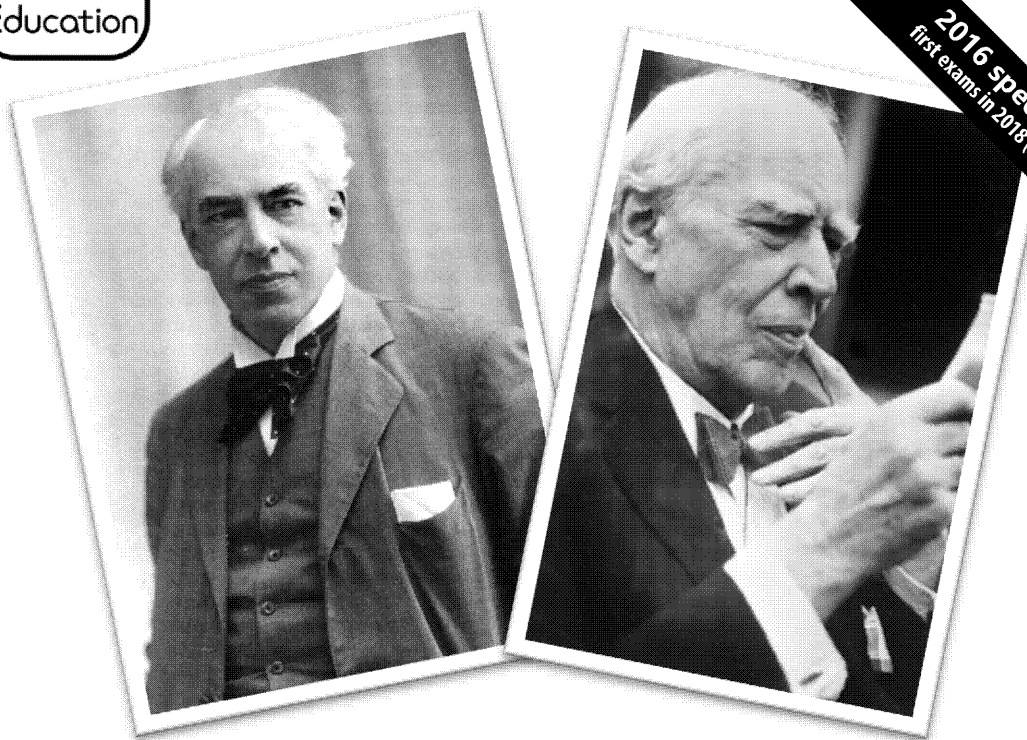




2016 specification
first exams in 2018 (2017 for AS)

Konstantin Stanislavski

A Complete Guide for AS and A Level AQA

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Teacher's Introduction

This thoroughly researched and clearly written guide to Konstantin Stanislavski fully prepares students for the practitioner elements of AQA's Drama and Theatre specifications at both AS (7261) and A Level (7262).

Each section covers an area of Stanislavski's life, theory and practice. With easily navigable and interestingly presented research notes followed by consolidation questions, the students' understanding of key knowledge is ensured. Extended research activities and practical activities then extend and cement knowledge. All activities are marked to show whether they are individual, paired, group or whole class activities. They are also marked with an indication of the time they should take and whether or not they are suitable as a homework activity. All activities are, however, flexible and can be tailored to suit the needs of your class and students.

Each section also contains exam tips to keep the students thinking about how the information they are gaining can be applied to the appropriate components of their qualification. The final section of this book contains a thorough explanation of how the knowledge is applicable to the specific components and assessment objectives.

Each section is linked to a focus assessment objective. Where there are links to other assessment objectives, these are mentioned in the Exam Tip boxes.

Assessment Objectives

- 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 is developed and performed
- AO4** Analyse and evaluate their own work and the work of others

Remember!

Always check the exam board website for new information, including changes to the specification and sample assessment material.

August 2018



A web page containing all the links listed in this resource is conveniently provided on ZigZag Education's website at **zzed.uk/8543**

You may find this helpful for accessing the websites rather than typing in each URL.

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* resulting from minor specification changes, suggestions from teachers and peer reviews, or occasional errors reported by customers

Go to **zzed.uk/freeupdates**

Overview Grid

Chapter	Section
Course outline: Where will you need practitioner knowledge?	
The Life and Times of Konstantin Stanislavski AO focus: AO1 A biography of Stanislavski and an account of Russian political and social history as well as key world events at the time.	1
An Overview of Stanislavski's Work AO focus: AO3 A broad introduction to the system plus an overview of Stanislavski's key theatrical achievements, including the developments of the Moscow Arts Theatre, Stanislavski's Studio Theatres, and his key written works.	2
Stanislavski's Artistic Intentions AO focus: AO2 An exploration of the intentions behind Stanislavski's system, including his concept of a grammar of acting, psychological realism, and subtext.	3
The Innovative Nature of Stanislavski's Approach AO focus: AO1 An overview of why Stanislavski's work is seen as innovative, which performances can be seen as key to this, and the experimental and evolving nature of his work.	4
Stanislavski's Working Methods AO focus: AO3 An explanation of some of the key rehearsal techniques of the system: Action, Magic If, Given Circumstances, Imagination, Units and Objectives, Super-objective and Through-line of Action, Circle of Attention and Public Solitude, Emotion Memory, and Tempo-Rhythm.	5
The Performance Style and Theatrical Conventions of the System AO focus: AO3 An explanation of realism and deeper exploration of subtext.	6
Stanislavski's Collaboration with Other Practitioners AO focus: AO2 An in depth examination of Stanislavski's collaboration with three key figures, Chekhov, Gorki and Gordon Craig.	7
Stanislavski's Influence on Other Practitioners AO focus: AO1 A discussion of the influence Stanislavski had at the time and still has now, plus an overview of those who followed his methods, including Lee Strasberg, Stella Adler and Sanford Meisner.	8
Exam Preparation An outline of how you might approach the practitioner components of both AS and A Level, including exemplar mark schemes and answers.	

Course Outline

AS Level: Practitioner elements

Component 2: Process and Performance (practical)

Your practitioner knowledge is assessed in the performance and portfolio elements of Component 2. Your practitioner knowledge must be applied to the performance of Extract 2.

You are expected to study:

- the context in which Stanislavski worked
- the purpose and artistic intentions behind Stanislavski's work and how this played out in his work
- innovation in Stanislavski's work
- both theoretical and practical elements of Stanislavski's system and work
- the style and convention of Stanislavski's work
- Stanislavski's collaboration with other practitioners and the influence he and they had on each other
- your text, both in terms of how it was originally performed and through the use of your own interpretation

In your portfolio:

- you must explain the benefits of, and difficulties presented by, using your practitioner knowledge
- you must explore how you incorporated your knowledge into your ideas as you develop your performance
- you must explain and analyse your performance with reference to the ideas of your practitioner

In your performance (Extract 2):

- you must clearly show the influence of your practitioner knowledge
- your performance must be in the style of the practitioner

A Level: Practitioner elements

For A Level, you are expected to study two practitioners. Your practitioner knowledge is assessed in the performance and portfolio elements of Component 2, where you devise a performance, and also in Component 3, through both your performance, which must be in the style of a practitioner (different to the one used for Component 2) and your reflective report.

Component 2: Creating original drama (practical)

You are expected to study:

- the context in which Stanislavski worked
- the purpose and artistic intentions behind Stanislavski's work and how this played out in his work
- innovation in Stanislavski's work
- both theoretical and practical elements of Stanislavski's system and work
- the style and convention of Stanislavski's work
- Stanislavski's collaboration with other practitioners and the influence he and they had on each other
- your text, both in terms of how it was originally performed and through the use of your own interpretation

In your working notebook:

- you must explain the influence your chosen practitioner has had on your work
- you should show the ways you have applied the theories of your practitioner
- you must explain how the theory you have studied was refined and developed

In your devised piece:

- your piece must be in line with the theory and practice of your chosen practitioner

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Component 3: Making Theatre (practical)

You are expected to study:

- the context in which Stanislavski worked
- the purpose and artistic intentions behind Stanislavski's work and how this played out
- innovation in Stanislavski's work
- both theoretical and practical elements of Stanislavski's system and work
- the style and convention of Stanislavski's work
- Stanislavski's collaboration with other practitioners and the influence he and other practitioners
- your text, both in terms of how it was originally performed and through the use of your own interpretation

In your performance of Extract 3:

- you must use the style and techniques of your chosen practitioner
- your performance should link completely to the ideas and methods of your chosen practitioner

In your reflective report:

- You should analyse and evaluate your work, and this should include how, and why, you incorporated the ideas of the practitioner.

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1: The Life and Times of Konstantin Stanislavski

The first section of this study pack gives you an outline of the life of Stanislavski, as well as the wider social, historical, and cultural context within which he lived and worked. The activities help you to explore the life and times of Stanislavski and how these external factors may have influenced his work. There are also activities showing which specific sections of the exam this information will help you to explore.



This section is divided as follows:

- 1) Research notes on the social, historical, and cultural context of Stanislavski.
- 2) Consolidation questions to cement the knowledge you have gained from reading the research notes.
- 3) Extended research activities to encourage further research into Stanislavski.
- 4) Practical activities to enable you to further explore the life and times of Stanislavski.

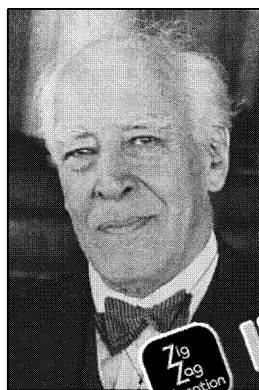
The focus AO for this section is: AO1 'Making connections between theory and practice'

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The Life and Times of Konstantin Stanislavski: Research Notes



Often considered the father of modern theatre, **Konstantin Stanislavski** was **creating an acting system** which enables actors to create characters that their audiences could believe.

Stanislavski was **born in January 1863**. The 5th January and date of birth due to the change from the Julian Calendar (5th used Gregorian calendar) (17th January) which Russia moved to.

Stanislavski's given name was **Konstantin Sergeievich Alexeevich**. He was from one of the richest families in Russia. His father, Sergei Alekseev, was a doctor. His mother, Elisaveta Vasilevna, was French-Russian. Stanislavski was born in Moscow.

Theatre was in Stanislavski's blood. His maternal **grandmother had been an actress**. Stanislavski's father loved theatre and to entertain his friends and family he turned a section of their country house into a theatre. They also created a theatre in their town house in later years. (Yes that's how rich they were!)

As a young person, **Stanislavski took part in amateur theatre**. He also **studied business and language** at a prestigious private school. He didn't complete his studies, however, instead travelling to Europe and joining the family business. During the 1880s, **he was a successful businessman**.

While working, Stanislavski kept up his passion for acting. In **1884**, **he adopted the stage name Stanislavski** to keep his acting separate from his family. He **enrolled in the Moscow Theatre School in 1885**, he did not find it gave him what he wanted, so he left in a matter of weeks. He chose to watch and study intently performances at the **Art Theatre**, which he called his 'University'. Although he found the actors' performances showed him what he should not do, rather than what he should.

Exam Tip

Knowing that Stanislavski is not enough. You are required to know of the context of the time, the practice in the theatre, the styles, social contexts, the connection between practice and theory.

In your piece of work, you need to be working on it or reflecting on it, you could be that shape of how these developments.

Theatre

When Stanislavski began acting, Russian theatre was in decline. Theatres were run by private owners rather than state-run. Stanislavski felt that this meant making money had to be the priority rather than the art itself. The dominant theatre style of the time was melodrama as melodrama borrowed heavily from the over-stylised conventions, with artificial movements such as a hand on heart to signify love, or across forehead to signify grief. Stanislavski felt that many decisions on costume, set and movement were made for show rather than because that is what was always done rather than to bring any meaning or realism to the world of theatre. He also complained that the actors didn't learn lines, but relied on prompts to fill in lines they didn't know.

In **1888**, **Stanislavski began the Society of Art and Literature** with a group of friends. The ideas were the basis for the **Moscow Art Theatre (MAT)** which he **established in 1898 with Nemirovich-Danchenko**: truthful, believable and detailed performances; actors moving between large and small roles; costume and set design with purpose and detail; professionalism and high standards. Stanislavski wanted to reach new and working class audiences and to use theatre to educate and enlighten.

This was the beginning of **Stanislavski's work towards Russian realism**. He worked with key realist playwrights, including **Gorki and Chekhov** (whose death in 1904 led to Stanislavski met and married actress **Maria Lilina in 1889** after they had performed together for the first time before she was two months old).

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In 1904–1905, Stanislavski experimented with symbolic theatre. He **created the Meyerhold** but it failed due to audience disinterest and the **revolution of 1905**.

Russia pre-1905 revolution

Serfdom (where workers are tied to the land and have no rights) was abolished in 1861, but there was still a massive difference between the rich and the poor and a peasant underclass whose work supported the life and position of the rich.

Work and conditions for the peasants and industrial workers were poor and trade unions were illegal.

There was a sense of injustice because you could not rise through the hierarchy system. There was also great anger at the autocracy which governed Russia. Several violent and terrorist organisations were trying to bring about political change.

Russia was fighting the very unpopular and unsuccessful Russo-Japanese War at the time of the revolution.

Russia post-1905 revolution

The revolution was not what was intended. The aims were not achieved, especially in the Bolsheviks. There were peaceful demonstrations.

It did, however, force the autocracy to constitute a constitution. In addition to the King, there was a government (Duma).

The Duma was formed with universal male suffrage. Peasants, tradesmen and workers had their own representatives. However, the Duma did not agree with the Tsar. Re-elections took place in 1907. This happened several times.

All this paved the way for the revolution in 1917.

In 1906, the company went on an international tour, to great acclaim. It was the **planning and writing for his works, that would later become his system** for acting.

From 1907, Stanislavski continued to develop his system with mixed success. At times, it led to turbulence (including being sacked from one performance) and at others it led to critical acclaim. Stanislavski met and worked with the British theatre practitioner, Edward Gordon Craig from 1908–1910.

Exam Tip

Think about how your own ideas are reflected in Stanislavski's. He wanted to achieve a new historical context. What is/ was working? (AQA AS p. 15, AQA A Level p. 16)

In 1912, he set up his first studio. He set up his second studio in 1916. He used his studios to research and develop his system for acting and to explore symbolism. There are also many drawings that show the development of his system intended as a manual for actors.

At the outbreak of World War I in 1914, Stanislavski was in Germany, studying the spy and thought he would be assassinated, but he was returned to Russia.

The second Russian revolution occurred in 1917, bringing massive social and political change. Stanislavski was **sympathetic to the new order**, despite the fact that his finances were affected when they were nationalised. The MAT was endorsed by Lenin. It became state funded and began to attract a large population.

The second revolution

This revolution was two revolutions within months of each other. The first was the fall of the government and the second was the left wing, socialist Bolsheviks in power.

There was a growing anger at government policy. Russia had suffered catastrophe in World War I with huge loss of life and a huge financial cost, leaving food shortages. Riots forced the abdication of Tsar Nicolas II. A provisional government was established but was replaced after a coup, by a government made up of Bolsheviks including Trotsky. Each region also had its own council of workers and peasants or soviets.

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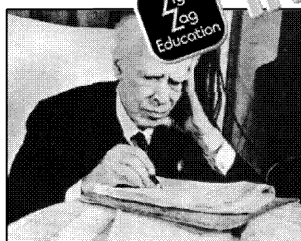
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State funding was withdrawn from the MAT in 1921, so the company undertook a tour. They toured to great critical (if not financial) acclaim until 1924. During that time, Stanislavski wrote an **autobiography** for a US publisher. Stanislavski also worked with US actors, including Lee Strasberg, to develop method acting, popular with many famous Hollywood actors.

When he returned to Russia, Stanislavski led the MAT for two successful years. The productions focused on the emotion and reality of the characters.

The MAT continued performing, adapting classics to be relevant to modern audiences. Stanislavski's last performance was in **October 1928**, when he **suffered a massive heart attack**. He died at the end of the performance when he collapsed.



He survived the heart attack. He focused on writing his memoirs, directing and teaching. Most of his work was conducted in Moscow. Many intellectuals, Stanislavski was by this time considered a leading figure. He was lucky to be interred in his own house, escaping execution. Many other internationally connected Russians and emigrants were executed.

Soviet Russia and Joseph Stalin

Russia was turbulent under Soviet Rule with infighting among the ruling party and with neighbouring states. Stalin rose to power by suppressing criticism of the party. Once in power, he effectively became a dictator. He and his supporters instituted large-scale repression, torture, forced labour, exile and execution of anyone who opposed the party.

Stanislavski died on **7th August 1938**. The marriage disowned his heir, Vsevolod Meyerhold, who was executed by police in 1940.

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The Life and Times of Konstantin Stanislavski: Consolidation Questions

Activity One: What Have You Learnt?

i	Individual	45 mins–1 hour	No extra resources
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Read Information Sheet 1 and use the notes to answer the questions below:

- 1) What 10 moments in Stanislavski's life do you think were most influential in his development as a practitioner? Create a timeline of those events explaining in what ways you think they were influential. (See timeline template on page 82.)
- 2) List the elements of Stanislavski's life that Stanislavski was unhappy with when he first wanted to start his own work.



- 3) Much changed in Russia during Stanislavski's lifetime. Complete the table below to show how Russia was like at the time of Stanislavski's birth and then at his death.

