

2016 specification
first exams in 2016 (2016 for AS)

The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-Time

A Complete Play Guide for AS / A Level

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Teacher's Introduction

The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-Time is a story which is adored by children and adults alike. It is available in a variety of formats as a novel and a play. Its focus on adolescence, family, trust and difference makes it a highly relatable and heartfelt text which creates characters that are easy to become attached to. One of the reasons *Curious Incident* as a script is that it provides the freedom to imagine exciting, abstract scenarios using a variety of techniques. The original production was praised for its use of multimedia and projection, and its use of text to study in a modern classroom, and also for its use of physical theatre – a performance style which is very popular with young audiences and performers. *Curious Incident* is a text which has many different readings and interpretations, making it a fantastic text to study at A Level.

This resource can be used to study the play in preparation for performance or examination. It can be used in conjunction with any learning specification; however, the resource has been specifically designed for the A Level Eduqas Drama and Theatre Studies examination (Component 3: Text in Performance). This resource is designed to cover examination specification, but also goes beyond the specification to provide a range of activities and resources to support learning.

Inside this resource:

Section 1: Context introduces the key context required for a full understanding of the play. The play is introduced and the original novel is also explored. Also provided is a synopsis of the play to provide a general understanding of the play's characters and themes.

Section 2: Scene-by-scene Analysis works through the play section by section, and offers a range of practical and written activities to explore key ideas. The play is broken down into specific episodes. The purposes of this resource the action has been split into specific episodes. These are presented in the order. This section includes practical performance activities, design-focused exercises and questions which are modelled on the Eduqas specification. The analysis will involve looking at the text and language, while also focusing on any practical aspects or relevant contexts.

Section 3: Developing a Production Concept deals more closely with aspects of the play as a whole. It is here that students' ideas and design concepts can be honed and refined. This section is placed upon encouraging their decisions to be in fitting with the entire play. This section includes research to research prominent practitioners, and then gives key questions for each aspect of the play: performance, lighting, sound, set design, costumes and props.

How to use this resource:

The teacher's notes and answers section of this resource includes short answers, and full answers for each activity. Where relevant, they also detail the purpose and intention of the activity, and draw out key knowledge and understanding from practical work, or alternative work that can be carried out depending on class size or ability.

Practice Essay Questions: These exam-style questions are designed for the purpose of providing a technically accurate representation of the exam questions which will be found in the exam. The questions, counts, wording, and further instructions for students are prescribed by us, and are based on the exam board. Please refer to the exam board website for examples and past papers.

Use the following key to determine the type of activity:

Note: this resource refers to Bloomsbury Methuen Drama edition. ISBN: 978-1-4081-7335-0.



Discussion



Writing

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Assessment Objectives

Assessment objectives set by Ofqual apply to all AS and A Level Drama and Theatre Studies specifications and are used by all exam boards. Exam and class assessments will determine how successfully students achieved the following AOs:

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

EDUQAS A LEVEL DRAMA AND THEATRE STUDIES

The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-Time is a set text for **Component 3: Text in Performance** of the Eduqas A Level syllabus. In the exam, the play is a set text for Section C. The focus is on a specific extract of the play while adopting the perspective of either a performer or a director, appropriate to the question. This 10–15 minute extract will be provided in advance of the exam. Students must study this extract in the context of the play as a whole.

The weighting of assessment objectives for this unit in relation to the rest of the syllabus is as follows:

Weight of the Assessment Objectives – Eduqas A Level Drama and Theatre Studies

Component	AO1 %	AO2 %	AO3 %	AO4 %
Component 1: Theatre Workshop	10	10	-	-
Component 2: Text in Action	10	20	-	10
Component 3: Text in Performance	-	-	30	10
Total for GCE A Level	20%	30%	30%	20%

This resource prepares students for the demands on these assessment objectives through the following content and activities:

- AO3:** Relevant social contexts are discussed and explored, alongside theatrical styles that are influenced or are applicable to the play. Students are encouraged to think about directorial ideas in both a creative and logistical way, developing an informed understanding of how theatre is made and how different aspects of the theatre support one another.
- AO4:** Students are encouraged to evaluate and justify the directorial and design choices made in practical exercises, through peer feedback, group discussions and written tasks. They are also encouraged to discuss other examples of theatre they have seen, and how these might influence their own work.

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section one: context

The People behind the Play

Simon Stephens

Simon Stephens is a British playwright, born 6th February 1971. He read History at university and then went on to work as a teacher. He has previously taught at the Royal Court on the South Bank and is the Artistic Associate at the Lyric Hammersmith. His plays are frequently performed across Europe.

His most famous plays include: *Punk Rock*, *London*, *Bluebird*, *Harper Regan*, *Porno*. His most recent work on adaptation includes *The Threepenny Opera*.

Mark Haddon

The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-Time was originally published as a novel in two separate editions, such as the Commonwealth Writers' Prize and the *Guardian* Children's Fiction Prize. There are two separate editions: one for adults, and one for children. This is an unusual publication strategy as the story had originally been aimed at adults. The children's edition was created to address adult and child-friendly themes – some of the more explicit context was removed.

Haddon was born 26th September 1962, and studied English at Merton College in Oxford. He is a children's author and self-illustrated many of his early works. He is the writer of *The Boy on the Boat* written for BBC television on two occasions.

The Play

The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-Time

Haddon's novel was adapted for stage in 2012 at the National Theatre. The play was received with critical acclaim and won seven Olivier Awards (at the time, this was the record) including Best New Play in 2013. The play was transferred to the Apollo Theatre in 2013, but the production closed when the auditorium ceiling collapsed. The play returned to the Gielgud Theatre in 2014 and ran until June 2017. The production also moved to Broadway and won a Tony Award for Best Play in 2015. The production has toured the world. The play has been praised for its use of innovative design and technology.

The Story

Curious Incident is about a 15-year-old boy named Christopher Boone, who lives with his mother and has behavioural problems on the autism spectrum; however, Haddon does not disclose that he is not an expert on the disorder. He has said: '*Curious Incident* is not an Asperger's... if anything it's a novel about difference, about being an outsider, about the surprising and revealing way.'¹

Christopher Boone is a mathematical genius who has never explored the world outside his home without his parents. One night, he discovers his neighbour's dog has been murdered and decides to investigate. The play is very loyal to the original novel, with the main part of the story being told from a first-person narrative, Christopher's book is read by him. In the first kind of narrator. In the second part, Siobhan suggests that the school perform *Curious Incident* so then the production adopts the form of a play-within-a-play. The play tackles themes of difference, adolescence, coming of age, family, betrayal, and death.

