Aca

Section 3 – Dwindling Man (2): From *'waste and pine'* until *'matter what matter the fact*

What is this section about?
Despite exercise and medicine, Man will still waste away and die.

How is language used to undermine the communication of meaning?
Lucky repeats words and enumerates a long list of sports. This obscures the clarity of mea
places such as 'Feckham'.

Section 4 – Earth Abode of Stones and Cadenza: From *'and considering what is more*' un

What is this section about?
Lucky describes the earth: water, stones, fire, land.

How is language used to undermine the communication of meaning?
Repetition and enumeration. Random reference to tennis. Lack of punctuation and phras

Section 5 – New Elements and Last Straw: From *'I resume alas alas'* until '*so calm…Cuna*

What is this section about?
Man will deteriorate and die in spite of everything.

How is language used to undermine the communication of meaning?
Repetition and nonsense sentences.

Summary
Overall the speech suggests that in spite of an apparently loving God, and in spite of the
destined to waste away and die. There will be no salvation. Life has no meaning.

The fact that the meaning is so scrambled reflects man's inability to deal with the reality
discussion of existence in academic philosophy, etc. until the real meaning is lost. Life is e
painful.

Activity 8: Exam Practice

QUESTION: As a director, how would you direct performances during this section of the p
original performance conditions of the play and justify your directorial decisions in relati
known theatre practitioner and your overall production concept.

*My production of 'Waiting for Godot' will be inspired by the practice of Joan Littlewood. Li
entertainment and the fusion of theatrical styles, such as direct audience address and sla
play, which incorporates a Music Hall style among more serious Absurd themes. My prod
entertainment hall, where the characters are all performers and Godot is the headline ac
filler as they wait for Godot to arrive. Lucky will be portrayed as an ageing entertainer, o
senile. He is brought onstage as a last resort, to fill time until Godot arrives.*

*Littlewood used direct audience address in her productions, most notably in 'A Taste of H
will use a similar technique in Lucky's speech. When Lucky performs, he will be brought to
he were performing for the audience in the theatre. When Pozzo (who will be dressed in t
directs Lucky ('Stop…back….turn') it is to position him towards the audience. When Lucky
the audience, he will have a fixed smile that seems to cause him discomfort. His teeth wil
an inner panic and despair.*

*Littlewood used Laban Movement Analysis to direct movement onstage. When Lucky beg
front of him with his right hand in a light and sustained way, as if he were conducting an o
this movement will become quick, heavy and indirect, as his resolve breaks down. Lucky's
begin to droop. In the original production in Paris in 1953, Jean Martin played Lucky as co
performance that was so shocking that the costume mistress sobbed and vomited when s
Lucky will descend in my production. When he says 'the skull the skull' his arms will swing
Estragon and Vladimir to try to restrain him.*

*When Lucky begins his speech, his voice will be deep and resonant like a popular entertai
way, enunciating each word clearly and projecting his voice. However, as the speech brea
so too will his voice. His voice will swap between high and low pitch, his volume will go up
to blend together, rendering them incomprehensible. He will shout the word 'skull' each t
say the word 'tennis'. This gradual breakdown of vocal delivery will reflect the deteriorati*

*Littlewood often broke down the divide between actor and audience, even using actors pla
productions. I will also use audience interaction in 'Waiting for Godot'. When Lucky begins
look at the audience and gesture towards Lucky, as if presenting him to them for their ente
deteriorates they will start apologising to the audience and then, after exchanging words i
will begin restraining him, while Pozzo attempts to block them from view. This moment wi
attempt to keep an air of professionalism as everything goes wrong, but also tragic, as Luc
distress. This will reflect the tragicomic existential themes of Beckett's play, where life is la*

- ✓ Shows understanding of chosen practitioner
- ✓ Applies practitioner methodologies to own production concept
- ✓ Makes use of appropriate terminology
- ✓ Shows understanding of original performance conditions

Part Six: The Boy

Activity 2: To be Seen

In this discussion, it might be argued that being seen is very important in the twenty-first
a confirmation of one's own existence. A suggestion that we would not post online if no
discussion about the point of life. What is the significance of our actions in a godless univ
meaning if life is essentially meaningless?

A modern production might be set in an indeterminate online world. The set might be de
and blank Twitter 'eggs', or flashing computer screens.