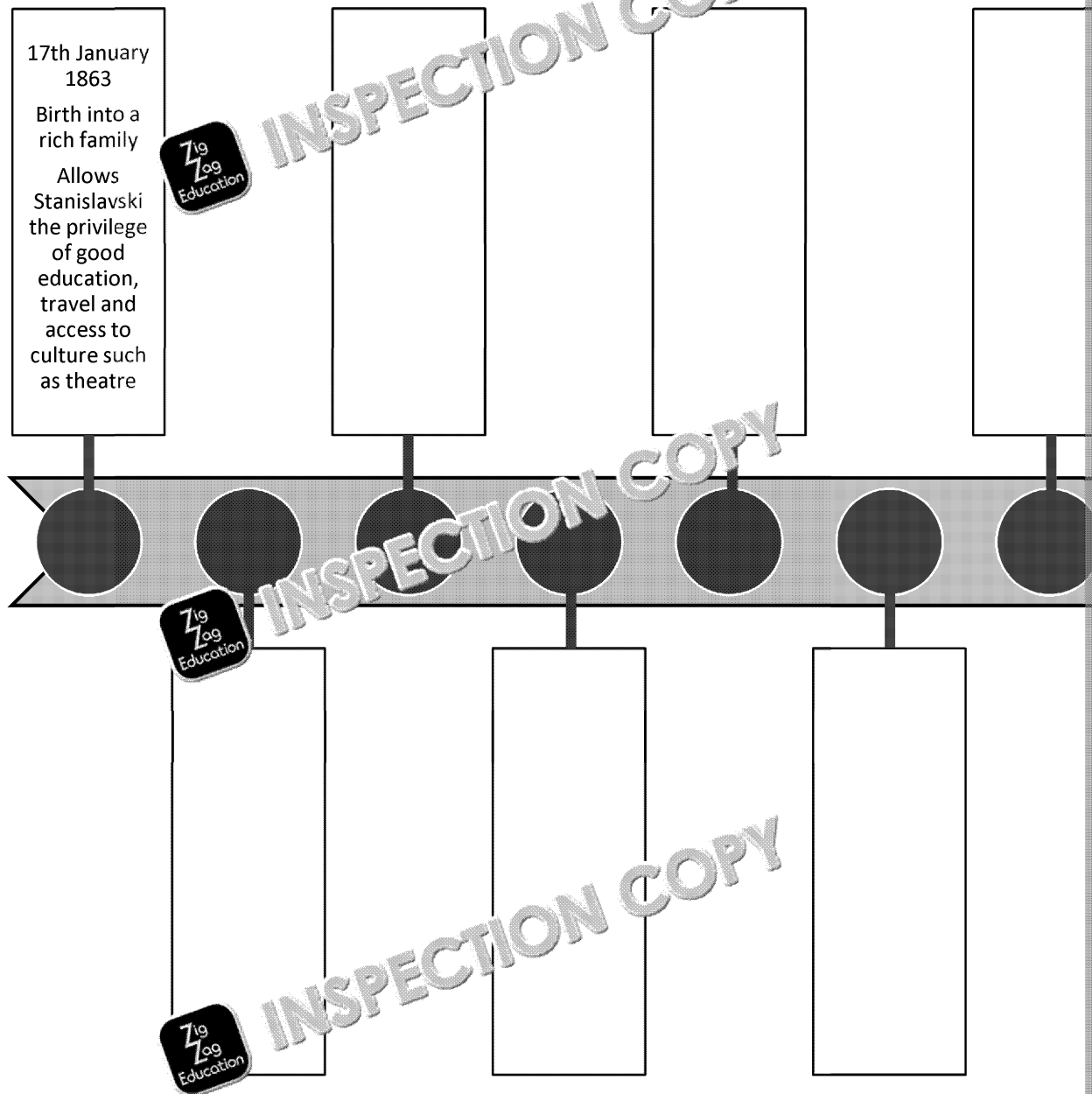
Russia: at Stanislavski's birth	Russia: at his death

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Timeline Worksheet



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The Life and Times of Konstantin Stanislavski: Extended Research

Activity One: Research Russian Life

i	Group → whole class	1–2 hours
----------	---------------------	-----------

Russian life prior to the 1905 revolution was very different to the life that we are used to. Stanislavski was from a wealthy family, they made their money and although not at the level of the nobles, their life was significantly different. In poorer families, only a few years before 1905, they would have been tied up in serfdom.

Serfdom is something that seems very far removed in British history, as protected by Britain by the Peasants' Revolt in 1381. Although it survived for much longer, it was officially abolished in Britain by Elizabeth I in 1574; nearly 300 years before it was abolished in Russia.

Part one: To help you to understand the privilege with which Stanislavski was blessed, research and prepare infographics on one of the following areas each, ensuring all areas are covered.

- the life of a peasant in Russia between 1861–1905
- the life of a tradesman in Russia between 1861–1905
- the life of a noble in Russia between 1861–1905

Some useful weblinks are:

- <http://www.bbc.co.uk/education/guides/zwxv34j/revision>
- https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Serfdom_in_Russia#Slaves_and_serfs

Some useful examples of infographics can be found here:

- <http://blog.hubspot.com/marketing/best-infographics-2015#sm.00001vhxxh>
- <https://www.columnfivemedia.com/9-infographic-examples-that-will-increase-your-conversions/>
- <https://designschool.canva.com/blog/infographics/>

Part two: In the following lesson, your groups will present their infographics to the class. Listen to the presentations, and if you can, make notes about any elements that you think Stanislavski might have used in his theatre to educate and enlighten.

NOTES:

Part three: Class discussion

In what ways may the class structure of Russia, which Stanislavski was growing up, have affected his wish to create theatre which was to educate and enlighten and reached a broader audience?

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Activity Two: What is Melodrama?

i	Individual	45 mins–1 hour	No extra resources
---	------------	----------------	--------------------

Stanislavski was unhappy with the theatre with which he grew up. Much of his work was to do with melodrama and used the conventions of melodrama. This is not a style of theatre very familiar in modern theatre, whereas the realism of Stanislavskian style is more common. To understand Stanislavski's new approach, it is first important to understand what he was pushing against.

Part one: Research melodrama and make a list of at least 8–10 points which explain it as a theatrical style.

Elements of melodrama	

Part two: Where do you see elements of melodrama living on in current stage, film or TV?

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The Life and Times of Konstantin Stanislavski: Practical Activities

Stanislavski's approach to theatre was in direct opposition to the dominant view of theatre at the time. While Stanislavski wanted art to be realistic and to reflect life, the melodrama and over-dramatised parody of reality. Modern theatre and TV is, in the main, a continuation of Stanislavskian ideas, that it can be difficult for us to imagine how acting was in the early 20th century. Stanislavski was just starting out.

The activities below are designed to help you understand how the theatre of the early 20th century looked, what was considered good acting and what elements of stylisation were used.

Activity 0 Declaim a Speech

i Individual → class 10 mins prep + 5 mins per performance

When Stanislavski first began acting, theatre was often melodramatic with actors declaiming famous speeches. You will perform a famous speech by Puck from the end of *A Midsummer Night's Dream* and declaim the theatricality of your voice.

Work individually on this task for 10 minutes. The class will then come back together and perform the speech using the score card below.

If we shadows have offended,
Think but this, and all is mended—
That you have but slumbered here
While these visions did appear.
And this weak and idle theme,
No more yielding but a dream,
Gentles, do not reprehend
If you pardon, we will mend.
And, as I am a Puck,
If we have sinned with luck,
Now to undo it with a tongue,
We will make amends ere long.
Else the Puck a liar call.
So good night unto you all.
Give me your hands if we be friends,
And Robin shall restore amends.

Shakespeare, A Midsummer Night's Dream, Act V, Scene i

Declaim a speech: Score card	
Volume	/10
Clarity of words	/10
Emphasis on rhyme	/10
Realistic characterisation	/10
Clarity of rhythm	/10
Enjoyment	/10

To declaim
To express
strong feelings
voice or with

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¹ <http://dictionary.cambridge.org/>

Activity Two: Stock Emotions

i

Individual → pairs → class

15 minutes

- a. **2–3 minutes** Individually: Come up with a stock action to represent each of the following emotions:
 - Love
 - Anger
 - Jealousy
 - Fear
 - Sadness
- b. **2–3 minutes** In pairs: Once you have come up with an action for each emotion, show it to your partner. Discuss the actions.
- c. **5 minutes** In pairs: Discuss the following with your partner: Were the actions similar to any you have seen in the media? At what level are these actions culturally dictated? How honest/real are they?
- d. **5 minutes** Whole class: Come back together as a class and feedback your ideas. Are there any common themes? Are there other ideas?



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2: An Overview of Stanislavski

This section of the study pack gives you an outline of the main body of Stanislavski's work, plus a closer focus on key moments and aspects of how that work developed. The activities help you to understand Stanislavski's work in the theatre and his journey of development. There are also tips showing which specific sections of the exam this information will help you to explore.

This section is divided as follows:

- 1) Research notes on Stanislavski's work.
- 2) Application questions to cement the knowledge you have gained from the research.
- 3) Extended research activities to encourage further research into Stanislavski's work.
- 4) Practical activities to enable you to further explore his work.

The focus AO for this section is: AO3 '...understanding of how drama and theatre are created and performed'



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An Overview of Stanislavski's Work: Research Notes

In his book *Stanislavski: An Introduction* Jean Benedetti suggests that 'if Stanislavski had "been a 'natural', ... there would be no System"'². Had Stanislavski found acting easy, or had his time at drama school furnished him with the answers he desired, perhaps he would not have felt the need to document his work, nor to unpick the processes by which he and other actors created characters. Therefore, he would never have created what we know today as his system for training actors.

Stanislavski's system is based on his desire to become the best actor he could be and to enable others to do the same. He was often frustrated by the ability of others to tell him what the desired outcome was, but not to be able to give him instructions on how to achieve this. Creating a system which enabled him, and actors he worked with, to get to the desired outcome through a clear and systematic approach was his desire. His focus was on the external elements of the actor and the text, to create a character that was truthful to the audience and the actor playing the role.

His vision of what truth was, however, was not merely to reproduce exactly reality, but to be trivial³. The truth presented on stage could use any theatrical conventions, but the actor had to create a believable truth for the audience.

Stanislavski's research was based on detailed observation and reading of psychology. However, in its infancy when Stanislavski began his studies, there was not a huge amount of psychological research. Therefore, he read what he could and tried to apply it to the detailed observation of other people's acting. It is from this study that Stanislavski began to think of psychology as an integral part of an actor's path to great characterisation.

Stanislavski was an experimental and forward looking theatre practitioner. In the previous section, we saw that Stanislavski was unhappy with the theatre of the time. He felt it lacked any genuine emotion. He wanted to create a style of acting that had a sense of truth and emotion. This was another driving factor behind his work.

Stanislavski had a **desire not to stagnate or become mechanistic** in his approach to work. This was true of his acting where he always challenged himself to improve, and of the development of his system. It may also be why only one of the books he planned for his system was published during his lifetime (*An Actor Prepares*): **while he was alive, his ideas were always evolving and his system could not be truly finished.** Even when he died, he was planning a production to show how his system could be applied to any style of theatre.

The

A truthful

Internal actions

Exam Tip

Stanislavski's system was about changing his character and you have many features from his system and keep his mind. '... with features from his system and production have adopted the system. AQA AS Component 1

'Consonance' of dramatic into the chosen production. AQA A Level Component 1

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² *Stanislavski: An Introduction*, Benedetti, J (Methuen, 1982), p. 11

³ *Stanislavski's Legacy*, Stanislavski, K (Methuen, 1981), p. 20

Stanislavski's Key Books

My Life in Art (MLIA): Autobiography; commissioned and published in US Russia 1926.

An Actor Prepares (AAP): The first book about the system; intended as the first in English in 1936; his widow received an advanced copy of the Russian version after Stanislavski died.

Building a Character (BAC): The second book in the system; intended as the third but death and WWII delayed the publication; first published in English in 1949.

Creating a Role (CAR): The third book forming the system; published in Russia and the USA in 1961.

Stanislavski's Legacy: Published in the USA in 1958; contains articles and Stanislavski's drafts.

There are **notable differences between the edition of AAP published in America and the Russian edition**. The Russian version contained redrafts and appendices that Stanislavski added after the publication of the American version. There were even more differences between the Russian versions of *Building a Character*, the Russian version having been edited to reflect the political situation of the country at the time of publication.

There was confusion when AAP was published in America. **Whereas in Russia, the volume one of the full work, with *Building a Character* as volume two, this was the American version.** Along with the length of time until BAC was published, this led to AAP being seen as a complete system. Even when BAC was published, ideas contained in AAP were considered more important than those in BAC when in fact, Stanislavski had intended them to be read together.

Stanislavski wrote AAP as fiction and BAC and CAR in the same format. **Through *Kostya, a young actor, tells of his experience learning 'the system' with the fictional director Vsevolod Meyerhold***, this allowed Stanislavski to show the system from the perspective of both an actor and a director. It also allowed both the young actor and the experienced director reflecting on those ideas. It also made the system more practical rather than as an academic. It enabled him to publish ideas he couldn't fit with the political situation of Russia; the ideas were that of a fictional young actor, not Stanislavski himself.

It is not reading and writing, that make up Stanislavski's influential body of work, **but directing is part of the legacy, as are the theatres, studios and ensembles he set up.**

Stanislavski's Theatres

1877: Stanislavski's father turns a wing of their country house into a theatre.

1888: Stanislavski founds the Society of Art and Literature which included a library, a theatre, an ensemble and drama and music schools.

1898: Established the Moscow Arts Theatre (MAT) with Vladimir Nemirovich-Danchenko.

1905: Founded the Theatre Studio and put Vsevolod Meyerhold in charge.

1912: Created the First Studio.

1916: Created the Second Studio.

1918: Created the Opera Studio.

1935: Set up his Opera-Dramatic Studio to be a legacy.

The Society of Art and Literature was where Stanislavski first began to develop the system. It was a group of like-minded actors and artists, including Stanislavski, Glikeriya Fedotova, and others, both highly influential in Stanislavski's development as an actor.

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The ideas he developed with The Society were then developed in the **Moscow Art up with Vladimir Nemirovich-Danchenko**, a successful playwright. Although in la theatre in the same way and rifts began to appear in their relationship, at the beg same things: **to create a genuine ensemble with no stars or constant lead actors; were original, with costume and set design being specific to each performance; the actors; the audience was not to be distracted by the theatre building, orches or go backstage.**

Exam Tip

Stanislavski saw the theatre as a tool for enlightening. When writing, you may want to consider your audience about a key theme or issue.



‘... informed by the work and methodologies of one of the prescribed theatre practitioners’

AQA A Level Component 2 p. 26.



Perhaps most importantly, **attract a different kind of fashionable theatre going theatre open to all.** The ar performances would have to perform for the workers the MAT still retained its id educate and enlighten desp audience.

As the MAT developed, so its style became more ingrained and **Stanislavski began another outlet for the more experimental areas of theatre and the development** the more established actors were unwilling to use without a great degree of bribe that he began to work with his studios.

The Studio Theatre was the first of these experiments and unfortunately, despite overall a failure. The First Studio was focused on the physiological areas of self-di into his system and, in particular, on improvisation. Many of the young actors wh playwright Anton Chekhov’s nephew, Michael Chekhov, went on to have great inf

The Second Studio was where Stanislavski worked more specifically on the teach a lot of the work he did here is detailed in his books. His final studio was **the Oper intended to train actors in his system.** Stanislavski himself taught there, as did o trained in the system. It is here that is seen as the most complete version of the s



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An Overview of Stanislavski's Work: Consolidation Questions

Activity One: What Have You Learnt?

i	Individual	45 mins–1 hour	No extra resources
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- 1) Make a list of the books Stanislavski wrote and when they were published. Note any differences in the timing of publication in Russia and in the USA after his death. Also, what effect do you think the timing of publishing in Russia and the USA posthumous publishing had on the text and how it was received?

Book	Date published in the USA	Date published in Russia	Pre/post death publication?
			

- 2) What were the names of the fictional actor and director Stanislavski first created in *Prepares* and why did he choose to create a fictional character?

Name 1:

Name 2:

Why: 

- 3) Which theatres and studios did Stanislavski set up and what was the aim of each?

Name	
	

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An Overview of Stanislavski's Work: Extended Research Activity

Activity One: The Seagull

i	Individual	45 mins–1 hour	Access to Internet
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In its first year, the Moscow Arts Theatre put on several plays but the one which was its production of *The Seagull*, by Anton Chekhov.

You are going to research the MAT's first production of *The Seagull* by Anton Chekhov using the following weblinks to help you:

- <http://www.seagulltheplay.com/>
- http://www.bbc.co.uk/1/health/2006/06/060624_seagull.shtml
- <http://www.seagulltheplay.com/performance-history-of-seagull-play-review>
- <http://www.sparknotes.com/drama/seagull/context.html>

Complete the following table with your findings:

<i>The Seagull</i> by Anton Chekhov	
What is the play about?	
When was the play first performed and how was it received?	
What was different about the MAT production of <i>The Seagull</i> ?	
Any other interesting facts about the MAT production of <i>The Seagull</i> ?	

Activity Two: Short Essay

i	Individual	20–30 minutes	No extra resources
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Stanislavski created his system to be a method for training actors. He made it into and a part of his life's work. He used elements of his life in the theatre as an actor, a director, a theatre founder.

Write a short essay (200–300 words) which answers the following question:

- Jean Benedetti said 'if Stanislavski had "been a 'natural', ... there would be no doubt that this might be true?'

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An Overview of Stanislavski's Work: Practical Activities

Activity One: Actor and Director

i	Pairs + performance	30 minutes
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Stanislavski was both an actor and director, and his books are written to explore how to create two performances of the mini-script below, each person taking the role of a different character in the two performances. You will perform both pieces to your teacher and fellow students.

At the end of the rehearsal and performance, discuss your feelings at the following points as director:

- 1) At the beginning, before any decisions have been made about how the performance will be created.
- 2) During the rehearsal process.
- 3) During the performance.

Was there a difference between your feelings as actor and director? Which section was the most stressful/more exciting, etc. as each role?

Mini-script (2)

Character 1 has lost his/her wedding ring and is looking for it.

Character 1: Come on, come on. It must be here somewhere. [pause] When did I lose it? Think. [sighs] Don't give up. It must be here. [Looks distraught]. It must. [Sits down]

Activity Two: Translation

i	Class	30 minutes
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It is important to remember that what we read today, in English, as written by Stanislavski, has been translated. Many of his books were also put together after his death from notes created in complete book form by Stanislavski himself. All this has to be borne in mind when we discuss his books and the information they give us about his theatre practice. We have to discuss his books in the political and social context in which he was writing and we have to realise that his work has been read many times and by many people.

The activity below is a whole class activity to enable you to consider the effect of translation as it is passed through many people.

Divide your class into two groups, your task in each group is to transfer an idea from the first to the last person and then to explore how the idea changed on its journey and compare the similarities and differences between the outcome for each group.

- 1) One person (A) from each group is given the text (overleaf) to read. They are given 2 minutes. They must not read aloud or show any other group members.
- 2) The text is then taken away by the teacher.
- 3) The rest of the class must go outside the room, leaving only the reader (A) in the room. After 2 minutes each group (B) then returns to the room. A must then tell B what they considered the most important elements of the text.
- 4) The next member of group (C) then returns to the room and (B) must tell them what they remembered was most important. Next (C) will tell (D) and so on until the information has been passed to the last person in the group.
- 5) At the end, the final member of the group must write down what they were told and compare it to the original document and also compare across the group: Which elements were most important? What was forgotten or left out? What does this tell you about the process of communication? Imagine you had a particular bias that meant you didn't pass on everything, how would this change your translation?