¹ Mark Haddon in a blog post 'Asperger's & Autism' on his website *Mark Haddon*, 2009. Available at <http://www.markhaddon.com/aspergers-and-autism>

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Synopsis

Part 1

The play opens with Christopher Boone and Mrs Shears standing and looking at a murdered Wellington with a garden fork. Christopher's teacher, Siobhan, is sitting to the side with a book – she is acting as narrator. A police officer arrives and questions Christopher. The police officer tries to touch Christopher, who reacts by screaming and hits the police officer. Siobhan explains that Christopher finds people and emotions difficult. At the police station Christopher tells the duty sergeant that he didn't kill Wellington, the dog, and asks the sergeant to collect him, and tells Christopher that he needs to keep his nose out of other people's business.

Siobhan suggests to Christopher that he writes a diary and records all his stories in it, which she reads from. We learn that Christopher's mother, Judy, died of a heart attack two years ago. Christopher and Siobhan are at school, and Christopher tells Siobhan that he is going to ignore the police officer who murdered Wellington. Christopher begins his investigation by going to visit Mrs Alexander, but nobody knows anything. He meets Mrs Alexander, who invites him into her house.

Christopher's dad is trying to convince his school to let Christopher sit a Maths A Level. Ed is excellent at Maths. Christopher tells his dad about his detective work and Ed becomes suspicious. He makes Christopher promise not to talk about Mr or Mrs Shears. He makes Christopher promise not to talk about Wellington's death any more. Christopher speaks with Mrs Alexander again. She tells him about Mrs Shears, and Christopher tells her that his mother has died. Mrs Alexander says she knows Mrs Shears and tells Christopher that Mr Shears and his mother had been having an affair. Christopher writes down his memories of Christopher's mother.

Ed has found Christopher's book, which talks about his mother's affair. Ed is very angry. He is speaking to Mrs Alexander, and they have a fight, which becomes physical when Ed hits Mrs Alexander's arm. Ed takes Christopher's book, and then comes back to apologise for losing his temper.

Christopher tries to find his book while his dad is at work. He finds the book hidden under a pile of unopened letters addressed to himself. He discovers the letter is from his mother, written to her after her death. Christopher later finds 43 letters addressed to him. His mother explains that she had to leave their house, and moved to London with Mr Shears, who was looking after Christopher. Christopher becomes extremely upset and begins to hate his father.

When Ed comes home and finds Christopher, he is very worried about him. He promises to talk to Christopher again, and admits that he killed Wellington. He says that he thought she was the murderer, but she didn't and he had become very angry. Christopher decides that he can't trust his father because he is a liar and a murderer. Christopher decides to go and find his mother.

Part 2

Siobhan asks Christopher whether the school can make a play out of his book, and Christopher agrees. It is a play of a play. Christopher asks Mrs Alexander if she will look after his pet rat while he is away. She says that they should find Christopher's father. Christopher then goes to find the police officer who is confused. He asks lots of people for help and eventually gets to the train, where he is stopped. Christopher manages to hide from the police officer and finds his way to London. He is in trouble on the tube when he loses his rat, and a man has to pull him from the tracks.

Christopher eventually makes it to his mother's house, and Judy is appalled when she finds out that Christopher she had died. Ed appears looking for Christopher, who refuses to come home. Judy ends up taking Christopher back to Swindon when Roger (Mr Shears) becomes suspicious.

Christopher sits his Maths A Level, and tries to explain it, but Siobhan says that it is a play. Ed asks Christopher if they can start a project together, one which involves the school and his friends again, and then he gives Christopher a dog. Christopher receives an A* for his Maths. He tells Siobhan that, because he solved the mystery of who killed Wellington, it means he is a detective. After the curtain call, Christopher returns to the stage to solve his Maths problem.

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ACTIVITY 1 - CHARACTER PROFILES

Create character profiles for the following characters:

CHRISTOPHER, SIOBHAN, ED, JUDY, MRS SHEARS, MR SHEARS, WELLINGTON, M

Your character profile should include the following information:

Age, relationship to Christopher (unless you are writing about Christopher!), other three key facts about them – these might include important things they do or experience. For example, one of the key facts about Mrs Shears is that her dog has been murdered.

ACTIVITY 2 - DRAW A COMIC STRIP

Draw yourself a comic strip which illustrates the entire play – this will consolidate key moments and the plot of the play. Focus on the important moments – limit your speech bubbles to explain what is happening in each image.

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ACTIVITY 3 - REDUCE THE PLAY

In groups of three or four, perform a mini version of the play with no more than 10 minutes of the play. It should be no more than one minute long, and you might have to perform it in a different setting. Spend 15 minutes planning and rehearsing your mini play. The plays should then be performed to the class. Discuss as a class how different each group's mini play was. Were there any important moments? Did some focus on anything in particular? Did the mini plays create different suggestions about the play, or what feelings the play might create?

Physical Theatre and Frantic Assembly

Physical theatre is an extremely important feature of *The Curious Incident*. It is used because Christopher cannot easily express his emotions or feelings through his speech. Therefore, physicality is used as another means of expression.

What is Physical Theatre?

Physical theatre is a form of theatre which is removed from naturalistic portrayals of human behaviour and expression. It emphasises the use of physical movement, such as dance, mime, or gesture. It is often stylised, symbolic, and representational. Some forms of physical theatre use very little or no dialogue, but some practitioners use it alongside dialogue to enhance the meaning or impact of a play.



DV8 are a company who are believed to be one of the original innovators of physical theatre. They use very little dialogue, and used physical theatre to address taboo social and political issues.

Physical theatre can sometimes be difficult to distinguish from dance; however, it is more gesture based. This means movement is not dictated or attached to music or rhythm, but is used for storytelling or intentions of a character.

Key Definitions

Mime – using only movement to suggest actions or feelings

Gesture – a movement of the body used to express an idea

Frantic Assembly

One of the most popular and prominent theatre companies who use physical theatre. They believe movement and physicality should always complement a storyline, not replace it – they don't call themselves a 'physical theatre company' because they don't want to be seen as a gimmick. They make decisions and also feel they have a lack of professional training in 'physical theatre'. They rehearse inside the set so that the actors can explore their environment and plan their movements.