Activity 7: Exam Practice

QUESTION: As a lighting designer, how will you use lighting at the end of Act I (from the e
the act)? Justify your decisions in relation to the original performance conditions and a w
(300 words)

Example Answer
*The Théâtre de Babylone in Paris, where the first ever production of 'Waiting for Godot' v
lighting options. Three simple lights illuminated a cloth backdrop and the rest of the light
were created by handheld, homemade lights operated by stagehands. I will use similarly s
inspired production of the play. Kneehigh use their home county of Cornwall as inspiratio
productions. For example, their production 'Tristan and Yseult' was first directed as a site
My production will also be site-specific. I will set the play in a barn on a Cornish farm. Vla
farmhands, dressed in modern farm dress. They will be lit by a combination of natural lig
farm equipment, e.g. a light bulb inside an old barrel of fertiliser.*

*When the Boy enters, the door and windows of the barn will be open, allowing natural ligh
these doors and windows will be shut, throwing Vladimir and Estragon into darkness. Ther
created by an actor holding a lamp above his head. Meanwhile, stagehands will light Vlad
throwing unusual shadows across their faces, creating a sense of ambiguity about their re*

- ✓ Shows understanding of chosen practitioner
- ✓ Applies practitioner methodologies to own production concept
- ✓ Makes use of appropriate terminology
- ✓ Shows understanding of original performance conditions

Section 2: Analysis - Act 2

Part One: Same Time? Same Place?

Activity 1: What is Time?

1) Answers might include: sun moving in the sky, changing moon, day/night, seasons c
2) Time helps us make plans and tell stories.
3) Our understanding of time helps us plan our futures and categorise achievement (e
time I am 20). It helps us understand how long we have left alive. It helps us make s

Activity 2: Vladimir's Song

Students might suggest the following:

- **Volume:** Vladimir begins this song loudly but gets quieter as he becomes more unce
- **Pace:** Vladimir begins slowly, enjoying the song, but then gets quicker as the song b
- **Pitch:** Vladimir begins high and then sings very low. He is out of tune throughout, h
- **Stressed Words:** Vladimir stresses the word 'tomb' each time it comes up.

Activity 3: The Sound of Silence

The BBC orchestral version of 4'33" includes an introduction that may be useful. Search '4
Barbican' on YouTube or go to: **zzed.co.uk/7779-4'33**

Activity 6: Exam Practice

QUESTION: In the light of the methodology of your chosen practitioner, how would you d
Act II of *Waiting for Godot* (until Vladimir's line 'The tree, look at the tree.')? (200 words)

*My production of 'Waiting for Godot' will be inspired by the practices of Punchdrunk. Pun
looped narratives is perfect for Beckett's play, which presents life as a series of repetition*

*Punchdrunk produce immersive experiences in found spaces. My production will also be s
inform my sound design decisions. I will set the play in an old recording studio. In each stu
narrative will be played out over and over, once in real time and then again as a recordin
unseen character will shout 'cut' and the same scene will be played back while the perfor
constant cycle of repetitions in Beckett's play, as well as referencing the fact that the first
an abridged version recorded for radio in 1952.*

*At the opening of Act II, Vladimir will sing his song into a microphone. It will take the form
upbeat, rhythmic, catchy. Each time he 'stops, broods, resumes' will be in response to an
song. When the song is played back it will be highly distorted – autotuned and with a 'rer
incredibly loud, and Vladimir will visibly cringe in response. This emphasises the lack of id
play. Vladimir is unimportant; his true voice is unheard.*

*While nowadays silence is a common tool in the theatre, in the 1950s, the silences in 'Wa
and unnerving. Theatregoers were used to the dialogue-heavy plays of Naturalism and th
Staging silence in this way was revolutionary for the theatre. I wish to recreate the unner
first-century audience. The recording studio setting will facilitate many different types of s
soundproof recording studios and a static, 'white noise' kind of silence produced by the p
as Punchdrunk use a filmic soundscape to underscore their productions, my use of juxtapo
audience as they move through the space.*

*There will also be a distinction between genuine silences and silences imposed by the reco
as a result of the actors being told to cut, for example, the silence after Estragon's line 'w
that Estragon got his line wrong). Other silences will occur naturally, such as the silence o
These different types of silence, natural and imposed, will create a multilayered experienc
productions.*

- ✓ Shows understanding of chosen practitioner
- ✓ Applies practitioner methodologies to own production concept
- ✓ Makes use of appropriate terminology
- ✓ Shows understanding of original performance conditions

Part Two: Distractions, Diversions, Repetitions and Routine

Activity 1: Repeated Time

'Life is just the same thing happening over and over again until you die'
Some prompts for discussion:

Agree	
Repeated seasons, timetables, cycle of eating and sleeping, elections, Olympics, World Cups, births and deaths	Meeting new people, su responsibilities (jobs, chi moving house

Part Three: Lucky and Pozzo Return

Activity 2: Exam Practice

QUESTION: As a director, how would you direct performances during this section of the p
original performance conditions of the play and justify your directorial decisions in relati
known theatre practitioner and your overall production concept. (300 words)

Example Answer
*In the original production of 'Waiting for Godot', the performances were incredibly powe
Lucky's shaking and slobbering was so horrifying that people famously vomited in respon
power of these early performances for a modern-day audience by using Antonin Artaud's
production.*

*Artaud created sensuously overwhelming experiences for audiences through rhythmic an
extract, I would direct Pozzo to continually whimper in a rhythmic, high-pitched manner. T
be almost hypnotic, lulling the audience into a trance-like state. The trance will be broke
and Estragon. They will speak in an unnaturally loud way, barking their lines to one anoth
battlefield. This will jar with the hypnotic moaning of Pozzo. The characters will also be c
crawling in a circle (all apart from Lucky, who is still). The rhythmic, cyclical movement wi
and induce a trance-like experience for the audience.*

*The performances will toe the line between comedy and tragedy. The movement, moanin
bizarre that the audience will laugh. Comedy will also be created by the juxtaposition bet
For example, Estragon will scream the line 'how about a little snooze' into Vladimir's face
line. Similarly, comedy will be created when Vladimir and Estragon get up quickly and eas
on the floor just a moment before. However, there will also be moments of cruelty. When
will go on for an uncomfortably long time, causing laughter and then disgust in the audie*

- ✓ Shows understanding of chosen practitioner
- ✓ Applies practitioner methodologies to own production concept
- ✓ Makes use of appropriate terminology
- ✓ Shows understanding of original performance conditions

Part Four: Who is Godot?

Activity 1: Religious Allusions through Staging

Some example answers:

- Using the posture of crucifixion. For example, when Vladimir and Estragon do their e
arms out on either side of the tree, alluding to the two thieves who were crucified w
- When Vladimir comforts Estragon, he may hold him in his arms like the Madonna a
- The grey and golden colour palette of many religious paintings might be used on th

Activity 3: Summary

Question: Is *Waiting for Godot* a play about hope or despair?

Example answer
*'Waiting for Godot' is a play about both hope and despair. Vladimir and Estragon are wa
and their waiting is fraught with boredom, anxiety and despair. They frequently consider
However, despite their despair they never get round to killing themselves, nor do they lea
decide to leave but do not move). This suggests a basic level of hope. They come back eac
arrive. Furthermore, for an audience, their comic, bantering relationship is infectious and
undoubtedly care for each other despite their assertions otherwise. This positive relations
Just like in real life, despair and hope are inextricably bound up in Beckett's play. Vladimi
meaning in a meaningless world. As Camus would argue, it is this struggle to find meanin
meaning and hope.*

What is a Production Concept?

Activity 2: Director's Interpretation

Example Student Answer:

1) *For me, 'Waiting for Godot' is about making sense of a life that is plagued by sufferi Estragon live in a world in which they are forced to wait endlessly for someone who life, and how they fill their time (with banter and exercise) is similar to how we fill o pass the time. It is how we make sense of our lives.*
2) *Meaninglessness, Social Inequality and Powerlessness*
3) *For a twenty-first-century audience, the themes of 'Waiting for Godot' are still relev struggle while the few prosper. Social media and television show us glimpses of lives enjoying luxury holidays and talent show contestants winning big. We wait for the d in reality, it is unlikely this moment will ever come.*

Lighting Design

Activity 1: Writing a cue sheet

Example cue sheet:

Cue	Description of Light	
Act I: In a moment it is night.	A harsh white spotlight with hard edges.	The dist sug shu
Act I: They do not move.	The house lights come on.	Vlad eve The esc
Act II: Next Day. Same Time. Same Place.	Pale green wash with a hint of pink.	The cha und pas leav
Act II: 'Was I sleeping while the others suffered?'	Spotlight closes in on Vladimir's face.	This will Vlad daw

Costume and Props

Activity 1: Exam Practice

QUESTION: As a costume designer, how would the practices of a well-known theatre pra for *Waiting for Godot*? In your answer, refer to the original performance conditions of th decisions in relation to your overall production concept.

Example Answer

Artaud rejected realism and contemporary fashions in his theories for theatre. Instead, he towards a state of ritual, in which oversized puppets and mannequins and ancient styles o I will use these theories as an inspiration for my own costume design for 'Waiting for God disconcerting experience for the audience through design.