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Text for use with Practical Activities 2: Activity Two

Instructions for making a proper cup of tea

Below you will find the instructions for making a traditional English cup served with afternoon tea in my house. The kind which comes with sophisticated etiquette. The kind which needs a particular type of etiquette in order to be properly served. The kind which is, in my humble opinion, the only way to drink tea. The kind which is, in my humble opinion, the only way to drink tea.

Firstly we must consider the necessary equipment. You will need to ensure that you have a satisfactory size teapot for the number of guests you are serving. It should contain a mesh or integral filter, or you will also need a tea strainer, not the common tea bag for our sumptuous brew.

You will need a kettle, preferably one which can be boiled on the hob as we will need boiling water to pour onto the leaves, not just boiled as in electric kettles which seem to switch off at the point just before you need it.

You will need a fine bone china cup and saucer. Do not be tempted by the common and the tea will not taste as elegant as it should, slurped from a mug.

You will need a teaspoon, milk, sugar lumps if you desire sweetened tea and patience.

Firstly you must put your water into the kettle to boil. Once the kettle is boiling, you should prepare your pot. The pot must be warmed with a little water, which should be poured into the pot, swirled around and poured out. This is a better tea.

Into your warmed pot you need to place one teaspoon of fine leaf tea per person plus one for the pot. Once the water is boiling, remove the kettle from the heat and pour the water straight into the pot. Replace the lid of the teapot and wait between five and eight minutes depending on the tea you have chosen. Your brew is ready. Halfway through the brewing process you should turn the pot and mix the tea without the need for stirring.

Once the tea is brewed to the desired strength, you can pour it into the cups with sugar lumps as desired and enjoy.



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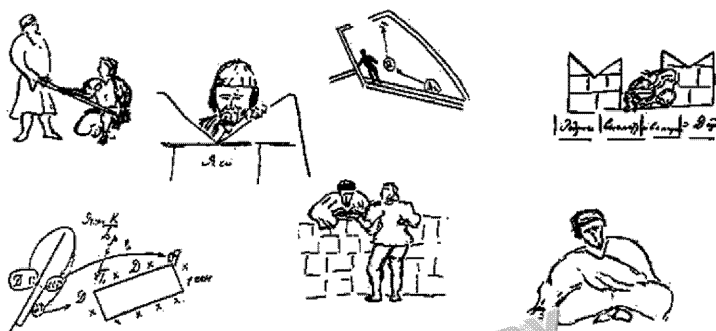
3: Stanislavski's Artistic Intention

This section will help you to understand the overriding artistic intentions of Stanislavski, providing information about the goals he was aiming for in his work and the creation of the system.

This section is divided as follows:

- 1) Research notes on Stanislavski's artistic intentions.
- 2) Consolidation questions to consolidate the knowledge you have gained from the research.
- 3) Extended research activities to encourage further research into Stanislavski's work.
- 4) Practical activities to enable you to further explore his artistic intentions.

The focus AO for this section is: AO2 An introduction to how to apply 'the artistic intention'.



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Stanislavski's Artistic Intentions: Research Notes

Overall, Stanislavski's intention was **to create a system that could be used to train actors to bring a truth and an honesty to the stage**. They should experience things that they could not experience from this the audience will watch a believable and real performance. For Stanislavski, **theatre brought learning** and this educating element of the theatre is something that he felt was important.

In his notes, Stanislavski often talked about **a grammar for acting**. From early in his career, he wrote detailed notes on his own work and on his observations of other actors. In these notes, he wrote of brilliance and creativity and yet at the same time, the most accomplished actors seemed unimpressive in these moments arose. He felt that **achieving great artistic moments on stage by accident** was not enough to enable artists to create those moments wilfully. He wanted a set of rules, that he called **a set of guidelines which help to create, shape and clarify expression**. His system would not create perfect acting and that the imagination, creativity and the director would be paramount, but he wanted his system to be the framework which would help actors to achieve those moments.

Stanislavski felt that acting well and the use of the system should be a way of life rather than a one off. In *Building a Character*, the character of Tortsov says, 'Much of that you hear in this school will be fully understood by you, only after many years'⁴.

In *My Life in Art* he said the system was not something that could necessarily be learned as a whole and that it may have to be learned in parts.

*'If each of them has to be worked on separately, systematically, by a whole range of exercises so be it!'*⁵

This is therefore at the heart of the system, a mode of character exploration that, when combined with practical experience, hard work and creativity, enables an actor to create what Stanislavski called **representative life**.

It is this idea of 'truth' which Stanislavski saw as so important that can, however, be seen in his work. **Stanislavski's work is tied up with the Realist movement of the late nineteenth century**. This was a fashion for creating drama which reflected and recreated real life on stage, as opposed to the declamatory style of theatre which had existed previously. Stanislavski made his system and his early work within theatre. **He considered his early work to be not a reproduction of real life on stage. His system, by contrast dealt in what he called 'scenic truth'**⁶. He felt that merely reproducing life on stage was not interesting or educative. Instead, he felt actors should be so in tune with their characters that their actions on stage were natural; that they behaved as if they were the characters. If the actor believed the character, then the audience would, too.

Exam Tip

Remember to write your own working notes or reflections on that Stanislavski's system as a rehearsal method. Incorporate this methodology into your practice. AQA AS p. 2



For Stanislavski, his key method of creating a character was to look at what was written in the text. This meant both the surface meaning of the script, and any potential hidden meanings. He spent time considering how the other facts of the character's life, performance and outside of it, might affect their actions and feelings and therefore their external expression. He felt that their external actions should speak independently of thought, therefore creating a truthfully portrayed character on stage.

⁴ *Building a Character*, Stanislavski, K (Methuen, 1950), p. 295

⁵ *My Life in Art*, Stanislavski, K (Routledge, 2008), p. 257

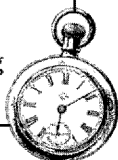
⁶ *My Life in Art* as quoted in: *Stanislavski: An Introduction*, Benedetti, J (Methuen, 1982), p. 34

Exploring subtext meant significant work in rehearsal constructing a backstory for improvisation and personal experience to create a whole character. He felt that on the stage, from the smallest character to the lead role. This is one of the reasons he was a keen supporter of equality within an ensemble, where no one actor always had the lead. All characters on stage should be equally three dimensional and believable and therefore important to the telling of the story.

Exam Tip

Collect photographs, magazine cuttings and printouts and add them to your working notebook. You should annotate them to show your ideas and explain why they are important.

‘... produce an individual working notebook documenting the devising process’ AQA A Level Component 2 p. 26.



Another key aspect which was the psychological realism of a production was the stage and costume. When staging was often stereotypical and lacked any sense of reality. Chekhov was conventionalised with specific costumes for particular types of character. He changed all of this. His focus was on production plans, with staging that created the sense of truth and made the actor and audience to believe.

Stanislavski also believed that action on stage should be a part of the realism. He was against melodrama, where actors moved merely because they felt they ought to do so. Movements associated with the emotion, like hand on the heart for love or the beating of the heart to show woe and distress. **Stanislavski felt that action on stage should be guided by what the character would do in the situation if this were reality.** If the character paced the stage in nervousness because pacing shows nervousness, but because this is what that character would do.

Experimentation over realism

Despite having an overarching wish to create a system for training actors, Stanislavski was developing and experimenting. His system was not fixed, but continually developing.

Although he was artistically focused on truth and is traditionally associated with theatrical realism, it was the fact that realism was the experimental and theatrical approach through his lifetime.

Stanislavski explored symbolism throughout his career and towards the end of his life was working on a production with Vsevolod Meyerhold combining the system with the theory of biomechanics. On the surface, biomechanics opposed the system of Stanislavski. Actors to use their bodies to physically communicate, often without language on stage. Stanislavski, however, valued the experimentation and willingness to question the received wisdom of how things ‘should be done’.

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Stanislavski's Artistic Intentions: Consolidation Questions

Activity One: What Have You Learnt?

i	Individual	45 mins–1 hour	No extra resources
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- 1) What did Stanislavski mean by the grammar of acting?
- 2) How did Stanislavski see imagination fitting with his system?
- 3) In what ways does Stanislavski's idea of psychological realism enable actors to see it as so important?
- 4) What is subtext? Why did Stanislavski see it as important?
- 5) How did Stanislavski see costume and staging as fitting with his ideas?
- 6) Who was Stanislavski working with towards the end of his career and why might this be a strange partnership?

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Stanislavski's Artistic Intentions: Extended Research Activities

Activity One: 'Truth' in Stage Design

i	Individual	45 mins–1 hour	A familiar play text
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Staging

It was not just the action on stage which Stanislavski wanted to evoke a sense of truth. He also considered the stage design, costume and props. Stage design would recreate action, movement, and were then placed on the stage to create a truthful representation of life.

Part one:

- 1) Pick a play with which you are familiar. You could use one of your extracts for Making Theatre (A Level).
- 2) Choose one scene (it can be anywhere within the play).
- 3) Now complete the table below:

Stanislavskian staging	
Play and playwright	
What you know about set from the script. This can be from stage directions and lines. It does not just have to be from the scene you have picked; if something is mentioned elsewhere in the script, remember to include this.	
What you can infer from other elements of the script. Does any action or dialogue in the play tell you anything about the period, wealth, style or interests of the characters, for example?	
Anything you would like to add and why. Is there anything you could use in the staging that you think could reflect something important about the characters or themes?	

Part two: Create a detailed stage design for the scene you have chosen. You might design it on computer. Remember to use all the information you collected in the table above.

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Activity Two: Subtext

i	Individual	20 minutes	No extra resources
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Stanislovski's approach looked carefully at not just the words on the page, but also those that are unsaid, but reveal a lot. In many ways, the subtext was more important for 'truthful' characters.

Look at this mini-script. Consider the subtext and what's going on that might be contained in your ideas next to the lines.

<i>Dave has just returned from work. Suhkri is sitting on the sofa. Their two-week-old baby is asleep on her chest. She looks shattered and is staring at the TV in front of her, although it is not on.</i> Dave: Hi, Love. How was your day? Better today? [pause] Did you see the NCT girls? <i>Suhkri continues to stare ahead.</i> Dave: Suhk? Suhkri: Oh. Hi. [Begins to sob uncontrollably] Dave: Suhk, what's wrong? We can't keep doing this. I don't know how to help. I am knackered. I have been at work all day. The day was mad. I didn't get any sleep last night. Suhk! I don't know what to do. Suhkri: I can't do this. Even though I am a better mum than me. They don't know their children. Their children suffer. Dave: He is asleep now! Suhkri: Oh yes, because that is what has happened all day. I have had a perfect sleeping angel and I could be a domestic goddess while you were hard at work being the man and bring home the bacon! Dave: That's not what I meant. <i>The baby begins to cry.</i> Suhkri: And I don't even know what he needs! Is he tired? Is he hungry? I don't know. I thought mums were supposed to know. I don't know! <i>Dave moves to hug the two of them. Suhkri pushes him away and turns her back to him.</i>	
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Activity Three: Evolving Theatre

i	Pairs	45 mins–1 hour + presentation time	
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Stanislavski's system was always evolving and changing. He said that the production should be 'conventionalised, modernistic, expressionistic or futuristic'⁷ as long as it was truthful for the audience.

Had Stanislavski still been alive today, we can surmise that he would have incorporated elements of theatrical practice into his work.

Below are listed theatrical forms, plus a quote outlining an element of that form. Working in pairs, pick one of the forms and think about how it links with what you know about Stanislavski's system.

- **Theatre of Cruelty** 'We do not intend to do away with dialogue, but to give words a significance they have in dreams' (*First Manifesto*, Antonin Artaud)
- **Epic Theatre** 'Its qualities of clear description and reporting and its use of characters as means of commentary earned it the name 'epic'.' (*Bertolt Brecht translated*)
- **Theatre of the Absurd** 'It aims to shock art its audience out of complacency, to present harsh facts of the human situation as these writers see it.' (*Absurd Drama*, C. J. Golding)

You finally need to create a presentation to share your findings with the class.

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⁷ *My Life in Art*, Konstantin Stanislavski (Methuen, London, 1980), pp. 486–487

Stanislavski's Artistic Intentions: Practical Activities

For Stanislavski, it was important that actions on the stage were as truthful as real life was reflected. It is useful to try to represent reality, both for the successes and the failures. Both success and failure can be equally informative. For Stanislavski, it was important to observe the work of others and to have his own work observed. This helped you to get a clearer perspective on how your work comes across and enabled yourself to improve.

Try the following activity to reflect on the successes and failures of your acting.

Activity On Successes and Failures

i	Pair	15–20 minutes
1) In a pair, one person (person A) leaves the room whilst the other (person B) hides a key or other small object. The purpose is for the key to be found, so don't hide it too well. Person A then comes back in and must look for the key. Person B should observe and make notes about how person A moves, their facial expressions, any words they say, and the sounds they make, etc. 2) Once person A has found the key, the drama stops and person B feeds back to person A. 3) Person A should then put the key back in the same place and leave the room. Person B should recreate 'looking for the key' as truthfully as possible. Again person B makes notes. 4) Person B should then feedback the successes and failures of the second performance. 5) Person A should then attempt the same improvisation again, reflecting on the feedback outlined by person B. 6) Consider the following questions: • Are the notes on successes and failures helpful? • Which notes are more helpful and why?		

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Activity Two: Stock vs Realism

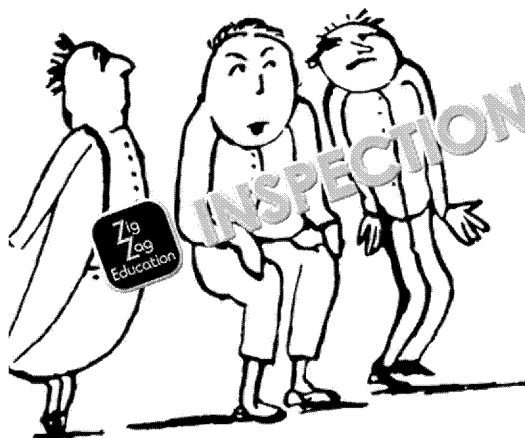
i	Pair/small group	15–20 minutes	
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Melodrama and the theatre practices of which Stanislavski was critical, relied heavily on stock actions which were truthful.

In pairs or small groups, take one of the role plays below and create two versions of the role play. In the first version, you should play the interaction in a stylised manner using stock actions to reveal the emotions in a melodramatic way. In the second version, you should attempt to play the role play in as realistic a way as you can. The intention is for you, the actor, and therefore the audience to be aware of the emotions in the situation.

Situation one: Paired Two friends. One asks the other to help them cheat in an upcoming test. The other is unsure about whether or not they feel comfortable doing this but does not want to lose the friendship.	Situation two: Group You are teenagers walking home from school. One of your friends is being bullied by a group of older students. This is the first time you have seen this happen. Try to show a realistic reaction.
Situation three: Group The aftermath of a low speed car accident. Characters: The driver of the car – in shock; really worried about the pedestrian. The pedestrian who was crossing the road and hit by the car. The friend of the pedestrian. People who were walking past at the time.	Situation four: Group You are in a waiting room for a doctor. Person A) very nervous, Person B) is very arrogant, Person C) really needs the doctor, Person D) has been forced to wait for a long time.
Situation five: Paired You are at a friend's house. Both of you are in love with the other person, but you are both too shy to say anything.	Situation six: Paired Doctor and patient. The patient has a condition that they have to live with for the rest of their life. They need urgent treatment.

Having run these role plays in both the melodramatic style and the realistic style, discuss the advantages or disadvantages of each way of performing, both for an actor and for an audience.



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Activity Three: Making Monologue Seem Truthful

i	Individual	15 minutes + performance	
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Monologues can be difficult to stage truthfully. We don't speak aloud to ourselves. Playwrights use monologues to show an audience the internal thoughts of a character.

Part one: Read the following extract from *Macbeth* (you could use other monologues from plays/playwrights) and make notes about how you would perform the speech truthfully.

Act I, Scene v

Lady Macbeth has received a letter from her husband explaining that three witches have called him 'thane of Cawdor', a title which the King gave himself when the witches also predicted that he was going to be King. Macbeth is reflecting on the truth of the prediction. The original script is on the left and a modern translation on the right.

Lady Macbeth: Glamis thou art, and Cawdor; and shalt be

What thou art promised. Yet do I fear thy nature;

It is too full o' th' milk of human kindness

To catch the nearest way: thou wouldst be great,

Art not without ambition, but without

The illness should attend it. What thou wouldst have

That wouldst thou holily; wouldst not so play, false,

And yet wouldst win it. Thould'st have, great Glamis,

That which thou dost, 'Thus thou must do,' if thou have it,

And that which rather thou dost fear to do,

Than wishest should be undone. Hie thee hither,

That I may pour my spirits in thine ear

And chastise with the valor of my tongue

All that impedes thee from the golden round,

Which fate and metaphysical aid doth seem

To have thee crowned withal.

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Part two: Now perform your version of the monologue to the class.

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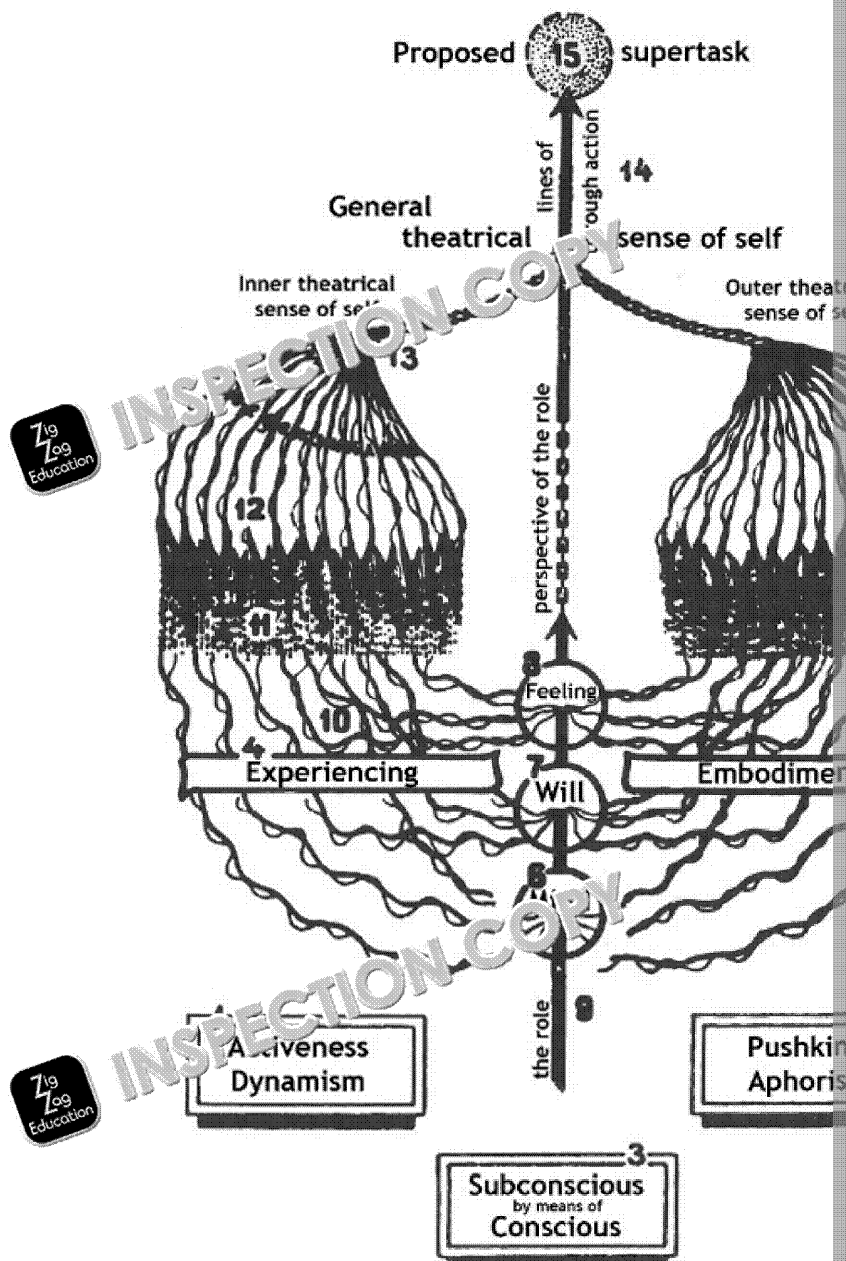
4: The Innovative Nature of Stanislavski's Approach

This section is intended to help you to see how Stanislavski was an innovator and in what ways his thoughts about, and work in, theatre were different and unusual at the time.