Frantic Assembly worked on *Curious Incident* to create the movement routines, set design, and the journey from Swindon to London. The Movement Director, Scott Graham, said that:

'I think the stylised ensemble nature of this production is important because it's different from the world. **Nothing really exists unless Christopher wants it to**, so the company moves around until Christopher focuses then they will snap into position. They represent chaos and they can be absolutely pure and linear and precise, whatever state of mind they are in.'

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ACTIVITY 4 - MOVEMENT TO REFLECT FEELINGS

Scott Graham explains that physical theatre in the play reflects Christopher's state about the two states Graham spoke about: chaos and precise.

- As a class, walk about the space. How will you make your movements precise? How will your move as a class? Perhaps your speed will be consistent, and your movements in unison for a few minutes.
- Now change your movements to become chaotic. How will you change? Are you still in tune with one another.
- Discuss what emotions might be attached to these two states. How might they be expressed?

ACTIVITY 5 - RESEARCHING FRANTIC ASSEMBLY

Using YouTube and working independently, you should research different productions of Frantic Assembly. You might want to look at Othello, Lovesong, Stockholm, or Beautiful People.

What do you notice about the type of movement used? What different kinds of movement change depending on the type or feel of the play? Make notes on your findings.

ACTIVITY 6 - MIME IT

- Spend one minute performing each of these actions in mime: playing an instrument, eating a meal, writing, making a cup of tea, reading a book, lifting a heavy box. Try to exaggerate your movement so that it would be clear to an audience what you are doing.
- Find a partner. Now, each of you choose one of the actions from above. You perform your action from your partner. Spend one minute performing this same action, showing different feelings or emotion: angrily, sadly, enthusiastically, and reluctantly. Your partner should be commenting on how the emotions changed the performance. You should then swap and your partner does the same exercise.
- Now, perform these same actions in mime, but this time you must decide upon something which gets in the way of your action! For example, if you are lifting a heavy box, that it is actually too heavy to lift at all, or if you are reading a book, perhaps the book falls from your hands. Your partner should try to guess what the problem was. You should then think about what you can do to make the action clearer. Try again until you can perform the action clearly. You should then do the same for your partner.

ACTIVITY 7 - FROM HERE TO THERE

Working as a class, choose one person who needs to travel from one point of the room to another. They must begin and end by standing on a chair. However, they must not touch the floor, other people in the room, and the chair. We'll call this person 'the traveller'. This person should be calm and confident with being lifted.

The rest of the class must come up with ways to help the traveller get to their destination. They can create stepping stones, or become stepping stones themselves. Other students can hold the traveller, or carry them. Make sure that every person in the class touches the traveller.

Make sure that you take your time with this activity and assess how you will support the traveller before you jump in and try it! Use the entire class to support one another and be aware of the risk attached to any lifts, and make sure you have a strong, solid foundation before you lift. Be careful to be carrying any weight. Keep concentration and communication throughout. Encourage creative ways of moving the traveller!

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Working with the Spectrum

Although Christopher is left undiagnosed in the play, it is generally accepted that he is on the autistic spectrum. Autism spectrum disorder can affect a person's ability to communicate with others. Those with Asperger's syndrome are also on the autistic spectrum.

A spectrum condition means that every person with autism will be affected differently. However, there are some similarities which are shared among people with autism:

- Difficulty understanding emotions, facial expressions, or tone of voice, e.g. sarcasm
- Difficulty understanding metaphors or figures of speech
- Slower cognitive processing – difficulty filtering through information
- Need for repetitive behaviour and routine
- Sensory sensitivity, e.g. over or under sensitivity to touch, sound, colour or pain
- Highly focused on specific interests or skills

There are many myths or stereotypes that have become associated with the autistic spectrum. Some of these include the belief that all people with autism:

- have no creative imagination
- are a genius or have a special gift
- don't feel empathy
- are uncommunicative
- are more violent than most people

However, a person on the autistic spectrum may be all or none of those things. The presence of any of these traits in a person, and is not necessarily dependent on having autism. People with autism may have different ways of expressing their emotions; for example, an autistic person might have a meltdown if they are overwhelmed. A meltdown might be expressed verbally by screaming, physically by lashing out, or by refusing to respond or move – or, they might do neither of these things. Triggers for a meltdown vary from person to person. Understanding that Christopher views the world in a very different way to most people is extremely important, because the play is supposed to be a portrayal of a person with an autistic condition. It is also key to understanding how he interacts with other characters, and how they might interact with him in certain ways.

ACTIVITY 8 - WHAT IS AUTISM?

Watch this video from the National Autistic Society which explains a little bit about Asperger's syndrome is: [zzed.uk/8301-aspergers](https://www.zzed.uk/8301-aspergers)

ACTIVITY 9 - RESEARCHING THE SPECTRUM

Working independently, research the autistic spectrum. Create a mind map or list of characteristics of the condition – try to find as many as you can, and don't be afraid to record conflicting information. Watch videos, find case studies, and read about the condition on medical websites. Find out what it is like to live with the condition and then keep your mind map / list, because later on you will use it to look at the play.

ACTIVITY 10 - DISCUSSING THE SPECTRUM

As a class, discuss what you think the challenges might be of having an autistic condition. How might it affect day-to-day life? How might it affect relationships? What about the challenges of living with the condition, or simply interacting with them? What do you think some of the most common stereotypes of autism are? Why do you think these ideas or stereotypes are damaging? Who do you think is responsible for creating them?

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section Two: scene-by-scene Analysis

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Summary

A dead dog lies in the middle of the stage with a garden fork sticking out of its back, standing on one side of it, and Mrs Shears on the other. They stare at one another. Mrs Shears accuses him of killing the dog. Siobhan is reading from Christopher's book. Christopher becomes distressed, rolls into a ball on the grass and begins to cry. Mrs Shears asks him some questions, but Christopher doesn't cooperate well. When the police officer asks Christopher from the ground, Christopher screams and hits the police officer. Siobhan reads some more of the book, explaining why Christopher finds people so scary. At the police station, the duty sergeant continues to question Christopher. Christopher's story is not believed, and the sergeant decides to give him a caution.