Lucky will be portrayed by an actor inside an enormous mannequin. The actor's face will b mannequin, where the heart would be. His face will sequentially portray emotions of ang time onstage. The mannequins face, above the actor's head, will be frozen in a blank, em varied internal world of the character. Pozzo will wear a grotesque fat suit, emphasising i rope he holds will not be attached to Lucky's neck as indicated in the script. Instead, Pozz intestine-like material. The actor portraying Lucky will hold the other end in his mouth (s Lucky's heart), suggesting a painful, physical connection between the two.

In his costume design for his own production of 'Waiting for Godot' in 1975, Beckett linke each character wearing an item of the other character's clothes. This suggested an interc Pozzo and Lucky, who wore similar patterns and fabrics in their dress. I will also suggest a costume by having Vladimir and Estragon connected by a length of material. This will mir connected through the rope. As the four characters move about the stage the two length leading to comedy as they attempt to disentangle themselves. This will also create a sens the characters spin, all holding material, like a maypole.

- ✓ Shows understanding of chosen practitioner
- ✓ Applies practitioner methodologies to own production concept
- ✓ Makes use of appropriate terminology
- ✓ Shows understanding of original performance conditions

Key Practitioners

Kneehigh (1980–present)

1) 10 example why questions:
   - Why stage a production of *Waiting for Godot* in the twenty-first century?
   - Why do Vladimir and Estragon stay with each other?
   - Why are Vladimir and Estragon in their current position?
   - Why does Lucky serve Pozzo despite his treatment of him?
   - Why can't Estragon remember the events of the day before?
   - Why does the tree have leaves in the second act?
   - Why does Godot never come?
   - Why does the same actor play both boys?
   - Why can Lucky only think with his hat on?
   - Why is Pozzo blind in Act II?
2) A production might be staged in a local place, e.g. a park or building site. The produc e.g. local politics. The found space should inform the atmosphere of the play.
3) The music hall style could be used to foster a strong actor/audience relationship. Th an onstage double act who speak to audience members and make jokes before the p look at the audience during pauses in the play to get laughs.

Antonin Artaud (1896–1948)

1) Lucky could be portrayed as a puppet, manipulated by Pozzo. The puppet would be and it would put the audience on edge.
2) In the silences, the characters could pull grotesque expressions that reflect their int continues, and the waiting gets more excruciating, these expressions could become
3) A distorted country road soundscape could underscore the production, putting the at irregular moments, causing an uncomfortable sensation that would match the di

Glossary

Actor/audience relationship	The relationship between performer and specta
Bathos	An anticlimactic descent from elevated subject
Colour Symbolism	The theory that colours are attached to differen
Crosstalk	Rapid-fire dialogue in which two characters con Popular for double acts in Music Hall.
Diegetic	Existing in the world of the play.
Expressionism	An early twentieth-century artistic movement t subjective perspective.
Flats	Painted 2D scenery that can be used as backgro
Flying	Lowering or raising scenery from above.
Focus	The adjustment of the edges of light on a stage.
Fourth Wall	The imaginary divide between audience and sp
Gaze	The direction of an actor's eyes.
Gesture	The use of physicality to communicate meaning.
Immersive	A style of theatre in which the audience inhabit
In the Round	A style of staging in which the audience sits on a
Laban Movement Analysis	A way of describing movement created by Rudo
Levels	Different heights of stage **OR** the brightness of li
Music Hall	A form of popular variety entertainment that w nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.
Naturalism	A late nineteenth-century artistic movement ba reality.
Non-verbal Communication	Communicating meaning without using an acto
Pathos	A quality that causes feelings of sympathy and p
Pitch	The highness or lowness of a sound/voice.
Posture	The way an actor holds themselves physically.
Projection	Projecting images onto the stage using multime
Promenade	A performance in which the audience moves ar
Protagonist	The main character in a play.
Proxemics	The distances between actors onstage / betwee
Site-specific	A production that uses the found surroundings setting.
Slapstick	A type of physical comedy that involves clumsin
Tableau	A freeze frame that represents that action of a s
Theatre of Cruelty	An experimental form of theatre created by Ant overwhelm the senses of an audience.
Theatre of the Absurd	A type of early twentieth-century theatre that p in illogical worlds.
Thrust	A style of staging in which the audience sits on t
Underscore	Sound that accompanies the dialogue of a scen
Vocal Delivery	The way in which an actor speaks their lines.