This section is divided as follows:

- 1) Research notes on the innovative nature of Stanislavski's approach.
- 2) Application questions to cement the knowledge you have gained from the research.
- 3) Extended research activities to encourage further research into the innovative nature of Stanislavski's approach.
- 4) Practical activities to enable you to further explore Stanislavski's innovative approach.

The focus AO for this section is: AO1 'making connections between theory and practice'



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The Innovative Nature of Stanislavski's Approach: Research Notes

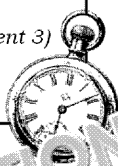
As with most theatre practitioners whose influence has stood the test of time, Stanislavski's work was a reaction against what he saw as the staid and hackneyed nature of the theatre of his time. He wanted to create something new and different. He felt that theatre did not offer truth to its audience and that it was lacking in its ability to civilize and educate.

These were the areas in which Stanislavski's approach was innovative. **It was also his goal to create a system for the complete training of actors**, something which he himself had found to be severely lacking in the training of actors.

The way in which Stanislavski approached theatre was also new. **He focused on the processes, making them as important as the performance itself.** In some ways, the process was more important, as he felt that without those processes the performance could never be truly authentic. His system and his way of working focused on using rehearsal to create a clear understanding of the action that could then be applied to direction, design and performance. He saw the actor's life on stage, truthfully.

Exam Tip

Keep detailed notes of the visual, spatial and aural elements of any productions you see. This can inform your devising (A Level Component 2), your interpretation of extracts (AS Level Component 2/ A Level Component 3) and your live theatre evaluation. (AS and A Level Component 1)



He wanted to ensure all elements were considered and with purpose. He was reacting against the way in which the theatre was doing things as they had always done. The theatre of the time, like melodrama did with its stock scenes and actions and stock characters. In 1898, part of the first production of *The Seagull* in 1898, part of the first production of the Moscow Art Theatre, his detailed notes about the production of the elements (or the directorial score) were so detailed that it threatened to overwhelm the production. However, he himself suggested his play be put on stage.

Key innovative performances

The Seagull, Anton Chekhov, 1898: First collaboration with Chekhov who was a professional contact and a close personal friend. Also Stanislavski's first in which he used the principles of psychological realism.

Hamlet, William Shakespeare, 1911/12: Collaboration with Edward Gordon Craig's symbolist aesthetic and Stanislavski's psychological realism. The production was a success in reviews but is also said to have influenced the staging of Shakespeare in the 20th century.

The Government Inspector, Gogol, 1921: Critically-acclaimed and a huge success. The production breaks with the expectations of the system, with a grotesque and satirical approach.

Le Mariage de Figaro, Beaumarchais, 1927: Stanislavski's final fully realised production. Uses new technology to break new ground, with a revolving stage.

Another factor in Stanislavski's innovation came from his desire to keep evolving his system. This meant that his work was always changing and developing, incorporating new ideas and techniques. He wanted to create a system which could be used to train actors, he **did not want** to create a system which was based on what had gone before. Until the day he died, he was experimenting with new ideas. Some of his last elements added to the system were based on his ideas for method acting. The focus on the internal thoughts and feelings of the character was a change from the previous focus on the external actions of the character. He worked with Vsevolod Meyerhold on his final collaboration. He worked with Vsevolod Meyerhold on his final production of *The Seagull*.

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Meyerhold was working on a system for training actors which seems, on first look, that of Stanislavski. Where Stanislavski worked for most of his career on ideas about psychological drive, Meyerhold's biomechanics worked from the physical. Actors were puppeteered by their director and used physical action to experience emotion. And yet **Stanislavski and Meyerhold were working towards a performance which was a system, another innovative idea.** At this point, Stanislavski was developing his own system, which involved using physical actions to provoke emotion, rather than the internal state of the character and leaving physical action to the director. He encouraged actors to experiment until that point.

Stanislavski's work was based on trial and error. He did not come to the system, but instead, through trial and error, trying out all the elements. He felt that this was the only way to find a system, to give actual examples and to have experimented with them. This is reflected in the fact his books are written as Tortsov and Kostya. The books follow the trial and error of the actor/director relationship. This may have been part of his longevity. He does not tell actors what to do from a position of power, but speaks from experience, offering ideas rather than offering a foregone conclusion as a solution.

Another innovative element for which Stanislavski is well known is his experimental approach. It is what allowed him to develop new and innovative ways of working, despite its fair share of failure and in some cases created tension within the Moscow Arts Studios in which experimentation could take place. He also worked, in the main, with younger actors who were more inclined to trial his new ways of working than the older more experienced actors.

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The Innovative Nature of Stanislavski's Approach: Consolidation

Activity One: What Have You Learnt?

i	Individual	20 minutes	No extra resources
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- 1) What form of acting was Stanislavski's work in opposition to and why?
- 2) In your own words, explain what the directorial score means.
- 3) How and why was rehearsal important to Stanislavski?

The Innovative Nature of Stanislavski's Approach: Extended Response

Activity One: Create a mis en scène

i	Individual	40 minutes	Familiar play text
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Mis en scène or directorial score was an innovation in terms of dramatic production. Setting, costume, action and props were dictated by what was already available rather than by what fitted with the play or performance. Stanislavski's creation of the mis en scène notes was intended to give more depth and truth to a production.

Take the opening section for a play with which you are familiar and create a detailed opening moments of the performance. Remember to consider the staging, lighting, sound, as how you would block the actors and how they would deliver their opening lines.

Activity Two: Create a Timeline of MAT Productions

i	Individual	40 minutes	Access to Internet
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Four key MAT productions are highlighted in this section. Create a timeline and plot these productions onto it. Then add at least a small note on their successes and/or failures.

There are many productions which could be named here. A good list can be found at https://en.m.wikipedia.org/wiki/Moscow_Art_Theatre although you will have to research failures of the productions separately. A useful website with both productions and failures is www.encyclopedia.com/literature-and-arts/performing-arts/theater/moscow-art-theatre. The current MAT is also useful. In particular, the page www.mxat.ru/english/history/

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The Innovative Nature of Stanislavski's Approach: Practical Act

Activity One: Trial and Error

i	Pair or small group	20–30 minutes + performance
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As explained in the research notes (4), one of the innovative findings about the system was the fact that they recorded the trial and error of his dramatic journey, rather than answers. The system is a process of development and therefore trial and error are

Work on the mini-scene below. You could work in a pair and both work as actors, or you could work in a group of three or more with directors and observers as well. Firstly, read it through and then trial the variety of different interpretations suggested below (and any of your own).

Mini-scene

Character a: I shouldn't have done it

Character b: No, you shouldn't have

Character a: I am sorry

Character b: Thank you

- 1) Try saying the lines with different tones, such as: sarcastic; disappointed; remorseful.
- 2) Try saying the lines with different backstories, such as: character a is a child and character b is a parent; character a is a partner who has cheated on character b; character a is a teen and character b is the shopkeeper who caught them.
- 3) Try saying all the lines without moving at all and then try saying them while moving.
- 4) After each of the rehearsal techniques, discuss with your partner (and observers) how they help you to understand the character and why? What scenarios did you feel were most truthful?
- 5) Now perform your favourite to the rest of the class and ask them for their opinion on the performance: which was truthful and why.

Activity Two: With and Without Props

i	Pair	10 minutes
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- 1) With a partner, first try to perform an everyday activity in mime with as much detail as you can. For example: drinking a cup of tea, brushing your hair, putting on make-up. Something that is familiar to both of you.
- 2) Now try the activity again, but this time with the correct prop – a cup, hairbrush, etc.
- 3) Which version of the performance was easier? Which felt more truthful? Can you explain why? Ask your partner to observe and be the most truthful.
- 4) Now swap roles with your partner.

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5: Stanislavski's Working

This section focuses on key elements of the system. It outlines some of the key re what they mean and how they can be applied, as well as the intended outcomes.

This section is divided as follows:

- 1) Research notes on Stanislavski's working method.
- 2) Consolidation questions to consolidate the knowledge you have gained from the system.
- 3) Extended research activities to encourage further research into Stanislavski's system.
- 4) Practical activities to enable you to further explore Stanislavski's system.

The focus AO for this section is: AO3 'knowledge and understanding of how developed and performed'



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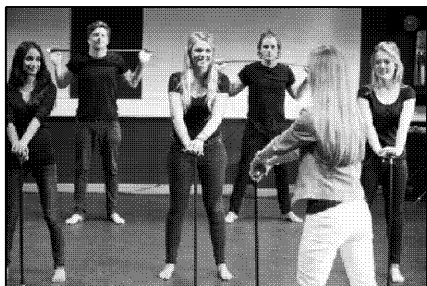
Stanislavski's Working Methods: Research Notes

Stanislavski developed his system over his lifetime. What we have now is not necessarily a finished product, but where he had got to, when he died. Had he lived longer, he would no doubt have developed the system further as this was what he was doing, pretty much until the day he died. **He believed in experimenting and moving forward so in essence his system could never be complete.** By the end of his life, he had however set up the Opera-Drama Studio, which is widely accepted as the most full realisation of his system as it stood at the end of his life. This is what his books, most of which were edited from his notes after his death, are what we refer to when outlining Stanislavski's system for training actors.

Exam Tip

Remember: Stanislavski always developed his system as a definitive one.

Reference to 'practitioner's practices' (AQ)



Unlike many of his contemporaries, Stanislavski was key to the development of a great performer. Instead of relying on directors (or actors) deciding which clichés to use in the lines. After a couple of run throughs in rehearsal, he expected to know their lines, however a prompter would be used during the performance, prompting lines which were forgotten. The cast didn't even bother to learn their lines, relying on the prompter. For Stanislavski, this was not acceptable.

Rehearsals to be used not merely as a practise for the performance, but as a time to develop the characters and for creating believable and truthful performances.

There are many elements to the system, and this guide can only touch on a few, but it covers the most important areas of Stanislavski's work and techniques so that you can then explore them in more detail.

Key elements of the system

Action: The physical actions of a character on stage.

Magic If: Imagining 'as if' you are the character.

Given Circumstances: The elements given to you in the script.

Imagination: What the actor brings to the text themselves, over and above what is written in the script.

Units and Objectives: The sections a script can be broken down into and the motivation for each unit.

Super-objective and Through-line of Action: The overarching motivation for the whole script and the manner in which this moves through the story.

Subtext: The hidden meanings in the script.

Circle of Attention: Rehearsal technique whereby actors relax on stage and focus on the reality of the text, instead of the stage.

Emotion Memory: A technique whereby actors use their own emotional reactions to bring a true character to life.

Tempo-rhythm: The inner and outer pace of the performance.

Action

This is the physical movement of a character on stage. Stanislavski wanted to avoid stylised actions of melodrama. He felt that any action an actor made on stage should be motivated and why the character is moving in that way. Action, for Stanislavski, also meant the purpose carried out by the character, as important as movement. Overall, Stanislavski felt that every movement should be motivated.

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Example:

Two characters on stage who are in love with each other, but in a large group of clichéd hugs and kisses to show their love. A loving look or a meaningful touch is more in keeping with shows of love in real life in those situations. Equally, a loving look is also key to the development of a believable and truthful character.

The magic if

Stanislavski wanted actors not to show a character, but to behave as if they were the character. He wanted actors to ask 'If I were in this situation what would I do?' This was intended to create a more natural and truthful character on stage.

Example:

An actor playing a character must believe that he or she must behave as if they were the character.

In fact, Stanislavski wanted actors to ask themselves three questions as a mode of 'What do I do', secondly, 'Why do I do it' and thirdly 'How do I do it'.

Example:

Dave has just returned from work. Suhkri is sitting on the sofa. Their eight-week-old baby is asleep on her chest. She looks shattered and is staring at the TV in front of her, although it is not on.

Given circumstances: Dave and Suhkri have an eight-week-old baby; they live together (we may assume they are partners); Dave works; Suhkri has been at home with the baby; Suhkri is very tired.

**Given circumstances**

These are the information an actor has about their role. From stage directions, the script, and others, what do you know about the character from the context of the time and place of the action? What do you know from the director's intentions, the staging, props and costumes, the lighting and sound effects? What do you know about every element of the production and how they behave, and what elements that the actor can bring to the role?

Imagination

Stanislavski wanted actors to take the given circumstances and then building on them with imagination. Some people call this element the proposed circumstances. Stanislavski said that if you did not know all elements of your character and their motivation, you were acting without your imagination and therefore acting without truth.

'If you speak any lines, or do anything, mechanically, without fully realizing who you are, where you came from, why, what you want, where you are going and what you will do when you get there, you will be acting without your imagination.'⁸

Example:

In the example, we see that Suhkri is depressed about motherhood and Dave has a baby into the world.

We might act through our more depth. Dave had a baby into the world. Perhaps Suhkri struggled to

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⁸ *An Actor Prepares*, Stanislavski, K (Methuen, 1937), p. 72

Units and objectives

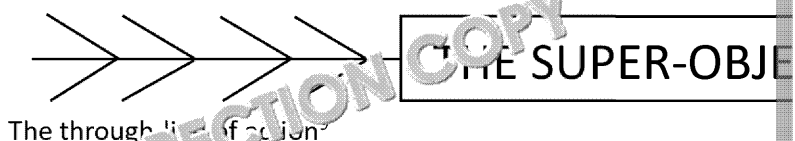
Stanislavski felt that to truly understand a character you had to understand their motivation. To understand the motivations, you needed to split the script into sections. He called this process of rehearsal you should split the text into sections, each of which has a different motivation. Then decide what your character's motivation is for the achievement of this objective and move on to the next unit. As rehearsals continued, Stanislavski felt these small units would eventually become a whole. He wanted the objectives to be phased into a whole.

Example: Units and Objectives for 'An Actor Prepares'	
Dave: Hi, Love. How was your day? Better today? [pause] Did you see the baby? It's so cute. <i>Suhkri continues to stare ahead.</i> Dave: Suhkri, what's wrong? Suhkri: Oh. Hi. [Begins to sob uncontrollably]	Unit one: Objective to understand the character's motivation.
Dave: Suhk, what's wrong? We can't keep doing this. I don't know how to help. I am knackered. I have been at work all day. The day was mad. I didn't get any sleep last night. Suhk! I don't know what to do. Suhkri: I can't do this. Everyone else is a better mum than me. They understand their children. Their children sleep. Dave: He is asleep now! Suhkri: Oh yes, because that is what has happened all day. I have had a perfect sleeping angel and I could be a domestic goddess while you were hard at work being the man and bringing home the bacon!	Unit two: To understand the character's motivation. *It is possible to play different objectives, such as to be stupid; or to get Suhkri obsessed; or to help Suhkri do a good job. Different character objectives have a very different effect on the character that you are playing.
Dave: That's not what I need. I need the baby to be happy. <i>The baby starts to cry.</i> Suhkri: Ah, I don't even know what he needs! Is he tired? Is he hungry? I don't know. I thought mums were supposed to know. I don't know! <i>Dave moves to hug the two of them. Suhkri passes him the baby and turns her back on them both.</i>	Unit three: To make the character's motivation clear. *Again, think of how the character would act if they were to show Suhkri he knows what he needs.

Super-objective and through-line of action

The way in which the units described above would be connected was by the super-objective. The super-objective is the overriding objective that links all the units together. The linking of the small units to the super-objective is called the through-line of action.

In *An Actor Prepares*, the director character or Tortsov illustrates it like this:



This was in *An Actor Prepares* to illustrate the fact that each smaller objective feeds into the super-objective. Stanislavski felt that no matter how good each part was, unless it fed into the performance as a whole would lack direction and truth.

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⁹ *An Actor Prepares*, Stanislavski, K (Methuen, 1950), p. 276

Example:

In the example above, where Dave has three units and three objectives (Unit one: To understand the relationship between the characters; Unit two: To understand Suhkri; Unit three: To make it up to Suhkri) the subtext is to make Suhkri feel better.

Subtext

Again, during the rehearsal process, Stanislavski wanted actors to go back to the text and think about all of what was being said by the characters. For instance, this was not just what was said but the subtext which was implied. In many ways, Stanislavski felt that the subtext was more important than what was actually said in terms of creating a psychologically real performance.