Part One: The Murder and Police Station (pp. 1-10)

Learning about Christopher

The play opens with a series of scenes which show Christopher in a situation which is far out of his comfort zone; therefore, we begin to learn about him while he is in a vulnerable and volatile state. This immediately introduces Christopher as being very different – we know he doesn't communicate well, he doesn't like to be touched, has an incredible attention to detail and always needs to know 'exactly what time it is'. It becomes clear from the outset that Christopher is behaving in a way which a lot of people would not be familiar with.

We learn about Christopher in two ways: through Siobhan's narration, and in the scenes where he is interacting with Christopher. For example, the first police officer Christopher meets reacts to Christopher's behaviour very well – he quickly becomes impatient and uncomfortable with Christopher lashing out at him. However, when the duty sergeant tries to take Christopher to the station, Christopher screams, the duty sergeant realises that he is going to have to treat Christopher with some allowances for his behaviour.

The first police officer reacts to Christopher in a way which emphasises that Christopher is very different and important because it affects the way that the audience also react to Christopher. The police officer, through the eyes of someone who doesn't understand him; therefore, this makes it easier for the audience to understand him. Had the first scene of the play been Christopher interacting with a police officer who knows his behaviour to be familiar, then the audience would view his character in a different light. To show that the police officer is having trouble communicating with Christopher, the director can use physical and vocal skills to portray the police officer's confusion and frustration. The police officer can use physical skills such as placing a hand to their head, or throwing their hands up in despair. The police officer can use vocal skills such as sarcasm, or facial expressions such as frowning or rolling their eyes, to show impatience.

ACTIVITY 1 - DEAD DOG

The opening stage directions explain that there is a dead dog centre stage, with a garden fork sticking out of its back. Discuss as a class, how might you create that image onstage?

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ACTIVITY 2 - INTERACTING WITH CHRISTOPHER

Working in pairs, rehearse the conversation between Christopher and the police officer. Start with the officer saying 'Would you like to tell me what's going on here, young man?' until 'I'm arresting you'. You should omit Siobhan's one line. The person playing the police officer should use physical skills which show their confusion and wariness in reaction to Christopher's words. This should last for 5-10 minutes.

The class should share their scenes with one another. Give feedback and constructively discuss how clearly the friction between Christopher and the police officer was shown. Which physical skills were most effective?

ACTIVITY 3 - ATTENTION TO DETAIL

When Christopher empties his pockets, he is very precise about describing what he finds: a piece of string, a wooden puzzle, three pellets of rat food for Toby, £1.47 (made up of two 10p coins, a 5p coin and a 2p coin), a red paper clip, a key for the front door, and 13 attachments including a wire stripper, a saw, a toothpick, and tweezers. What might they tell you about Christopher? What is important to him?

ACTIVITY 4 - CHRISTOPHER ON THE SPECTRUM

Working independently, use the research you did earlier to create another mind map that describes Christopher's position on the spectrum.

For example, you might have written 'doesn't like physical contact' on your original mind map. You could add to it that Christopher doesn't like to be touched, because he hits the police officer when the sergeant that he wanted the police officer to stop touching him.

For every symptom you pick out as being one of Christopher's symptoms, find the research that supports it. You should also come back to this new mind map / list and add to it as you read the play. It should be a complete record of all the ways Christopher displays autistic tendencies. If you have any other ideas, you could also add these as you go too!

Gesture as Motif

When Christopher's father, Ed, comes to visit, he and Christopher hold out their hands and touch palms. They then touch fingers. This gesture is an agreed movement between Christopher and Ed. It means they are good, and that they love one another. It is the equivalent of a hug for Christopher. It is the only way Christopher will let anyone touch him, and it is reserved for his father.

This simple gesture becomes a very important motif in the play – this means it is used throughout the play. The gesture means that Christopher is not alone, and it is used to comfort him. However, it is also used to comfort Ed and Judy when they feel as though they need a reminder of Christopher's love and trust. There are a few times in the play when Christopher does not cooperate with the gesture, and this also becomes very significant.

ACTIVITY 5 - NEVER TO TOUCH

Discuss as a class how it might feel to never be touched. Imagine that you could never be touched – your child or a parent, for example. How might that feel? How do you think Christopher would feel if he was touched? Why does he not like being touched? How do you think Christopher's parents would feel if they were to touch him? What emotions might that provoke?

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ACTIVITY 6 - PASS THE GESTURE

As a class, walk around the space at random and in silence. When you come face to face, raise your hand. The other person should then decide whether or not they will touch fingers. If they agree, the gesture should be performed very slowly – as if you are passing something. You also have the power to not engage in the gesture and just walk away. Spend 10 minutes on this activity.

As a class, discuss the following points: How did the gesture feel? How did you feel when you were rejected by another person? How did it feel if someone rejected your gesture? What was the effect of the gesture?

Were any stories created through this activity? How might Ed feel when Christopher performs the gesture? How might it feel for Christopher when they do perform the gesture in front of the audience? How does the gesture affect the audience?

Part One: Siobhan and Ed (pp. 10-15)**Summary**

Siobhan reads more of Christopher's book, explaining why he doesn't understand his father, Ed, tells him that he needs to stay out of trouble. Christopher wants to keep Wellington, the dog, but he is warned by Ed to leave it. Siobhan reads an email about a mother dying. Christopher tells Siobhan that he is going to be a detective and that he will keep Wellington, even though his father asked him not to. Siobhan tells Christopher that she will help him with Wellington. Christopher agrees.

Structure

In the novel, Christopher doesn't do a great job of filtering through his experiences. He details everything and doesn't leave a lot out. Not all of this would translate very well to a stage production. Siobhan reading Christopher's book means that she can act as the person who filters the important moments – such as moments of **exposition** or plot development. This makes her a character acting simultaneously as a structural device.

The action in *Curious Incident* doesn't always take place sequentially, and we often see dates and times instantaneously. In the first production of *Curious Incident*, the director used the entire play, making it easy for them to step up and into the action whenever they were needed. This is done between conversations seamlessly, just as though they are pressed together like

ACTIVITY 1 - CREATING TABLEAUX

Siobhan has read and filtered through Christopher's book in order to present the most interesting moments to the audience. Go through the synopsis and find these moments. In groups of three or four, create a series of **tableaux** which represent these moments. Present them to the class. Give each other feedback and discuss why you think these moments are important to be cut, which ones might you choose, and why?