Example	
Script	Subtext
<i>Dave has just returned from work. Suhkri is sitting on the sofa. Their eight-week-old baby is asleep on her chest. She looks shattered and is staring at the TV in front of her, although it is not on.</i>	Both characters are nervous.
Dave: Hi, Love. How was your day? Better today? [pause] Did you see the NCT girls? <i>Suhkri continues to stare ahead.</i>	She has had bad days and wants to lighten the mood and make her day as hopes was happy.
Dave: Suhk? Suhkri: Oh. Hi. [Begins to sob uncontrollably]	She has not had a good day.
Dave: Suhk, what's wrong? We can't keep doing this. I don't know how to help. I am knackered. I have been at work all day. The day was mad. I didn't get any sleep last night. Suhk! I don't know what to do.	He doesn't know what to do. He feels like he is expected to be happy but he is finding things hard.
Suhkri: I can't do this. Even though I am a better mum than me. They are better and their children. Their children are better than mine.	Her day has made her feel like a bad parent.
Dave: He is sleeping now! Suhkri: Oh yes, because that is what has happened all day. I have had a perfect sleeping angel and I could be a domestic goddess while you were hard at work being the man and bring home the bacon!	Stop complaining! She feels he doesn't take her into consideration. She feels their roles are defined by traditional gender roles.
Dave: That's not what I meant. <i>The baby begins to cry.</i>	He is frustrated.
Suhkri: And I don't even know what he needs! Is he tired? Is he hungry? I don't know. I thought mums were supposed to know. I don't know!	She feels confused and doesn't know how to understand the child.
<i>Dave moves to hug the two of them. Suhkri passes him the baby and turns her back on them both.</i>	Their relationship is broken.

Circle of attention and public solitude

This is a rehearsal technique which can then be brought into a performance as a way of creating a realistic atmosphere on stage. The circle of attention is the area with which the actor focuses their attention on stage. The circle of attention that Stanislavski used to use was to ask an actor to sit on a chair in the middle of a stage. The actor's attention must focus only on what is within the spotlight, and to begin with this is a small circle. As the actor moves through the scene, full of other actors, to concentrate only on what is within the very small circle of attention. Stanislavski called public solitude. If this is recreated on stage, an actor is able to perform as if they are alone, despite being in an auditorium in front of an audience.

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Emotion memory

Emotion memory is another exercise to be used in rehearsal. The idea is to fuse the actor with the imagined experiences of the character. By bringing personal emotions to the stage, Stanislavski felt that there would be a more truthful representation of each emotion, rather than cliché or stock expressions of emotion. He also felt that by remembering past emotions, the actor could bring a more realistic action to a performance.

Exam Tip

During your devising or rehearsal work on your extracts, try to use some of Stanislavski's rehearsal techniques as a way of developing your character.

'... reflect ... aspects of the practitioner's approach' (AQA AS Component 2 p. 32),

'Connections between dramatic theory and practice' (AQA A Level Component 2 p. 40).

Remember to keep a log to use as evidence in your portfolio / working notebook / reflective report.



Tempo-rhythm

Stanislavski's idea of tempo-rhythm was developed later in his work. It came from the total inward focus of emotion. Different emotional states have particular rhythms. A character would have his or her own tempo-rhythm on their objective at the time and in relation with other characters on stage. The external rhythms created an internal tempo-rhythm. For example, if a character is meeting a friend, the tempo-rhythm may well be slow. If they are surprised, the tempo-rhythm may be fast. For children, whose tempo-rhythms are often chaotic, the atmosphere of chaos may be engaged. It was very important that the character's tempo-rhythm of other characters was their own distinct.

It is also possible that a single character may have a conflict between their inner and outer tempo-rhythm they are trying to portray to other characters, for example someone who is secretly about which they are very excited. Again, the tension between the inner and outer tempo-rhythm can create both a true portrayal and an exciting performance.

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Stanislavski's Working Methods: Consolidation Questions

Activity One: What Have You Learnt?

i	Individual	30 minutes	No extra resources
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- 1) What sets Stanislavski apart from his contemporaries?
- 2) What are the three questions Stanislavski wanted actors to ask, to analyse a character?
- 3) Create a diagram, to explain how the circumstances, units, objectives, super-objectives, all relate to each other.

Activity Two: The Mental Technique Roulette

i	Class or groups	15 minutes	
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Cut out the cards below and put them in a hat. Each player starts with 3 points. The player with the highest score as much as you can, and when you reach 0 points, you are out.

Each person takes it in turns to draw one of the cards. When you draw a technique card, you must give a brief explanation is correct you score one point. If you draw a 'Bang! Bang!' card you are out and the card is always returned to the hat.

Once you lose all your points you are out. The winner is the last person in. You can play for as long as you like, where the winner is the highest scoring person after a set amount of time or turns.

Action	Units and Objectives
Magic IF	Super-objective
Given Circumstances	Subtext
Imagination	Circle of Attention
Bang! Bang!	Emotion Memory

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Stanislavski's Working Methods: Extended Research Activities

Activity One: Units and Objectives

i	Individual	15 minutes	Familiar play text
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Take a small section of a script with which you are familiar (about 1 or 2 pages). Choose a section to be your focus. Break down the script into units and select an objective for that character with an objective which is phrased as 'I want...'.


Activity Two: Rehearsal Schedule

i	Individual	20 minutes	No extra resources
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Imagine you are directing a performance. You need to create a rehearsal schedule for your actors and their characters. Pick four of Stanislavski's techniques and decide which order you will use them in. Also decide how long your actors should spend on each rehearsal technique and whether they should work on their own, in groups with other actors or as a whole class. Write down the text you are imagining the rehearsals being for.

Activity Three: Rehearsal Activities

i	Group → class	30 minutes–1 hour, class size dependent
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Part one: In groups, pick one of the following techniques: Magic IF; emotion memory; rhythm. Ensure that each technique is covered across the class. You then have 15 minutes to create an original rehearsal activity that uses your chosen technique to help an actor explore their character.

Part two: After the 15 minutes, the groups will take turns to try out their activity. After each activity, you will be given a few minutes to take notes on what you thought of the activity and how it could be improved.

Part three: Once all the groups have tried out their activity on everyone else, you will have 15 minutes for the class to discuss your final rehearsal activity.

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Stanislavski's Working Methods: Practical Activities

Activity One: Emotion Memory Stimulus

i	Individual → pair	25 minutes	Object from home
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At home: Find an object that reminds you of a moment with a very strong emotion, a photograph of a holiday you went on, or an item that reminds you of a special person. Using the item as a stimulus, try to recreate that moment in a small improvisation which recreates the emotion. Try to remember exactly how you felt and exactly how you spoke.

In class: Pairs take turns to come and present your improvisation to the other. While the other improvises, they focus on the emotion(s) explored. At the end of the improvisation, they thought you showed and compare this with your intention.

Activity Two: Tempo-rhythm

i	Groups	30 minutes
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In small groups, improvise a short scene using the improvisation cards below. You can use all or but not all of the character cards need to be used.

Concentrate on the tempo-rhythm of your character. One member of the group is the observer who takes notes about how the tempo-rhythms of the characters interact in the piece overall.

Situation: Train station in a small rural town.	Character one: Member of staff in the ticket office. You are coming to work on your shift. You're tired. It's been a long day of people asking stupid questions. You can't wait to go home.	Character two: A young couple. You are upgrading your seats. You're a bit nervous. You're a bit shy.
Character three: Person in their 70s. You are going on a long journey to stay with your sister. Your daughter booked your tickets for you. You are getting them from the self-service ticket machine, which you don't know how to use. You are quite flustered. You have left yourself plenty of time to get the train, but this is not stopping you worrying.	Character four: Parent with young child in a buggy. You don't have a ticket and need the train which is due in 5 minutes. You've only just got here in time. The baby needed changing on the way, so you have a dirty nappy in your bag. You are worried other people can smell it. You're supposed to be meeting a childless friend in town for coffee.	Character five: A young man. You're a bit nervous. You're a bit shy. You're a bit nervous. You're a bit shy. You're a bit nervous. You're a bit shy.

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Activity Three: Personal Tempo-rhythm

i	Class	10 minutes	
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Walk around the room with conflicting inner and outer tempo-rhythm and afterwards made you feel, and any difficulties you had completing the task. Below are some would allow the conflict of tempo-rhythm between inner and outer state:

Potential scenarios:

- You are on the way to visit an elderly relative who is very ill and whom you love. You have just received a text from a person you have fancied for ages asking you on a date.
- You have just heard that you didn't get the job you wanted while you are hosting a party.
- You are in a situation and are feeling very nervous, but need to control the situation in front of the other people who are experienced actors.

Activity Four: With Purpose

i	Pairs	15 minutes	
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Work in pairs, with one of you carrying out the activity and one of you observing. Put a chair in a space. Stand about 10 paces from the chair before you begin. One of you stands and the other sits down.

Now run the same exercise again, but before you do, use your imagination to create a chair. Why do you need to sit in it? What are you doing at the time? What is your purpose?

Discuss the differences in your performance with your partner. Which version was better? Which time did you feel more at ease? Which time were you fully focused? Now repeat the exercise with a different purpose.

Activity Five: Public Solitude

i	Class	5 minutes per student	
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Each member of the class will take a turn at being the actor while the rest of the class acts as the audience.

Arrange staging so that there is a single chair in the centre of the stage with a spotlight on it. Prepare three cards (below). Choose one of the cards and act as if the instructions on it are real.

The idea for the student acting is to ensure that their concentration is not broken by the audience around them. As the improvisation goes on, the spotlight should be widened to include the audience in the actor's circle of attention.

The audience should watch and try to guess which of the three cards the actor picked.

This is a photograph of your Grandfather, who passed away some years ago, and with whom you were very close.	This is the cue card that you have made for this presentation you are giving to do. If you do well, you will get a promotion at work.	This is a letter from your mother saying that you have been accepted for a place at university.
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6: The Performance Style and Conventions of the System

This section of the study pack gives you an outline of the performance style and the Stanislavski's system, as well as the philosophy of these aspects of his system. The areas are divided into four sections. There are also tips showing which specific sections you should focus on for the exam this information is provided in the exam tips section.

This section is divided as follows:

- 1) Research notes on the social, historical, and cultural context of Stanislavski's system
- 2) Multiple choice questions to cement the knowledge you have gained from the research
- 3) Extended research activities to encourage further research into Stanislavski's system
- 4) Practical activities to enable you to further explore the life and times of Stanislavski

The focus AO for this section is: AO3 'how theatre is developed and performed'



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The Performance Style and Theatrical Conventions of the System

In many ways, performance style was less important to Stanislavski than the product of the system. **Performance was achieved.** This is shown by the bulk of his system being dedicated to techniques rather than staging conventions.

As a broad overview, Stanislavski's performance style is usually pigeonholed as **realism**, but this is a simplification. It was politically helpful to align it with the Soviet realism movement, but the internal and the psychological elements of his system also meant that his work was more complex. **Realism**. Many of the central tenets of realism were important to Stanislavski, and in his work, he felt that realism was a guiding principle.

Realism itself, however, has many elements. Stanislavski himself often substituted realism and yet there are some key distinctions. **Naturalism is associated with French realism.** It was about accurately and methodically copying real life. It was a direct response to the melodramatic characters of nineteenth century literature and drama; as was Stanislavski, he wanted to create a realistic portrayal of life, using realistic staging, props and costumes. The other key element to naturalism, was its interest in the mundane, and the underclasses and with love, death and moral decline; this set it apart from realism.

Realism grew out of naturalism. It did not have the same fascination with the lowly and ordinary people at the centre. This may have been working class, but was more about the intricate reproduction of real life favoured by naturalism, realism looked for a distillation of the key elements of real life to create an honest, theatrical representation. It wanted to engage the audience; the inclusion of mundane elements had the potential to do so.

Stanislavski himself sought to create realism on stage. In some cases, his detailed attempt to create truth, led to an over-cluttered stage and a tendency towards naturalism.

Elements of realism

There is no single set of rules about realism, but these are the elements we expect in a production in the Realist mode:

- Four walls – the setting creating three walls and the fourth being the invisible wall between actors and audience. This Fourth wall is not crossed or broken in realist productions.
- Normal speech – people speak as they would in the real world, rather than in theatrical language, verse or other forms of communication.
- It is about normal people.
- It is set in real places, rather than being based in fantasy worlds.
- Realistic sets, props and costumes.
- Realistic sound and music.
- A clear focus on acting techniques which portray a life-like representation of reality. This does not mean that it is on stage, but that it creates a believable theatrical truth that the audience can accept and believe.

Perhaps the most important element of realism, however, is its focus on subtext. **Realism firmly fits into the category of realism** in that the underlying meaning of what is said by the characters is more important than the surface meaning.

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It is this subtext which is seen in realism to give the characters a three-dimensional life. They are driven, sometimes by hidden agendas, sometimes by the constraints of society, sometimes by emotional responses over reason, that makes them appear human. **They have lives beyond the moment in which they exist, and this is what the focus on the audience: a life beyond the stage.** Characters are given a backstory. They exist before the performance that we see, and their actions and words affect both the other characters on stage and the audience.

Example of subtext

Script	Subtext
PE teacher: What a beautiful morning this is, girls. Beautiful. Lovely.	PE teacher wants to encourage the girls to be positive. She also enjoys the weather.
Nathan: Bloody freezing. Bloody PE	Nathan does not like PE, especially not on a cold day.
PE teacher: Pardon?	PE teacher heard Nathan's attitude. Also wants to know what he has given her a chance to change.
Nathan: Nothing, Miss.	Understands the unwritten rule that 'Nothing' is the matter, and will not be punished. She will not be punished. She will not be punished.

Subtext was one of the driving factors in Stanislavski's system and something which was central to his work. At the beginning of his work on the system, he went for quite an academic analysis as the first, and often biggest, part of the rehearsal process. Towards the end of his life, he had moved more towards improvisation and practical rehearsal techniques as a way of making the subtext that remained dominant to the end product of a successful performance.

As noted in previous chapters, Stanislavski was an innovator and he feared nothing. It was not just his approach to the rehearsal process that changed the way of acting, but the performance styles also changed. He experimented with symbolism, staged combat, and working on the physicality of the actor, combining elements of biomechanics and the system. Nathan typically believed that anything was possible within realism. **He was not afraid to pick up a sword in the theatre he explored, if they created what he considered to be a dramatic truth.**

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The Performance Style and Theatrical Conventions of the System

Activity One: What Have You Learnt?

i	Individual	20 minutes	No extra resources
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- 1) What theatrical style is Stanislavski most commonly associated with?
- 2) What are the key similarities and differences between realism and naturalism?

Similarities	
	
	
	

- 3) According to the notes, which of the common features of realism noted in the notes through his career?

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The Performance Style and Theatrical Conventions of the System: Ex

Activity One: Setting and Realism

i	Individual	20 minutes	Access to Internet
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Find a photograph of a production by Stanislavski (there are some links below which show a picture and explain how the setting fits into the genre of realism).

 [http://profdrih.blogspot.co.uk/2016/06/the-rodin-1395-written-by-anton.h](http://profdrih.blogspot.co.uk/2016/06/the-rodin-1395-written-by-anton-h)

 <http://theatrefutures.org.uk/stanislavski/anton/event-stanislavski-on-stage/>

 <http://cw.routledge.com/textbooks/corstraining/practitioner-stanislavsky.d>

Activity Two: Subtext

i	Class	20 minutes	
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Watch a clip, either one of the two links below or one you have shown to your teacher, and write a commentary explaining the subtext within it. It may be useful to read a brief summary of the play before watching the clip to provide some context.

Much Ado About Nothing: Act IV, Scene i

 <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yK0jIGM-uSI>

Long Day's Journey into Night: Act II opening

 https://youtu.be/sA731BYRgvs?list=PL_-DOtschlAx13gNuW4d4NpLfGTHUNE2

Activity Three: Psychological Realism

i	Individual	10 minutes	No extra resources
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Write a definition of the term: psychological realism.

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The Performance Style and Theatrical Conventions of the System

Activity One: Subtext

i	Pairs	10 minutes
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In pairs, cut out each of the role cards below and place them face down in two piles and one pile of subtext cards. Choose one of the situation cards between you and each. Don't show each other your subtext card.

Together you then begin to improvise the situation that is on your situation card and act out. If there is time, try to do some improvisation, but with different subtext cards to see what happens (or doesn't).

Situation You are at a bus stop waiting for the bus to work.	Situation You are at the bar waiting for a blind date.	Situation You are at the bank waiting for a loan.
Subtext You are in a foul mood because your car broke down.	Subtext You really don't like the other person, but you have been brought up to be very polite.	Subtext You are nervous about the loan.
Subtext You are in love with the other person.	Subtext You are really sad because you just took your dog to be put down.	Subtext You are angry about the loan.
Subtext You are very confident, verging on arrogant, about your ability to excel at what you are doing currently.	Subtext You have just got an ulcer on your stomach and it is really bugging you.	Subtext You are happy about the loan.

Activity Two: What Needs to be Left Out?

i	Groups	15 minutes + performance
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Stanislavski felt that truth on stage was different to truth in real life and that mere naturalism) was not theatrically interesting. Somethings would need to be left out for the audience and not to merely bore them with watching a complete reconstruction. Improvise a scene where a child tries to cheat in an exam. There are several challenges:

- Remember an exam is long. How much do you need to show to give a sense of the audience?
- How can you show something that by its nature would have to be difficult to stage and realistic?
- How do you recreate an exam room that the audience will believe and make it seem like it is happening?

Show your scene to the rest of the class and give them group feedback about the performance.

- How truthful was the representation?
- How interesting was the performance to watch?
- What was the most effective part of the performance?
- What could have been improved?

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Activity Three: Realism and Symbolism

i	Groups	45 minutes–1 hour	
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Stanislavski was happy to combine realism with symbolism. Your challenge is to do the truth of the performance.

Part one: In small groups of 3–6, you are going to create a short improvisation. There must be a prop which is used to signify the main character and more than one character during the improvisation. You could, for example, follow your character through his/her life and each actor could play a different age using the prop to show the character. You should try to create a character who is equally truthful through each not playing in a different character, you can play other characters as necessary.

Part two: Now get back together with your class and discuss the following:

What were the successes and failures of trying to combine symbolism and realism?

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7: Stanislavski's Collaboration with Other Practitioners

This section of the study pack explores Stanislavski's collaboration with other practitioners. Stanislavski collaborated with many actors, directors, designers, playwrights and theatre practitioners. This section will focus on his work with Edward Gordon Craig, Chekhov and Gorki. The section will explore the collaborations and how they shaped Stanislavski's work. There are also tips for the exam this information will help you to explore.

This section is divided as follows:

- 1) Research notes on Stanislavski's collaboration with other practitioners
- 2) Consolidation questions to cement the knowledge you have gained from the research
- 3) Extended research activities to encourage further research into Stanislavski's work
- 4) Practical activities to enable you to further explore Stanislavski's collaboration

The focus AO for this section is: AO2 how others 'apply theatrical skills to performance'.



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Stanislavski's Collaboration with Other Practitioners: Research

Over the years, **Stanislavski collaborated with a great number of other theatre practitioners**. **Vladimir Nemirovich-Danchenko, with whom he began the Moscow Arts Theatre, whom he declared to be his successor when he died.** This section will focus on the practitioners that Stanislavski directed on numerous occasions and who fit with the position of realist that he chose to align himself, and one theatre practitioner whose ideas were a long way from Stanislavski's. **This is to show the way that Stanislavski simultaneously aligned himself closely with a particular movement (realism) and challenged himself to look beyond the confines of that movement.** This is also reflective of Stanislavski's long attempts to ensure his ideas did not become static, but evolved and changed.

Playwright

The Moscow Arts Theatre was instrumental in promoting the works of new Russian playwrights. Two key playwrights favoured by the MAT were Anton Chekhov and Maxim Gorki.



Chekhov

Chekhov began writing while still at school. His father had overstretched the family's finances and that, combined with having been cheated by one of the contractors he had paid to build them a house, meant the family was bankrupt and destitute. Chekhov had to fund his own education and one of the ways he did this was by writing for theatrical papers. This led over the years to more and more writing both for papers and also short stories. He also wrote several plays, including *Ivanov* and *A Man of Straw* (the translation) and *The Bear*. In 1894, he began writing *The Seagull*, which brought him into contact with Stanislavski.

In 1896, *The Seagull* opened in St Petersburg. The first night was an unmitigated disaster. Chekhov swore he would not write for theatre again. However **Vladimir Nemirovich-Danchenko, partner at the MAT and a friend of Chekhov's, had seen the production and loved it, and persuaded Chekhov to allow the MAT to stage the performance.**

The MAT's production of *The Seagull* was a success. **Stanislavski used his psychological approach, enabling an exposition of the subtext as well as the text, creating a more interesting performance for the audience.** Stanislavski produced a detailed directorial score, printed with the text of his play. This directorial score allowed the nuances of the text to be explored even when they weren't explicit in the script. This led to Chekhov's plays henceforth being specifically for premieres at the MAT. **The three plays he wrote for them before (performed in 1899), *Three Sisters* (performed in 1901) and *The Cherry Orchard* (performed in 1904).**

Chekhov and Stanislavski's relationship was not always smooth, as revealed in the case of the actor Knipper, who was an actor at the MAT. Chekhov and Knipper were often apart. Chekhov stayed in Moscow at the time Knipper was in Moscow at the MAT, an arrangement that suited Chekhov as he was not wanting to change his marriage that he had with a wife who changed his lifestyle or who was in his way.

'By all means, I will be married if you wish it. But on these conditions: even if I have been hitherto—that is, she must live in Moscow while I live in the country and see her.'¹⁰

Exam Tip

Realist plays often use Stanislavski's elements of realism, but less usual.

In AS Coursework, the Composer of the text is Stanislavski, the realist text is your choice.

'... possibly key extract opportunity when applying methodology chosen pre (AQA AS Coursework)

Features of work and (AQA A Level Coursework)

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¹⁰ http://www.gutenberg.org/files/6408/6408-h/6408-h.htm#link2H_4_0066 The Project Gutenberg by Anton Chekhov, accessed 05/1/2017

In their letters, Chekhov and Knipper often swapped complaints about Stanislav giving advice to each other on their work.

For Stanislavski, his work with Chekhov was central to his development of the system. It forced Stanislavski to develop his notion of subtext, as Chekhov steadfastly refused to reveal the nature of his characters, and yet was happy to deconstruct and denigrate his characters as wrong, if their interpretation was not the same as his own.

Stanislavski's work also renewed Chekhov's interest in writing for the theatre, as is proven by *The Seagull* and before his death, the publication of Chekhov's work in play scripts. **Chekhov died until his death, the leading realist at the MAT.** Chekhov's death in 1904, greatly seemed to mark the end point in the relationship between him and Nemirovich-Danchenko, as their visions began to move further apart.

Maxim Gorki

Another playwright who is inextricably linked with Stanislavski and the MAT is Maxim Gorki.

Gorki was one of the many pen names used by Alexei Maximovich Peshkov, a man with a troubled past and a strong political view. He believed that literature and art had the capacity for political change and that that was how it should be used. Much of his writing throughout his life had a political message, be that overt or implicit.

His work was popular with both the underclasses and the academics as he was open to talking about Marxist socialist values – the share of wealth between all by the uprooting of the workers and their overthrowing of the upper classes. It is this that led him to become friends with many of the post-revolutionary leaders, including Lenin.

Gorki was a friend of Chekhov's and Chekhov envisaged Gorki taking over from him at the MAT. However, despite this, he only successfully premiered two of his plays in 1902, *The Lower Depths*, the third, *Civil War*, and *The Sun* was highly political and controversial and its premiere at the MAT in 1905.

Gorki's influence on Stanislavski can be traced to the decision to stage Gorki's play *The Lower Depths*, which divided between realism and naturalism and led to further divisions between Stanislavski and Nemirovich-Danchenko. **Stanislavski was up until this point, against overtly political theatre** and believed that an actor's job to tell the audience what to think, but to be honest and if that honesty revealed themselves to the audience then so be it, but this wish to use theatre to draw political judgments, should not be the aim of the actor.

When Stanislavski worked on *The Lower Depths*, however, he felt that he tried to bridge the gap between the play and the current political climate. (1902, leading up to the 1905 revolution) his directorship was a failure.

The Lower Depths is also much more in the tradition of naturalism than realism. It focused on the underclasses, and the seemingly inescapable fate of this. It forced Stanislavski to develop realism which he was developing with the help of Nemirovich-Danchenko. However, due to Stanislavski's disputes over the directorial style of this play, Nemirovich-Danchenko's influence on the play.

In 1911, both Stanislavski and Gorki were on the island of Capri convalescing. When Gorki his drafts for the system. They discussed working together again, and although of their combined ideas fell into the work which happened in the First Studio, was a key rehearsal technique.

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After criticising Lenin, Gorki spent many years in Italy, knowing living in the USSR had difficulties and possibly risk death or imprisonment for have criticised the party. He became friends with Stalin, and it was at his request that Gorki returned to the USSR. He was given many privileges, including housing, the renaming of a Moscow street and a Russian passport. **In 1932 as a method of controlling Stanislavski by Stalin, the MAT was renamed the Moscow Art Theatre and a 'red director' was installed. The red director was intended to ensure there were no revolutionary activities.** Stanislavski attempted to appease the political powers and to continue his work but this meant **the MAT produced work only in a Soviet style, which limited its creative freedom.**

In more modern times, the MAT split into two factions, one called itself the Chekhov Theatre, the other one retained the name the Gorki MAT. **Now the Chekhov Theatre, both of which still exist.**



Edward Gordon Craig

Edward Gordon Craig was a British theatre practitioner who first introduced in 1908. Craig was famed for his work in stage design. His outlook was that the actor was not important, it was the tools a director could use to communicate his theatrical vision.

When Stanislavski was introduced to Craig, he was very interested in his ideas and invited Craig to work on *Hamlet* with him. Perhaps Stanislavski was unaware of Craig's ideas, or perhaps he was keen to show how successful his own method would be, or perhaps he was keen to show how successful about internal characterisation could be in any performance. He wrote a letter to his friend Liubov Gurevich, that he wanted to experiment with so that he might create a deeper and clearer sense of form through experimentation with other forms.

Craig himself thought that staging *Hamlet* was impossible. He was of the opinion that Shakespeare was poetry rather than drama and as such wanted to test out his theory that Shakespeare did not work on the stage. **Both men came at this collaboration in an unusual and oppositional way.**

This continued through the design and rehearsal process. Where Stanislavski saw that the piece should be played in a symbolic way and wanted to have a lot of symbolic characters, such as death on stage, Craig wanted the internal realism of the characters in the performance. **When Craig suggested that *Hamlet* be staged throughout the performance, Stanislavski overruled him.**

Exam Tip

Keep in mind that for A Level and A Level apply practical own interpretation way of doing Stanislavski down any your research and your own

Another difficulty that the production had was that Craig did not speak Russian. The production was conducted in a combination of German, which Stanislavski spoke, English and a third language. The cast found it very difficult to work with Craig. Combining this with Craig and Stanislavski's different views on the role of actors, meant the cast found a lot of the process very challenging. **Craig's idea of 'puppet theatre', where the actors were *übermarionettes*, that is completely under the control and direction of the director, was a major point of contention.**



In contrast to Stanislavski's usual preference for the final performance was a simplified set. The addition of different screens for different scenes was a simplification. **He wanted stage hands to change the set between scenes, so the audience could see the change, and the curtain was shut at each change.** Craig often changed the size and shape of the set. The set was intended to reflect Hamlet's state of mind. The set was painted in gold and cream and this was a reflection of the things. The interior of Elsinore palace was cream. Coloured lights were used to change the colour of buildings were cream. Coloured lights were used to change the colour of buildings were cream.

allowed the set to be the blue of the sky or the grey of dusk, as necessary. The set was used symbolically in the costume.

The performance, which finally took place in 1912, had a mixed reception. The reception was positive, although some did praise the MAT for trying new ideas. The media in general was much more positive.

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Stanislavski's Collaboration with Other Practitioners: Consolidation

Activity One: What Have You Learnt?

i	Individual	30 minutes	No extra resources
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- 1) Which element of the system did Stanislavski's work on Chekhov's plays help?
- 2) Create a timeline plotting the various performances of Chekhov's, Gorki's and Gordon Craig to show the artistic development of Stanislavski at the MAT.
- 3) List three things Gordon Craig and Stanislavski differed about.

Things in which Stanislavski and Gordon Craig differed	Way in which they differed

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Stanislavski's Collaboration with Other Practitioners: Extended

Activity One: Research Another Practitioner

i	Individual	1 – 1.5 hours	Access to research resources
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Research one of the other practitioners that Stanislavski worked with, for example Danchenko or Vsevolod Meyerhold. Briefly outline the work they did together and the other.

Present your findings to your teacher in the form of an extra sub-section which covers the workbook. Try to use a different style, with key elements highlighted, pictures and

Activity Two: Design

Look again at the picture of Gordon Craig's design (below). In what ways does it differ from Stanislavski's? Write your answer by labelling the picture below, showing the elements which they differ.



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Stanislavski's Collaboration with Other Practitioners: Practical

Activity One: Naturalism

i	Groups	30 minutes
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In keeping with the fact that *The Lower Depths* is a naturalistic play rather than a detailed stage directions. In groups of eight (or nine if you would like to have a set opening to the first act as described in the stage directions below.

Obviously in a drama classroom this will be less naturalistic than you could create in a professional theatre. **important thing to think about is the positioning specified for each character.** Use other appropriate props that you have access to, to create as much of a feel as you can.

The Lower Depths, Maxim Gorki

THE FIRST ACT

SCENE. A cave-like cellar. The ceiling is arched, grimy, with the plaster peeling off in places. A square window high up in the right wall. The right corner is partitioned off with a wooden door. Close to the door of this room are BOOBNOFF'S sleeping planks. In left corner the stone wall left is the kitchen door, where KVASHNYA, the BARON, and NASTYA are. Between the stove and the door, is a large bed with dirty print curtains. Sleeping in front by the left wall is a block of wood with a vice, and an anvil, also another low

(On the lower block KLESSHTSH is seated trying keys into old locks. At his feet are a miscellaneous keys, strung on wire rings, a battered tin samovar, hammer, and pickaxe. In the shelter are a large table, two seats, a stool, all dirty and of plain wood. KVASHNYA is by the samovar, the BARON is chewing some black bread. NASTYA is on the table, reading a tattered book. In the bed, behind the curtains, ANNA lies coughing. BOOBNOFF is on the planks with an old hat shape between his legs, considering how he shall deal with his trousers. Scattered about him are some old vizards, some pieces of buckram, a rag. He is off to sleep on his planks. He is in his sleep. The ACTOR, out of sight, tosses and turns. (It is an early morning. The sun is rising.)

Activity Two: Monologues

i	Individual	45 minutes + performance
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Considering all you know so far about Stanislavski's approach to acting, work on a set of monologues below, taken from *The Seagull* by Chekhov.

Remember one of the things that Stanislavski famously did with *The Seagull* was to take notes about all of the visual, aural and spatial elements. A good starting point with a monologue, therefore, would be to create a detailed set of notes about how you

Once you are ready, perform your monologue to the class and ask them to feedback on the honesty, truth and depth of your characterisation.

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The Seagull Anton Chekhov

Nina is an actress. She has returned after a few years to the home of her ex-boyfriend, and how she spent the years away from him.

NINA

Why do you say you kiss the ground I walk on? I ought to be killed. I'm so tired, I can't rest. I am the seagull... No, that's not it. I'm an actress! It doesn't matter. So he didn't believe in the theatre, he laughed at my dreams, and little by little, I lost my heart. And always the strains of love, and a constant fear for the child... I became an actress without thinking or feeling. I don't know what to do with my hands, I can't find my voice. You can't imagine how it is like to know you're acting badly! I am a seagull you know. You know it at my feet, he came to me and said, 'I had an idea. Act like yourself. I'll spend all her life on the shores of a lake. She loves the lake, like a seagull by chance, and, because he has nothing better to do, destroys her...'

What was I talking about, before? I – Yes, about acting. I'm not like that anymore. I act with delight, with rapture. I feel drunk when I'm on stage and think that I am wonderful. I've been walking around, walking around and thinking, thinking and even believing in myself every day. Now I see at last, Kostya, that in our kind of work, whether we're writers or actors, the thing is not fame, or glory, not what I used to dream about, but learning how to express oneself and have faith. If I have faith, it doesn't hurt so much, and when I think of my career, it doesn't hurt.

When you see him, don't tell him anything... I do love him, yes, I love him more than anything. He is my subject for a short story.'

How sweet it used to be, Kostya! Remember? How bright, and warm, how joyous. The feelings we had for each other were like fine, delicate flowers! Do you remember?

The Seagull Anton Chekhov

Treplev has a very complex relationship with his mother, who is a famous actress. He is now an adult. Treplev wants to be a playwright, but abhors current theatre. In his monologue, he addresses his mother, Nina. At the start of it, he is pulling the petals off a flower.

TREPLEV:

She loves me, she loves me not; she loves me, she loves me not; she loves me, she loves me not. My mother doesn't love me. Of course not! She wants to live, to love, to wear bright dresses. She is five years old, a constant reminder that she is no longer young. When I'm not there, she is alone when I am, she's forty-three – and for that, she hates me. Besides, she knows I don't love the theatre, she thinks she is serving humanity and the sacred cause of art, and that the world of today is hidebound and conventional. When the curtain goes up, and, in a room full of light, those great geniuses, those priests of holy art, show me how people eat, drink, and wear their jackets; when from those banal scenes and phrases they try to fish out a moment of beauty, easily grasped and suitable for domestic use; when, in a thousand variations, I am asked to love, over and over again – then I flee, as Maupassant fled from the Eiffel Tower, which was too vulgar.¹²

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¹¹ The Seagull, Chekhov, A taken from: <http://notmyshoes.net/monologues/nina.html>

¹² The Seagull, Chekhov, A taken from: <http://notmyshoes.net/monologues/treplev.html>

Activity Three: Actor or Director in Control?

i	Pairs → fours	30 minutes + performance	No extra resources
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For this activity, you are going to work in a pair and then in a four, swap partners. You need to create a performance piece where the director advises, but the actor takes the final piece.

Then with your second partner, the actor must be a puppet or marionette for the director.

Perform both pieces to the class and discuss the pros and cons of each method of

Shakespeare	Modern
HAMLET To be, or not to be? That is the question— Whether 'tis nobler in the mind to suffer The slings and arrows of outrageous fortune, Or to take arms against a sea of troubles, And, by opposing, end them? To die, to sleep— No more—and by a sleep to say we end The heartache and the thousand natural shocks That flesh is heir to—'tis a consummation Devoutly to be wished! To die, to sleep. To sleep, perchance to dream—ay, there's the rub, For in that sleep of death what dreams may come When we have shuffled off this mortal coil, Must give us pause. There's the respect That makes calamity of so long life.	The question is, is it better to be Is it more honourable to put up with All the bad things that luck throws Or to fight back And end everything? To die is like — Nothing more — and by dying we The heartache and troubles Of the living body — that's a thing To wish sincerely for! To die is to To sleep in the hope you might dream In that sleep of death, what kind When we have died That makes us think. That's the reason That makes us put up with this awful

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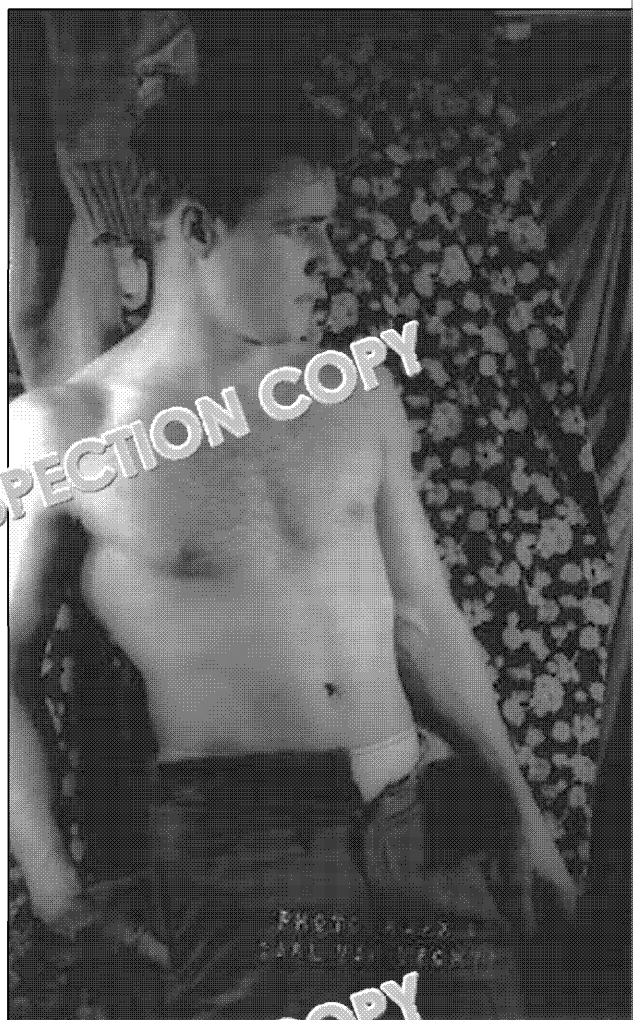
8: Stanislavski's Influence Practitioners

This section of the study pack explores Stanislavski's influence with other practitioners and up to the present day. The activities help you to explore his influence and how it has been used. There are also tips showing which specific sections of the specification this information will be assessed on.

This section is divided as follows:

- 1) Research notes on Stanislavski's influence on other practitioners.
- 2) Consolidating questions to cement the knowledge you have gained from the research.
- 3) Extended research activities to encourage further research into Stanislavski's influence.
- 4) Practical activities to enable you to further explore the influence of Stanislavski's system.