Key Definitions

Exposition – insertion of important background information

Tableau – a still picture which represents a scene or moment

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This helps the play to move along at a pace which is exciting for the audience. In from Christopher reading the book, into a conversation between Christopher and Christopher's book which explains his mother's death two years ago, and then into Siobhan and Christopher. Within five pages, we have jumped between present, the book; conversations which happen onstage are sometimes live, imagined or all revolve around Christopher's experiences, the audience have a central figure to everything a whole lot easier to understand. By using the space onstage, Christopher in different areas of the stage and different conversations, which will represent a moment and time – this is called **cross-cutting**.

ACTIVITY 2 - STAGING SPACE

Working in groups of three, you should rehearse this section of the play, from Christopher's 'I'm sorry' up until Ed's line 'I'm sorry Christopher, I'm really sorry.'

You should rehearse and focus on making it clear when Christopher is moving between the different areas of the stage. You might want to explore setting up the different scenes in different areas of the stage and how they might move between them. Alternatively, you might have the characters approaching each other from different areas of the stage up so that Christopher only needs to turn to speak to someone else. It's important to make it clear for the audience! Rehearse for 15 minutes.

As a class, share your scenes. Give feedback and discuss the most effective way to stage the scenes.

Siobhan

We have already established that Siobhan's role allows her to pick out the important parts of the book, but she does much more than this. Siobhan is a multifunctioning character who plays as a character, on a structural level, and also helps the audience.

As a character, Siobhan is a crucial part of Christopher's life. She is his teacher and more than anyone else in the world – more than his parents. Siobhan helps Christopher understand the world and people, while also encouraging him to consider his own feelings throughout the book.

Structurally, Siobhan is the narrator and then the director of the play-within-a-play. She narrates the events, Siobhan also helps to move the events along by encouraging Christopher to think about his plans on doing next. She also allows Christopher to engage in a lot of the physical actions that he narrates the events.

For the audience, Siobhan is key to understanding Christopher. Siobhan is able to convey the emotion through storytelling that Christopher would never be able to achieve, and she tells the audience what Christopher is feeling at any given moment. It would not make sense for Christopher to tell the audience the story of his life, because he does not like talking to strangers and does not like sharing his ideas. Therefore, it only makes sense that Siobhan should be encouraging him to share his ideas. she can then share them on his behalf.

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Voice of a Narrator

The actor playing Siobhan should create a voice which is appropriate for her role as Christopher. Luckily, these roles complement one another very well because a teacher to a group of people – their audience is a classroom. When speaking to Christopher that she needs to help him understand her speech, but must also be engaged and interested. There are a number of ways you can change your voice in order to inhabit a character:

Accent	a specific way of pronouncing your words, associated with location
Diction	the clarity with which you speak words
Inflection	changing vocal qualities at particular moments for effect
Intonation	rise and fall of the voice
Pitch	raising your voice to be higher or lower
Projection	speaking in a way which allows your voice to be heard by many
Stress	placing emphasis on particular words
Tempo	the speed at which lines are delivered
Tone	using voice to express a particular mood or feeling
Volume	using your voice to be louder or quieter

ACTIVITY 3 - TEACHER'S VOICE

Read the extract from Christopher's diary which Siobhan reads on page 12 (beginning 'Mother died two years ago'). Working in groups of three or four, choose one person from each group. One member of the group should use the list above to make decisions about how Siobhan should use accent, diction and inflection. Ask the person playing Siobhan to make decisions on board. If anything wasn't quite right, you should change it. If everything is good, move on to the next three features: intonation, pitch and projection. Keep moving through the list until you think you have perfected the 'teacher's voice'. Spend 20 minutes rehearsing.

Those playing Siobhan should perform the extract to the class. After everyone has performed, discuss how the Siobhans were different. Were there any vocal qualities particularly important or interesting?

ACTIVITY 4 - PRACTICE ESSAY QUESTION

As a performer, how would you use vocal skills to portray Siobhan as both a teacher and a mother? Write an essay (200–300 words)

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Part One: Christopher Investigates (pp. 15-20)

Summary

Christopher goes to Mrs Shears's house to ask about Wellington, but she doesn't know. Christopher remembers asking Reverend Peters about heaven. The next day, Christopher does some detective work and asks four of his neighbours questions about Wellington, but Mrs Alexander asks him if he wants any squash and biscuits, and seems to be frightened. Christopher worries she might call the police, so he leaves.

Avoiding a Stereotype

Playing a character such as Christopher can be extremely difficult because he finds it hard to communicate with or react to people appropriately. Therefore, an actor needs to think about how to think and reacting to people – because Christopher might not react to certain things. It is also important to know that every individual on the autistic spectrum will be affected differently. The portrayal of Christopher is completely focused on representing him as an individual.

In some ways, performing as Christopher could be very simple. Christopher loves facts and is extremely literal – therefore, the delivery of his lines should also be very literal. He doesn't use different tones, such as sarcasm, because Christopher would not use them. On the other hand, he doesn't mean there shouldn't be any expression – Christopher becomes excited, angry, frightened, etc. for everyone else.

The most important thing is to make sure that you can justify every decision, just like when creating a character. For example, if you are going to speak slightly slower or leave a long pause before a response, it might be because Christopher has slower cognitive processing and needs more time before he answers. On the other hand, he might sometimes speak very quickly if he knows a lot about, such as maths or science!

ACTIVITY 1 - LIKES AND DISLIKES

Working independently, write two lists – a list of everything that Christopher likes and a list of everything that Christopher doesn't like. Think of everything that makes Christopher happy and explain why he might like or dislike certain things. Remember that he is very literal. Your lists might inform your understanding of Christopher and his reactions to the world.

ACTIVITY 2 - MEET AND GREET

In groups of five or six, stand in a circle. One person should stand in the middle of the circle.

Everyone else in the circle should think of a character (from the play or completely new) who has a relationship with Christopher or need to interact with him at some point. You might be a boy who is talking to Christopher on a phone on a street, or a girl who fancies him, for example.

One at a time, step into the middle of the circle and interact with Christopher using your character. Christopher should then respond, without being told who this person is supposed to be.

Once everyone has said their line, the person who is Christopher should swap with the person in the middle and the activity should start again – you'll have to come up with new improvised lines for Christopher to guess who he thought the characters were at the end of their roles.

The aim of this activity is to try to think honestly about how Christopher would react. Remember, he doesn't like talking to strangers!