The focus AO for this section is: AO1 'making connections between theory and practice'.



Marlon Brando in *A Streetcar Named Desire*, using method acting, the American development of Stanislavski's system.

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Stanislavski's Influence on Other Practitioners: Research Notes

Why is Stanislavski influential?

Michael Billington said in *The Guardian* that **Stanislavski is 'undoubtedly the greatest acting and – despite everything that's changed in the last century – what he has to say that while modern acting has moved on past the system, and there are many other theatres, Stanislavski is massively important, whether or not you use his technique, you have to know them.**

Stanislavski's influence was of course felt during his lifetime, not only in his home country.

Russia

Stanislavski's influence on theatre in Russia was profound at the time and continued to be so. He founded the Moscow Arts Theatre, which still exists today, albeit in two separate faculties and studios where his acting system was taught and was one of the driving forces behind the Russian arts.

Europe

Stanislavski and the Moscow Arts Theatre influence reached further than just Russia. **Stanislavski's tour around Europe.** Between the 1890s and the 1917 revolution, Russian art was popular in the USA. The MAT's tour was a part of this and was a resounding success. It was after this tour that Stanislavski began working on a psychological approach to acting. **After the tour, Stanislavski and the MAT began in 1922**, during which he discussed the possibility of a new theatre school.

The USA

Following directly on from the second European tour, Stanislavski went to the USA. **It was here he first tried to publish his system, however the US publisher rejected the proposal**, asking instead for an autobiography. Stanislavski wrote *My Life in Art*.

The other reason that this was key in the legacy of Stanislavski, is that **many US actors came to see what Europe had been doing and attended lectures and performances by the MAT.** People such as Lee Strasberg who would go on to develop his own, somewhat different system, based heavily in parts on the Stanislavski system. Stanislavski's celebrity at this time was such that he even met the president of the United States, at the White House.

Exam Tip

For both A and AS Level, you have to show your knowledge of Stanislavski's influence on others. Ensure you show that you understand that **method acting focuses on emotion memory and elevates it above things, and does not muddle this up with intellectual focus of Stanislavski's system.**

Method acting

The development of the system was the creation of what is known as method acting. Some of the former students of Stanislavski's system stayed on after the tour in the 1910s. One of the most influential was Richard Boleslavsky, who stayed in the USA and taught many of the techniques of the system. **Lee Strasberg and Stella Adler** were also influential in American stage and film.

Strasberg and Adler went on to form the Group Theatre with another member of the Group, which became some of the most influential figures in American theatre, developing techniques based on Stanislavski's system.

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¹³ S is for Stanislavski, Michael Billington, *The Guardian*, 17th April 2012

Strasberg's method acting was developed from the form of the system, which St
1920s tour. It is one of the criticisms of method acting, that it focuses too heavily
 encourages actors to 'become' their character in an all-consuming and potentially

Stella Adler worked alongside Strasberg, until in 1934 she worked with Stanislav
learned of the developments he had made to his techniques. At this point, she b
 bringing the idea that an actor should not merely use memory, but also imaginatio

Meisner was another member of the Group Theatre, which had such wide influence
 understood Strasberg's focus on using emotion memory to be too all-encompassing
 actors to consider the emotional and imagined improvisation of the text. **His tech**
focuses less on the individual character and more on the relationship with other

There are high-profile film and theatre actors linked with all of these techniques.
 Brando, Warren Beatty, James Dean and Robert De Niro. There are many more tv
 actors who are linked with the various techniques and teachers. It is not always c
 they are most linked to, and there is a level of mythology and mystery around son
is often linked to Lee Strasberg and method acting, however several sources say
Adler and disliked Strasberg's techniques.

The debate between Stanislavski followers and Brecht followers in the UK
From the 1950s until the 1970s, a debate raged in the theatres and drama schoo
Stanislavski's system had been taught in acting schools, however the German th
had gained more and more followers and with the Berliner Ensemble, he had gain
 his theatrical approach which was set up to challenge the dominant theatre practi
 referred to as dramatic theatre.

Dramatic Theatre vs Epic Theatre	
Dramatic	Epic
Has a linear plot with a beginning, climax and resolution.	May start and stop at any point.
Recreation on stage for the audience to observe.	Makes the audience a participant.
Suggests things to the audience.	Argues with the audience.
The audience shares the experiences.	The audience is outside the action.
Actors become the characters.	Actors demonstrate the characters.
Psychological.	Political.

Stanislavski had many well-known followers within British theatre, including John
 Michael Redgrave. However, there was a rising number of big names who felt mo
 Brechtian model of epic theatre, including Laurence Olivier, Joan Littlewood and P

In the years following Stanislavski's death, there was a codification of the system
 become set in stone and to some, dogmatic, since Stanislavski was no longer arou
 Berliner Ensemble, which visited London in 1955, the year of Brecht's death, seem
 comparison.

In fact, the system and its practitioners seem to have survived. Modern dram
 variety of approaches, including both training in the system and epic theatre amo

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TV realism

The continual popularity of realism and many of the elements of the system, is at **that most TV and film drama still uses a psychological realism approach.** TV drama extends the fourth wall and suspension of disbelief, past the level of theatre as the audience really is looking in on characters who cannot see and do not (in programmes) acknowledge them.

The system continues

Stanislavski did not seem to want to create a **fixed approach to theatre.** Although that could train actors, he continually changed the elements of the system so that **Perhaps the current approach which teaches his theories alongside those of other** and directors pick and choose the elements that best suit their artistic vision, would have evolved.

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Stanislavski's Influence on Other Practitioners: Consolidation Q

Activity One: What Have You Learnt?

- 1) When did the MAT go on tour around Europe and why was a European tour v performers of Europe?
- 2) Which book was Stanislavski asked to write when on tour in the USA and how
- 3) Complete the table below showing key figures who took Stanislavski's ideas a

Name	When did you meet Stanislavski?	Which elements of the impact
		

- 4) Which two theatre practitioners divided British theatre practice between the

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Stanislavski's Influence on Other Practitioners: Extended Research

Activity One: The Epic/Dramatic Debate in the UK

i	Individual	30 minutes	Access to research resources
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Pick one of the actors mentioned as championing the system in Britain during the epic theatre. Create an information sheet about him/her including information such as written and/or directed, theatres they worked with, awards credits and any other find related to their career in theatre.

Activity Two: Research into Epic Theatre

i	Individual	30 minutes	No extra resources
----------	------------	------------	--------------------

Research further into epic theatre. See the table in the consolidation questions and contrast epic theatre with Stanislavski's theatre. Identify areas of it that Brecht de

Class discussion:

Which theatrical form do you prefer and why? Why is it successful? Is each one better for a certain type of play? Which do you think audiences expect today? Is there value in combining elements of both styles to create something new?

Activity Three: Mini Documentary Project: Method Acting in the USA

i	Group	15 minutes	Research resources
----------	-------	------------	--------------------

In a small group research the questions below and then use this information to create a mini documentary. You could take on different roles, with one person being the director, one the scriptwriter, one the producer and one the key figures from Group Theatre and the Actors studio.

- Who founded the Group Theatre?
- Where was the Group Theatre based?
- How long did the Group Theatre run for?
- What reasons can be given for the demise of the Group Theatre?
- When was the Actors Studio formed?
- Who formed the Actors Studio?
- Who was the artistic director of the Actors Studio from 1951–1982?

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One of the areas of method acting which is both admired and criticised is the detail of the characterisation. Your class is going to create an improvisation called 'the staff room' in a school or college staff room. Before the improvisation, you need to create a detailed list of the behaviours of teachers. You should collect ideas from observation, discussion and perhaps, if you can, a trip to the school or places teachers 'hang out'!

With your diary and research, you are then going to spend 15 minutes, as a class, to discuss your characterisation. You will then have to present your character to your teacher (and any other teachers who you may want to give you feedback about how realistic your characterisation was).

Another strategy often adopted by actors who follow method acting is total immersion in the roles below and, for the lesson, become it. Try to continue your normal interaction with the character you have chosen.

The roles are outlined below, however, they need some extra information to create dimensional characters we expect from a piece of realism. You should therefore find information to your character, by completing the 'extra information' section below family life, likes, dislikes, activities in and out of school. Give special consideration to how you have created the personality traits outlined in the role information.

Once you have completed the extra information, you will continue your normal life and your reactions in terms of your character, and you, and behave 'as if' you were the

Character 1 You are timid and shy. You are very quiet and afraid of how others will judge you. Interaction and would rather be alone than in large groups. You want to do well in of talking in class or group socialisation very difficult, although when people get to friendly.

You are very confident. You are popular and friendly. You always have something cheeky, but you usually manage to turn it around so that people are rarely cross with you. You are never rude to anyone and are always friendly.

You have a very large dose of teenage hormones. Other people are almost exclusively male. You have a very short temper and do not like people telling you what to do. You come

You are very intelligent. You find school work easy. Sometimes this makes school have to find other ways to entertain you, such as asking the teacher awkward questions or teasing your classmates. This doesn't always make you popular.

You would be anywhere other than school/college. You hate school/college but when you (re)looked at an apprenticeship it looked like too much hard work was better.

At the end of your lesson in character, have a 10 minute feedback session about how it went. Did you feel like you were able to become the character? What challenges did you come across? What did you find most interesting?

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Assessment Preparation

The information you have read, researched and used in the previous chapters can all be used to feed into your AS and A Level theatre studies. Practitioners and their ideas are useful in several sections of your qualification. Below is a short guide to exactly how and where you can use the knowledge you have gained for both written and practical purposes. Also, don't forget the 'Exam Tip' boxes which we

Always check information, specification

At AS and A Level, you have to show that you can link theory (what you have read and research you have done) with practice and/or design work. You also have to show Stanislavski's methods being applied to your own work. If you have done all the practical work in the book, you are well on your way to beginning to do this.

AS Level

Component 2: Process and Performance (practical)

Your practitioner knowledge is assessed in the performance and portfolio elements. Your practitioner knowledge must be applied to the performance of Extract 2.

In performance of Extract 2:

- You will be marked on how your work is consistent with the ideas and methods of Stanislavski (Mark scheme with full details can be found on pp. 32–34 of the specification.)

In your portfolio you must provide evidence which shows:

- your explanations about how you created and developed your ideas
- your response to the text
- how you developed, changed and improved your skills during the time you worked
- how precisely, clearly and logically your evidence is presented
- how you make links between theory and the practical work you do (Mark scheme with full details can be found on pp. 35–36 of the specification.)

How could you do this?

- You could use Stanislavski's rehearsal techniques to get into character.
 - Create a mind map showing the given circumstances you have gleaned from the text.
 - In performance groups, run improvisations where you imagine your character's situation and use Magic If to decide how they would react.
 - Analyse your text, splitting it into units and objectives and also coming up with a plan for your character.
 - Spend some time considering the emotions that your character has during the performance. Explore and remember moments in your life where you experienced similar emotions. Find an object, piece of music or smell that evokes that emotion in you and spend time with it. You can then apply it to the appropriate moment in the script.
- You could create detailed directorial scores, like Stanislavski.
 - As director, you could create a detailed score showing all the setting, props, costumes, etc. you wish to include.
 - As lighting, sound, set, costume or puppet designer, you could create a design for elements fit with the play as a whole.
 - As performer, you could keep a detailed log of all the Stanislavskian rehearsal techniques and what you have learnt about your character from them.
 - Keep a log of any ideas you have along with your justification for them for the portfolio to show your progression of ideas.
- You can evaluate your choices based on how far they match or develop Stanislavski's methods.
 - Create a table into which you put key decisions you make during your rehearsal. Add a column where you discuss in what ways this decision matches Stanislavski's methods. You feel it develops it for a current audience.
 - Log the Stanislavskian techniques which you use throughout rehearsal and write what they were intended to achieve, whether you chose to use them or not, and the impact (good or bad) they had on the rehearsal and/or performance.

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A Level

For A Level, you need to study two practitioners. Your practitioner knowledge is a performance and working notebook elements of Component 2, where you devise as a practitioner, and also in Component 3, through both your performance, which must be as a practitioner (different to the one used for Component 2), and your reflective report.

Component 2: Creating original drama (practitioner)

In your working notebook:

- you will be marked for your ability to connect your theoretical knowledge of the practitioner which you created
- you will be marked for your ability to explain and evidence the choices which you made (Mark scheme with full details can be found on pp. 40–41 of the specification.)

In your devised performance:

- you will be marked for how closely your performance is aligned to the ideas and choices of your chosen practitioner

(Mark scheme with full details can be found on pp. 40–41 of the specification.)

How could you do this in your devised piece?

If you choose Stanislavski for this component, you could:

- Use Stanislavski's stage conventions, and those of realism in your performance
 - Come up with a realistic and truthful scheme for the props and costume.
 - Ensure that all action on stage is done with purpose and honesty.
 - In your groups, run a section of your performance using purposefully staged action. Try to run the same section avoiding any kinds of clichéd action. Ask your audience to identify the difference.
- Apply some of the elements of Stanislavski's system to the rehearsal process.
 - In your performance groups, run improvisations where you imagine your character's background and situation and use Magic If to decide how they would react.
 - Go through your script or text breaking it down into units and objectives. What would the character be trying to achieve in each unit? How would they explore further in your devising?
 - Although a devised piece does not have a script, you can still apply units and objectives to your performance by breaking down the scenes you create and ensuring that each character has an objective and that there is an overall super-objective for the piece.
- Show some key moments from Stanislavski's own work within your devised piece.
 - Look at some of the play texts that the MAT performed under Stanislavski's influence (*Lower Depths*, Gorki; *Hamlet*, Shakespeare, etc.) and see if you could incorporate elements into your devised piece.
 - Improvise conversations between Stanislavski and other key figures in the world of theatre (e.g. Brecht; Strasberg; Gorki; Bertolt Brecht). Make notes on the elements which stood out to you and how they are informing your devised piece.
- You might adapt a text or sections of a text into the style of realism.
 - Read an extract of a non-naturalistic play by a playwright such as Bertolt Brecht or Steven Berkoff and stage it as naturalistically as possible. What becomes of the change in style?

How could you do this in your working notebook?

If you choose Stanislavski for this component, you must:

- Evidence your understanding of Stanislavski.
 - Go through the chapters of this resource, noting down elements from each chapter and how they relate to your devised piece.
 - Make a list of 10 things you have learnt about Stanislavski and his techniques and how you will explore further during devising.

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- Show that you can make and analyse connections between Stanislavski and the devising process for your performance.
 - Make a list of the aims and objectives you have for your performance. How do these link with these?
- Show how your initial response to the practitioner changed and developed through the devising process.
 - Keep detailed notes and records of all the decisions you make and all the ideas that are not used in the final piece.
 - When you start devising, make a list of everything you think and know about the practitioner's approach to theatre. Do the same again at the end of your performance.

Component 2: Making Theatre (Practical)

In Extract 3:

- There are up to 15 marks available for your application of the methods of your chosen practitioner.
- You need to ensure that you use the practitioner's ideas effectively.
- You need to ensure that any personal ideas can be linked back to your chosen practitioner.
- You need to ensure elements of the practitioner's work is clear in your performance.

In your reflective report

- You need to evaluate and analyse the process you went through to create your performance.
- You need to refer to your performance.

How could you do this while working on your extract?

If you choose Stanislavski for this component, you could:

- use Stanislavski's stage conventions, and those of rehearsal, in your performance.
 - Come up with a realistic and truthful scheme for the props and costume.
 - Ensure that all action on stage is done with purpose and honesty.
 - In your groups, run a rehearsal of your performance using purposefully staged action. Try to run the rehearsal avoiding any kinds of clichéd action. Ask your group to observe and give feedback.
- apply Stanislavski's system to the rehearsal process.
 - In your performance groups, run improvisations where you imagine your character's situation and use Magic If to decide how they would react.
 - Go through your extract, breaking it down into units and objectives and character's super-objective.
 - Explore the subtext of your extract.
- create a detailed directorial score for your extract.

How could you do this in your reflective report?

- Ensure you reflect on what did and did not work in your rehearsal and performance.
- Comment on which elements of Stanislavski's techniques you felt were useful.
- Analyse the changes you made along the way, through using Stanislavski's techniques.
- Discuss what you intended to achieve with Stanislavski's techniques and what you achieved.

Don't forget the Assessment Objectives:

- A01** Create and develop ideas to communicate meaning as part of the theatre-making process (Assessed in: component 1, AS & A Level)
- A02** Apply theatrical skills to realise artistic intentions in live performance (Assessed in: component 2, AS & A Level)
- A03** Demonstrate knowledge and understanding of how drama and theatre is developed (Assessed in: Component 3, A Level, Interpreting a Performance Text)
- A04** Analyse and evaluate their own work and the work of others (Assessed in: component 4, AS & A Level)

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Answers

Answers 1: The Life and Times of Konstantin Stanislavski

Consolidation questions 1

- 1) Students may choose a variety of different events and moments in the life of Stanislavski for their ability to select events appropriately, and for their ability to explain how influential in Stanislavski's development. Some example explanations have been given as a worthy answer.

Answers might include:

- Birth into a rich family
- Example comment regarding influence: He had the luxury of a good education and therefore he could afford to have leisure time for acting/theatre.
- Grandfather being an actress
- Example comment regarding influence: The family was already interested in acting/theatre world. He would have had access to contacts and experience.
- Father's love of theatre
- Theatre spaces being built in his childhood home
- Taking part in amateur theatre
- Leaving school before completing studies
- Becoming a successful businessman
- Going to the Moscow Theatre School and leaving again
- The Maly Theatre
- Dislike of melodrama
- The Society of Art and Literature
- Starting the Moscow Arts Theatre
- Meeting Gorki and Chekhov
- Marrying and having children
- The Theatre Studios
- 1905 revolution
- Going on international tour
- World War I
- 1917 revolution
- State funding for the MAT
- Withdrawal of state funding for the MAT
- Travelling to Europe and America
- Writing his autobiography
- Having a heart attack
- Being in internal exile
- Stalin's purges

- 2) Answers may include:

- Theatre in decline
- Theatres as commercial
- Art less important than money
- Over-stylised conventions
- Speech declaimed
- Actors using clichéd movements
- Decisions on costume, set and movement made because that is what was always done
- Actors didn't learn lines
- Over use of a prompter

- 3)

Russia: at Stanislavski's birth	Russia: at Stanislavski's death
Julian Calendar	Gregorian Calendar
Serfdom just abolished but still massive difference between rich and the poor and a peasant underclass whose work supported the life and position of the rich	Money of the rich redistributed
No work and condition rights: unions illegal	Regions run by council
Could not rise through class system	Many intellectuals or nobles killed in the purges
Autocratic monarchy	Ruled by Stalin (effectively)

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Extended research activities 1

Activity One

How the groups of students present their findings is up to them, although a focus on precise and concise information is usual for an infographic. The following is some indicative content:

- **Peasant:** Most of the population lived in extreme poverty; most lived a rural agricultural life; in 1861, but still only able to rent (at high cost) land from the nobility; poor standards of living; isolated rural communities; could move to the city and work in a factory, but conditions were poor for most, although some factory owners did provide (very) basic healthcare.
- **Tradesman:** A very small group in Russia: formed what we might call the middle class; involved in business and trade; increased with the industrialisation of Russia in the 1890s; they would be widely travelled; comfortable lifestyle; owned and ran the factories.
- **Noble:** Very comfortable lifestyle; landowners; conservative political views; wanted to maintain the status quo; the biggest and most powerful group; inherited land and titles; the Tsar could also be considered a noble.