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Facial Expressions

Earlier on, Siobhan read an extract from Christopher's book about understanding expressions. Christopher becomes confused when people 'talk without talking' and people certainly do that often. Going through the play and finding moments when people do this might be useful, because then you will be able to identify any moments that Christopher is probably not understanding. One way this is explained in the text is that Siobhan draws Christopher faces to help him to understand what certain emotions might look like – these faces have potential to be incorporated dramatically.

ACTIVITY 3 - CHRISTOPHER'S VOICE

Working independently, look at the following extract of Christopher's dialogue:

There isn't anything outside our universe Reverend P
There isn't another kind of place altogether.
Except there might be if you go through a black hole
a black hole is what is called a singularity which means
it is impossible to find out what is on the other side
because the gravity of a black hole is so big that
even electromagnetic waves like light can't get out
of it, and electromagnetic waves are how we get
information about things which are far away.
And if heaven is on the other side of a
black hole then dead people would have to be
fired into space on a rocket to get there and
they aren't or people would notice.

Annotate the speech with any ideas of how you might perform this dialogue. Think about the vocal skills to portray Christopher. Do you think he is excited by these ideas?

Spend 15 minutes rehearsing your speech with a partner. Try to include at least one line of feedback.

Perform your speeches to one another. Give feedback – what was effective? What was which were potentially too stereotypical or too heavy? Can you be subtler? What did your own performance feel truthful?

ACTIVITY 4 - FACIAL EXPRESSIONS

In groups of three or four, you should create some 'facial expression' signs! Draw and create the following emotions: happy, sad, angry, confused, amused and shocked.

One group should look at the section of the play where Christopher goes and investigates (pp. 16–19). You can choose a larger or smaller section of that scenario. You should also have someone to play Siobhan. Siobhan should stand on the side of the stage and understand the people he meets by showing him the appropriate face signs. Expect perhaps Christopher might interact with her and ask 'does that mean confused or not?'

Then, you should rehearse the scene again, but this time Siobhan should be choosing the face sign that Christopher is feeling – this might help the audience understand how he might be feeling.

Other groups might choose to look at this same scenario, or they could choose a different one. Be creative and experiment with how the signs might be incorporated!

After 30 minutes, perform your scenes to the class. You can choose between the two versions to ensure the class get to see both versions between all the groups. Discuss how the signs benefit your understanding of the characters? How might it benefit the audience?

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Summary

Siobhan and Christopher talk about his investigation. Christopher suggests that Suspect, because Mr Shears and Mrs Shears got a divorce. Christopher's father Grascoyne, about Christopher taking his Maths A Level. Mrs Grascoyne is resisting a Maths A Level at the school before. Ed has had a phone call from Mrs Shears is very angry that Christopher ignored his instructions. Ed becomes particularly mentions Mr Shears. He makes Christopher promise that he will stop asking about Christopher tells his father that he wants to be an astronaut. Christopher is not finished and the murderer will never be caught, because he is not allowed to

Staging and Set Design

Curious Incident is now renowned for its innovative 'grid set' which looks like an enormous box. However, the staging and set design has gone through many changes since the creation of the play, which emphasises that there are often many different ways you can stage a show. These will all have their benefits and drawbacks.

Initially, the director and designer of *Curious Incident* thought that they might want to stage the play within Christopher's classroom, seeing as though most of the scenes took place here. This would have made sense because the entire play technically takes place there – everything else we see is a flashback, or is the play which is being performed inside the school too. This would have been a good, fixed, **naturalistic** setting – Christopher could have had access to chalk boards or projectors, or toys and building blocks, all of which could have enhanced the storytelling.

However, the team at *Curious Incident* decided that they wanted the set design to be **abstract**, so they created a design which reflected the inside of Christopher's grid system which Christopher could draw on like graph paper as he was doing his homework. It was clear, clean, and worked very logically – just like Christopher's mind!

In the National Theatre, the production was **in the round**. This means that all of the audience sit on four sides of the stage, looking into the space. This created an immersive atmosphere as though the audience were inside Christopher's brain. It also allowed the ensemble to enter from all edges and jump into the space when they were needed!

When the production moved to the West End, they had to change the set design to fit a traditional theatre space, where the audience sit facing the front of the stage. They kept the grid floor and made it into a box – so now the audience were watching Christopher from the front.

ACTIVITY 1 - CHANGING SPACES

Watch this video from the National Theatre which explains the benefits and problems when changing between stages. As you watch, make a list of these pros and cons. Which is most effective? zzed.uk/8301-changing-spaces

ACTIVITY 2 - DISCUSSING STAGING

As a class, think about theatre you have been to see – what type of staging have you seen? Think of any occasions when the staging has been very effective? Can you think of any occasions when it has been distracting or irritating for you as an audience member? Why was that? How could it have been improved?

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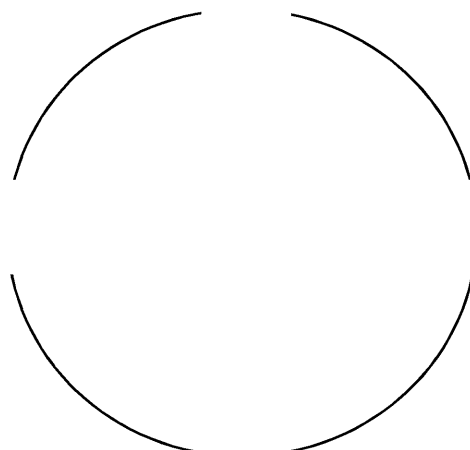
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ACTIVITY 3 - PERFORMING IN THE ROUND

As a class, sit in a large circle but leave four walkways for actors to enter the stage. The diagram below is for guidance.



Look at the conversation between Christopher and Siobhan at the top of page 2 ('Why would you kill a dog?') until the conversation between Mrs Gascoyne and not going to take no for an answer').

As a class, make a circle and choose four people to act out the scene in the middle. Run through the scene once, to get a feel for the action and make some decisions (remember, that these two scenes are supposed to happen in different locations).

Then, perform the scene again, but this time audience members should shout 'BLOCKED' if they can't see the action for too long. Every time someone says 'BLOCKED', they should move to a different position themselves so that this audience member is given a better view.

Afterwards, discuss with the class. What problems continually arose? What did you learn from performing in the round?

TOP TIPS FOR PERFORMING IN THE ROUND:

- ✓ Use the walkways as blind spots – it is safer for you to turn your back here
- ✓ Make sure the action happens on diagonals, to maximise the audience members' view
- ✓ Projection of voice is extremely important as you will be talking away from the audience
- ✓ Keep any scenery or props low so that the audience's sightlines aren't blocked
- ✓ Keep space between actors so that there is more space for sightlines
- ✓ When facing another actor, try to align so you are slightly offset – shoulders

ACTIVITY 4 - STAGE DESIGN POSSIBILITIES

We have already discussed the possibility of staging the play in a classroom and have created Christopher's mind. How many other possibilities can you come up with? How can your stage design reflect? Create a mind map and come up with as many ideas as you can. You don't have to think everything through!

Share your ideas with the class. For each idea shared, discussed how it might work and how to create it? Would it work for all moments of the play? Would there be any difficulties?

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Father-Son Relationship

The relationship between Christopher and his father, Ed, is one which is full of tension and complications, but also full of love. Ed is depicted as a man who doesn't really know how to communicate with his son but is trying the best that he can. In this scene we see him talking to Mrs Gascoyne about Christopher taking his Maths A Level early and he is insistent that Christopher should be able to do it, because he is keen for his son to be successful and happy.

We then move straight into a scene which sees Ed confronting Christopher for doing it. Ed becomes very angry when Christopher mentions Mr Shears, and the reason why Ed is frustrated with Christopher's single-minded nature. From there, we witness a conversation between Ed and Christopher, which involves Christopher enthusiastically rambling about astronauts – Ed is not keeping up with or engaging in this conversation. Ed refers to him affectionately as 'Chris' while talking.

Christopher and Ed are two very different people and they don't have the relationship that Ed would have with his son. However, they have a strong and loving bond, so it is interesting for the audience to watch that break down later on. Although Ed is very different from Christopher, his son in many ways – he too is a pretty unemotional, rational thinking guy. Ed offers simple and practical solutions to problems: if Christopher needs a special invigilator, they can pay for one. However, he can't relate to Christopher's love of maths because he is a builder and works with his hands. Ed is a working-class family man whose family life always seems a little bit lost during the course of the play.

ACTIVITY 5 - FATHER-SON BONDING

- a) Working independently, complete the following sentences from the point of view of Ed and then again from the point of view of Christopher.

I am...

I wonder...

I hear...

I see...

I want...

I pretend...

I feel...

I worry...

I cry...

I say...

I dream...

I try...

I hope...

I lie...

I need...

I will...

- b) Find a partner. One of you should play Ed and one should play Christopher. You should read your lists out loud. Alternate the speaker between sentences. Ed should speak first with his 'I am' and then Christopher should reply with his 'I am'. Then Christopher should speak first with his 'I wonder' and so on. Speak to one another, but remember to think about your body language (Christopher might avoid eye contact).
- c) Share your mini scenes with the class. Afterwards, discuss the different interactions. What was the dynamic between Ed and Christopher during this activity? Did it highlight any similarities?

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Part One: Mrs Alexander (pp. 26-30)

Summary

Christopher speaks with Mrs Alexander again, and Christopher wants to know to like Mr Shears. Mrs Alexander is reluctant to discuss it, and then reveals Christopher's mother had died. She makes Christopher promise that he can't about to discuss; she then tells Christopher that his mother had been having that this is why Mr and Mrs Shears split up. Christopher goes home and see

Mrs Alexander

In this scene, Mrs Alexander becomes caught in a bit of a moral dilemma. Mrs A thinks that Christopher must know about the affair between Judy and Mr Shears. discovers that he has no idea, she has already said too much.

Mrs Alexander decides to tell Christopher the truth because she doesn't believe it should be kept in the dark. She also might believe that explaining things to Christopher him to understand his father's behaviour, and why Christopher should leave some

Mrs Alexander is an elderly lady who probably moves in a very particular way – slightly hobbled or use a walking stick. Her expression would probably be very so However, she shouldn't be a caricature – she should be recognisable as an ideal friendly lady from across the street.

Mrs Alexander is a character who must be very likeable. She is a friendly old lady wants to be a friend to Christopher. This could be because of her good nature, be age and identifies with him, or because she is also a little bit lonely. One reason Alexander should be very agreeable to the audience is because this will highlight responds to her in a way which is very unsure, even though he talks to her more considers 'a stranger'. However, the audience might be able to imagine how they as Mrs Alexander – it would probably be a very different conversation.

ACTIVITY 1 - BUZZWORDS

As a class, discuss Mrs Alexander and decide upon some 'buzzwords' to describe member of the class should go up and write a word describing Mrs Alexander or describe her personality, appearance or history. Then, as a class, decide upon to make sure you cover all aspects of her in those five; for example, don't pick five appearance but none about her personality.

ACTIVITY 2 - PUTTING BUZZWORDS INTO ACTION

As a class, you should all walk around the room while putting the five buzzwords the buzz words is 'elderly' then think about how you might move. If one of the about how you will interact with other people. Move around the space and interact while trying to get a feel for how Mrs Alexander might interact with her world.

ACTIVITY 3 - A FRIENDLY CHAT

Working in pairs, look at the conversation between Mrs Alexander and Christopher (beginning with Mrs Alexander: 'What happened to you the other day?'). Decide The other person will respond to Mrs Alexander's lines through improvisation – might naturally respond. What are the differences between your reactions and that Christopher doesn't?

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Communicating Subtext

One thing which is really difficult for Christopher to understand is subtext – he only sees what is said and on the surface, so anything which is implied is very difficult for him to grasp. Christopher is very intelligent and as long as those around him are making it clear, he can interpret what is meant.

For example, in this scene Mrs Alexander decides to tell Christopher why Ed does not like her. Mrs Alexander tells Christopher that his mother had been ‘very good friends’ with Mr Shears. The audience have probably figured out what Mrs Alexander is implying, but Christopher does not. Mrs Alexander has to stress that they had been ‘very, very good friends’ before Christopher understands that means that his mother and Mr Shears were ‘doing sex’. This scene can be very funny because Mrs Alexander is trying to tell Christopher about the affair without having to spell it out, but really spelling it out. It’s also funny that as soon as he understands what Mrs Alexander is implying, she tells her – they were ‘doing sex’. Why didn’t you just say so, Mrs Alexander?