Part two/ three: Answers may include:

- Stanislavski may have felt the levels of inequality to be unfair and to want to use his position to help the poor.
- Stanislavski may have wanted to use his family's wealth and power for good.
- Stanislavski may have seen theatre as a tool for political change.
- Stanislavski may have seen a new audience as more open to a new style of theatre.
- Other answers, which can be justified, may be just as valid.

Activity Two

8–10 points about melodrama.

Answers may include:

- Sensational
- Appeals to the emotion
- From melo – music and drame – drama
- Happy ending
- Unrealistic
- Extreme behaviours
- Caricatures/Stereotypes/Archetypes/Stock characters
- Lack of detailed characterisation
- Plot more important than characterisation
- Lacks subtlety
- Often predictable
- Stock characters
- Stock settings

Part two: Students may mention pantomime or various comedies (especially sitcoms), musicals, operas or children's television to melodrama.

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Answers 2: An Overview of Stanislavski's Work

Consolidation questions 2

1)

Book	Date published in the USA	Date published in Russia	Pre/post death publication?	Ideas r
<i>My Life in Art</i>	1924	1924	Before his death	The first translation into English, which is a response to the ideas of the system.
<i>An Actor Prepares</i>	1936	1938	Russian ed. after his death	As above, but with a more detailed response to the ideas of the system.
<i>Building a Character</i>	1949	1955	Well after his death	Over 10 years after his death, the book was published. It is a collection of Russian political ideas, later on.
<i>Creating a Role</i>	1961	1957	Well after his death	Russian edition more famous than the English one. It has been published in many languages.

- 2)
1. Kostya and Tortsov
 2. This allowed Stanislavski to show the system from the perspective of both a student and a teacher. It allowed him to explore things in a practical way, rather than as an academic. He felt important, even when they didn't fit with the political situation of Russia. It was a fictional young actor, rather than Stanislavski himself.

3)

Name	Aims
Society of Art and Literature	Like the other actors; beginning of Stanislavski's system.
Moscow Arts Theatre	To create a true ensemble; discipline of actors; to be a kind of audience.
First Studio	To experiment with new theatre ideas.
Second Studio	To work on the teaching elements of his system.
Open Laboratory	To train actors in the system; to be his legacy.

Extended research activities 2

Activity One: Indicative content:

<i>The Seagull by Anton Chekhov</i>	
What is the play about?	It is a play about four characters, an actress, two writers, and a landowner who is also an amateur actress. The play explores romantic conflicts.
When was the play first performed and how was it received?	First performed 17 October 1896 and it was a disaster. The audience and Chekhov said he would give up writing.
What was different about the MAT production of <i>The Seagull</i> ?	Nemirovich-Danchenko, Stanislavski's partner in the MAT, directed the play. Stanislavski created a detailed inner action and the actors complemented the external action. Everyone was surprised about the performance, but it was not a success.
Any other interesting facts about the MAT production of <i>The Seagull</i> ?	Chekhov did not see the performance until 1 May 1897. The play was performed in December 1898; probably because he was not as much of a disaster as the first production. The Moscow Art Theatre still has the seagull as its emblem. Chekhov apparently liked the <i>mis en scène</i> and the performance of the character of Trigorin. The play was weak.

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Activity Two:

Jean Benedetti said 'if Stanislavski had "been a 'natural', ... there would be no System" might be true?

There are a number of ways in which to answer this question, but some indicative con

- The fact that Stanislavski understood what it was to find something hard and wa
- That Stanislavski was always striving to make his own performances better
- That people who are naturally good at things often find it difficult to explain the s
- Stanislavski found when he asked actors he admired for their advice)
- Had he been a natural he wouldn't have needed the system himself

To explore this idea further and evidence their idea, you could point students in the c and books:

 <https://www.theguardian.com/stage/2013/mar/16/stanislavski-man-method-sim>

 <https://www.theguardian.com/stage/2012/apr/17/modern-drama-konstantin-sta>

 Stanislavski: An Introduction by Jean Benedetti

 My Life by Stanislavski

Answers 3: Stanislavski's Artistic Intentions

Consolidation questions

- 1) Expect an answer which in some way communicates the idea of: 'A set of rules, th does in language: as a set of guidelines which help to create, shape and clarify im
- 2) Expect an answer which talks about:
 - i. Subtext
 - ii. Internal thoughts and external actions
 - iii. Back story
 - iv. Personal experience
 - v. Staging and costume
 - vi. Acting in the same way they would if they were in that situation in real life
- 3) Answers should include some, or all, of the following ideas:
 - Just reproducing life on stage would be boring
 - Because actors would be so in tune with their characters' thoughts and feeli would appear natural
 - They behave as if they are the character
 - If the actor believes in the character then the audience will too
- 4) Expect an answer which includes the following:
 - The given meanings in the text
 - Because it helped to create a more rounded and real character
- 5) Expect an answer which contains the following:
 - Costume and staging should create a sense of truth on stage
 - Enables actor and thus audience to believe the world created
- 6) Expect an answer which includes the following:
 - He was working with Vsevolod Meyerhold
 - This is strange because Meyerhold's ideas encouraged the actors to use thei communicate without language and on a bare stage. This seems at odds with Stanislavski encouraged.

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Extended research activities 3

Activity One:

There are a wide range of potential correct answers for this, but expect a design which there is a rationale for every design decision.

Activity Two:

There are a variety of possible answers to this, the following is one potential interpretation

Script	
<i>Dave has just returned from work. Suhkri is sitting on the sofa. Their eight-week-old baby is asleep on her chest. She looks at her watch and is staring at the TV in front of her, although it is not on.</i> Dave: Hi, Love. How was your day? Better today? [pause] Did you see the NCT girls? <i>Suhkri continues to stare at the TV.</i> Dave: Suhkri? Suhkri: Oh [Suhkri begins to sob uncontrollably] Dave: Suhk, what's wrong? We can't keep doing this. I don't know how to help. I am knackered. I have been at work all day. The day was mad. I didn't get any sleep last night. Suhk! I don't know what to do. Suhkri: I can't do this. Everyone else is a better mum than me. They understand their children. Their children sleep. Dave: He is asleep now! Suhkri: Oh yes, because that is what has happened all day. I have had a perfect sleeping angel and I could be a domestic goddess while you were hard at work being the man and bring home the bacon! Dave: That's not what I meant. <i>The baby begins to cry.</i> Suhkri: And I don't even know what he needs! Is he tired? Is he hungry? I don't know. I thought mums were supposed to know. I don't know! <i>Dave moves to hug the two of them. Suhkri picks up the baby and turns her back on them both.</i>	<i>Both characters are exhausted.</i> <i>She has been trying to do everything on her own.</i> <i>She has been trying to do everything on her own.</i> <i>He does not know how to cope, even though he is a man.</i> <i>Her day has been a struggle.</i> <i>Stop crying!</i> <i>She feels serious and unequal to the task.</i> <i>He is frustrated.</i> <i>She feels misunderstood.</i> <i>Their relationship is strained.</i>

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Activity Three:

There are many ways in which students might answer the question, however below is form and the ways they might be linked to Stanislavski's work.

	Key features	Possible
Theatre of Cruelty	• A break from traditional Western theatre. • An active audience who are involved and engaged. • Against the idea of things becoming mundane and routine. • Felt only specific groups were being explored within theatre. • Interested in the subconscious. • To help audience to purge destructive feelings and emotions usually repress. • Language was unable to communicate well enough so characters reverted to sound. • Audience at the centre and action taking place around. • No set/props/costume. • Overwhelm the audience with sound/light.	Stanislavski's own work was a routine in theatre; as it is probable that Stanislavski was against that too so the Theatre of Cruelty was a reaction against that. Stanislavski felt that the subconscious of certain groups and he wanted to explore that. Stanislavski was very interested in the subconscious. Although Stanislavski's realistic sets and costumes, the reality on stage is different from what he may well have developed with props and costume.
Epic Theatre	• Challenges the theatre of the day. • Makes the audience alert. • Poses problems for the audience to solve. • Issues are unresolved in the performance. • Audience is encouraged to question what they are seeing and forces them to make decisions. • Makes the human being the object of enquiry. • Uses montage. • Each scene can stand alone. • The narrative may be broken up.	As Stanislavski's system was what had become routine, what he wanted to become the norm, it was a reaction against what would want to work as a cliché. Stanislavski wanted to make the human being the object of enquiry, although this may have been more didactic than epic theatre, but it is similar. Stanislavski was very interested in the human being and therefore theatre was the object of enquiry.
Theatre of the Absurd	• Questions essential concepts such as truth, morality and the meaning of life. • Characters who can't find a purpose in life. • May be satirical. • May be darkly humorous. • May be absurd. • May not have a clear plot structure. • May contain tragic or horrific elements. • Often aims to shock. • Often naturalistic language, however cliché or nonsense is often used to denote the confusion and/or meaningless of the characters' situation.	Stanislavski's interest in the human being well have developed into the Theatre of the Absurd. Stanislavski felt that characters, plot and absurdist theatre were used to explore characters who were in a state of confusion and/or meaningless of the characters' situation. Stanislavski's interest in the human being could have led him to develop a more engaging and educational theatre.

Answers 4: The Innovative Nature of Stanislavski's Approach**Consolidation questions 4**

- 1) The current theatre of the time: Melodrama.
- 2) It is the director's notes, including detail of the scene, including setting, props, lighting, actor's movement and line delivery.
- 3) Stanislavski's system and his way of working focused on using rehearsal to create characters and action that could then be applied to direction, design and performance to represent life on stage, truthfully.

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Extended research activities 4

Activity One: Create a mis en scène

This will be achieved differently by different students and for different script choices, include information about many or all of the following:

- Staging
- Lighting
- Sound
- Costume
- Props
- Movement on stage
- Delivery of lines

Activity Two: Create a Through-line of MAT Productions

Look for a text which plots the given productions in chronological order (*The Sea and the Broom*, 1911/12; *The Government Inspector*, Gogol, 1921; *Le Mariage de Figaro*, 1784) and adds two to three extra productions with notes about their successes and failures. Indicative content: (There are other productions which students may also select).

- 1898 – *The Merchant of Venice* (Shakespeare): A Shylock with a strong Yiddish accent, played positively and Stanislavski was accused of racism, as well as making the poetic language too literal.
- 1902 – *The Lower Depths* (Gorki): A great success. Considered a part of social realism, depicting the dire circumstances of the lower classes.
- 1909 – *A Month in the Country* (Ivan Turgenev): The first production using the technique of rehearsal, which was unpopular with the actors. The production was a success.

Answers 5: Stanislavski's Working Methods

Consolidation questions 5

Activity One

- 1) Stanislavski believed that rehearsal was key to the development of a great performance.
- 2) What do I do? Why do I do it? How do I do it?
- 3) Accept any appropriate style of diagram which communicates the following:
 - Given circumstances taken from the text.
 - The text broken down into units and each of those units is given an objective.
 - The objectives are linked together to create the super-objective.
 - The subtext is informed by both the given circumstances and the objectives.

Activity Two

Accept appropriate answers for each rehearsal technique

Action: The physical actions of a character on stage. Magic If: Behaving 'as if' you are the character. Given Circumstances: The elements given to you in the script. Imagination: What the actor brings to the text themselves, over and above what is written in the script. Units and Objectives: The sections a script can be broken down into and the motivation for each unit. Super-objective and Through-line of Action: The overarching motivation for the whole script and the manner in which this moves through the story.	Subtext: The hidden meaning behind the script. Circle of Attention: Rehearsal technique where the actor focuses on the stage and becomes part of the text, forgetting the audience. Emotion Memory: Actors use their own past experiences and reactions to real events to bring truth and reality to their performance. Tempo-rhythm: The pace and rhythm of the inner and outer thoughts.
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Extended research activities 5

Activity One

Indicative content

Ensure units of action are broken in appropriate places and that all objectives are actions directed at someone or something else.

e.g.

To show [another character] I am sad = correct

To cry = incorrect

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Activity Two

Accept any answer which is well justified in terms of progression of character development.
Example: Given circumstances; subtext; units and objectives; imagination → I have chosen the unit with what there is in the text (given circumstances), follow up with looking at the underlying motivation in the text (subtext) then having looked at what is in the text, I would move to splitting the text into units and then reasons for the actions of the character (objective), followed by using imagination to bring this to life.

Activity Three

Accept any technique which is well matched with the character and the situation.
Example: Imagination – improvise the five minutes leading up to the moment in the script; then the day before the events which were important for the character leading up to the moment in the script.

Answers to the Performance Style and Theatrical Conventions**Consolidation Questions 6**

1) Realism

2)

Similarities	
Both use realistic setting/props/costume.	Realism wanted to create a realistic picture of life on stage; naturalism was more exactly on stage.
Both use realistic language.	Naturalism was fascinated by the decay, realism was not.
Both want to create a version of reality.	Naturalism focused on the lower middle classes.
Both a direct response to the literature/drama which had come before (melodrama).	Realism is not interested in the past.

3) He used symbolism, staged plays all in verse and was working on a production of *The Cherry Orchard* and the system.**Extended research activities 6****Activity One**

Look for analysis which covers the detail and realistic props, setting and costume. The proximity of the characters, the engagement with each other, the use of the fourth wall or the Stanislavski system or of realism.

Activity Two**Clip one**

Subtext: Benedict – trying to show sympathy and care for Beatrice, because he knows she is in love with her, but (until he blurts it out) he cannot show this. When he says he loves her he is trying to save her from rejection or looking stupid and then tries to save face and make himself look less stupid. He wishes that she had someone who would love and care for her and help her out in the end. Benedict says he loves her, she is shocked, worried that he is lying and also trying to understand why he is so strange.

Clip two

Subtext: Edmund – the younger brother is trying to hide his drinking suggesting he is afraid that his brothers will disapprove. The subtext of 'That's what drove me to drink' is that his drinking is a way of coping. Perhaps suggesting an addiction as well as a guilt about doing it. Edmund seems unsure of his decision to cover up. When talking about his illness, Edmund seems worried despite his denial. He is angry at his brother for treating both him and his mother as inferior and incompetent.

Jamie – the older brother enjoys having caught his younger brother and this gives him a sense of power. When they both drink they are 'in it together' setting them up in opposition to their father who is in the bottle shows they are both doing something they shouldn't be doing. The pleasure he gets from his addiction, as does hiding the fact that he is drinking. Jamie speaks to his brother as if he knows better because he is older. He is worried about his mother and is blaming his brother if anything goes wrong.

Activity Three

A form of the Stanislavski system which focuses on the internal motives, motivations and responses of the character; attempting to create an honest and truthful representation of reality.

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Answers 7: Stanislavski's Collaboration with Other Practitioners

Consolidation questions 7

- 1) Subtext
- 2) How the students choose to create their timeline may differ, but the key performances should be included:
 - 1896 *The Seagull*
 - 1899 *Uncle Vanya*
 - 1901 *The Three Sisters*
 - 1902 *The Philistines*
 - 1902 *The Lower Depths*
 - 1904 *Uncle Mitya*
 - 1906 *Dr. of the Sun*
 - 1908 *Hamlet*
- 3) Any three from the following:
 - Craig thought *Hamlet* couldn't be performed.
 - Craig wanted symbolic characters.
 - Stanislavski wanted realist characters.
 - Craig wanted *Hamlet* on stage throughout.
 - Craig wanted actors to be ubermarionettes.
 - Stanislavski wanted actors behaving as if they were in their character's position.
 - Stanislavski usually used realist staging.
 - Craig designed a simple set with screens which could be moved symbolically.

Extended research activities 7

Activity One

It will depend which practitioner the student chooses, but look for a brief explanation of how and when they met Stanislavski, followed by an explanation of the work which they should then either be followed by or interspersed with information about the influence of Stanislavski's work.

Activity Two

There are various elements which differ from a realist set design. Some of the answers are:

- Lack of detail
- Use of props to create a sense of depth
- Simple, black screens
- Simple, symbolic costume
- Use of cloth to give a sense of furniture

Other answers, clearly explained and justified, may also be appropriate.

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Answers 8: Stanislavski's Influence on Other Practitioners

Consolidation questions 8

- 1) 1906 and 1922; the tours were welcomed because Russian art was revered in Europe.
- 2) *My Life in Art* – he had wanted to write books about his system, but the publisher which he wrote reluctantly.

3)

Name	Did s/he meet Stanislavski?	Which elements of the system did they adopt?
Lee Strasberg	No	Method acting was developed from the focus on emotional truth that Stanislavski brought on that 1920s tour. However, method acting, that it focuses too heavily on emotional truth, encourages actors to 'become' their characters in a potentially dangerous manner.
Stella Adler	Yes	An actor should not merely use memory to recall emotions, but should use their character's experiences to create the emotion.
Sanford Meisner	No	Encouraged actors to consider the emotional truth of the text. His technique (the Meisner technique) focuses on the individual character and more on the relationship between characters.

- 4) Brecht and Stanislavski – Brecht's approach was new and innovative, whereas Stanislavski's became stagnant. Brecht offered new ideas which were in opposition to the system of Stanislavski. Brecht, some supported Stanislavski.

Extended research activities 8

- 1) Actors who may be chosen:
 Stanislavski: John Gielgud, Peggy Ashcroft and Michael Redgrave
 Brecht: Lawrence Olivier, Joan Littlewood, Peter Hall
 Ensure for whichever actor was chosen, the information sheet contains information about:
 • Key performances
 • Plays written and/or directed by them
 • Theatres they worked in
 • Film credits
 • Any other interesting information related to their career in theatre
- 3) a. Harold Pinter, Cheryl Crawford and Lee Strasberg
 b. New York
 c. 1931–1940
 d. The War; the lure of Hollywood
 e. 1947
 f. Elia Kazan, Cheryl Crawford and Robert Lewis
 g. Lee Strasberg

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