Of course, she doesn’t just say so because Mrs Alexander was embarrassed to be telling Christopher. Also, this scene is funny because Mrs Alexander is the person being embarrassed instead of Christopher – had she just told Christopher about the affair outright, the contrast between the two attitudes are juxtaposed to create humour around these two very different people.

Key Definitions

Subtext – a hidden, but normally obvious, meaning in any text

Juxtapose – place two ideas close together for contrasting

ACTIVITY 4 - AN APOLOGY LETTER

Working independently, write a letter from the point of view of Mrs Alexander. The letter should be addressed to Ed Boone, and should apologise for talking to Christopher about Jock. You should explain and justify why Mrs Alexander told Christopher and also explain why she is talking to Christopher.

Share your letters with the class by reading them aloud – try to characterise and perform your letter.

ACTIVITY 5 - EMBARRASSING MOMENTS

As a class, discuss embarrassing moments. Do you have any embarrassing scenes from the play to share? Discuss how people act when they are embarrassed. How do they feel? How do they show their embarrassment? Pay attention to how people in your class tell their stories.

ACTIVITY 6 - AWKWARD CONVERSATIONS

In pairs, rehearse the conversation between Mrs Alexander and Christopher, trying to highlight subtext. Think about how physicality will portray embarrassment – what physical actions Mrs Alexander make? How will she use eye contact? How will she place stress on certain words? After 15 minutes, perform these scenes to the class and discuss what performance choices you made.

ACTIVITY 7 - PRACTICE ESSAY QUESTION

As a performer, how would you use performance skills to portray Mrs Alexander in this scene?

IN MY ANSWER I HAVE:

- ✓ explained the context of the scene in reference to the rest of the play, and
- ✓ explained and justified the use of performance skills in reference to Mrs Alexander
- ✓ explained and justified how an audience could interpret my decisions

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Part One: Remembering Mother (pp. 30-33)

Summary

Siobhan asks Christopher if he has told his father about the conversation with her. He says no, and says he isn't sad about the affair because his mother is dead and the problem no longer exists. Siobhan asks how much he remembers about his mother. He remembers about a day that they went to the beach, and his mother convinced him to go. She began to swim and Christopher screamed because he thought there might be a shark. She was down by touching his hand.

Staging a Memory

When Christopher first speaks about his mother, the memory is a good one. Judy is watching when she is playing in the water and encourages Christopher to join her – she also pushes him down when Christopher becomes scared. This contrasts with what Judy tells Christopher. This scene is appearing onstage as a flashback, so one interpretation of this scene could be Christopher choosing to remember her at her very best. For this reason, the actor playing Judy should be smiling and bright, and might look particularly glamorous. Her portrayal at this point is how Christopher wants her to be – this might contrast with the version of her that he sees in the present.

It is pretty clear at this point that the Judy we are watching is a flashback because she is remembering her and Christopher narrates in the past tense. There are a few ways this could be staged: Christopher could simply narrate and watch his mother from afar, or Christopher could move more to re-enact the scene, e.g. he might actually go into 'the water' and touch her hand.

Movement

Having a memory played out onstage can sometimes be a little confusing, especially when characters interact with characters who are also in the present action. One way of differentiating between the memory and those who are not might be to use movement. For example, the characters in the memory could move through a physical theatre routine while the others onstage move naturally. The memory could be abstract movement as dreamlike and as being part of Christopher's creative imagination.

The way that Judy and Christopher move in this scene should be very different. Christopher's movement processing is quite slow and that he is wary of the sea in this scene, so he might be hesitant to move. Judy, on the other hand, is keen for Christopher to jump in – so her movement should be free! One way of experimenting with how characters should move is to look at the scene and think about how they might move.

ACTIVITY 1 - ACTING A MEMORY

- In pairs, both decide upon one event each which has recently happened to you, such as meeting a friend in the street, or your morning routine. Rehearse a scene by talking through what happened – what you did, what you said, what you saw. Then, one person also act out what happened as you speak it. You can use the other person in the scene as the person you saw or spoke to. Spend five minutes rehearsing each scene.
- Perform these scenes to the class, and then discuss after each scene. How did it feel? Flashbacks? Did it feel natural or forced? How did it feel to watch? What did you notice about focusing on? What were you aware of as an audience member?

ACTIVITY 2 - CHOREOGRAPHY IDEAS

As a class, discuss any initial ideas you have about creating a physical theatre routine that you stylistically show the beach, her swimming, and her falling in the sea, through the ensemble in any way?

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Laban Movement

Rudolf Laban was a movement choreographer who developed a theory for categorising movement. When thinking about the direction, weight, speed, and flow of movement, he considered eight efforts. The colours indicate their pairings, meaning they are similar movements.

Efforts	Direction	Weight	Speed
Wring	Indirect	Heavy	Sustained
Press	Direct	Heavy	Sustained
Flick	Indirect	Light	Quick
Dab	Direct	Light	Quick
Glide	Direct	Light	Sustained
Float	Indirect	Light	Sustained
Punch	Direct	Heavy	Quick
Slash	Indirect	Heavy	Quick

Experimenting with these foundational movements allows a performer to move away from their usual states and take on physicality which is strange or unexplored for them. It can also be used for experimenting with how a character should move. There is a lot of potential for this in *The Curious Incident*, so finding the movement states which are appropriate to specific characters and situations in the choreograph in this way too. For example, if a character tends to float when they move, in their theatre routines this could be exaggerated and enhanced by incorporating them in their movement.

ACTIVITY 3 - EXPLORING THE EIGHT EFFORTS

- Move around the space in neutral. For about three or four minutes at a time experiment with Laban's eight efforts – wringing, pressing, flicking, dabbing and slashing. Start by just adopting the movement into your hands and the body in that way. Pay attention to how these movements make you FEEL. Use them appropriately to characters or situations.
- The boys in the room should imagine they are Christopher, and the girls should imagine they are Judy. Go back to the scene and spend five minutes reminding yourself how they behave. Go back to the table of Laban's movements and choose two which you think your character would use during that scene. You cannot choose two from the same pair.
- Move around the space and try to adopt these efforts. Experiment without words. As you become more comfortable you can begin to speak some of your character's lines. You get into the right frame of mind! Do this for three or four minutes.
- If you were playing Christopher, then find a Judy and explain which efforts they chose. Now, you should swap characters, so using their choices spend five minutes performing as Judy. The movement states should help you with playing a character.
- Discuss as a class what you noticed about using the Laban efforts. How do the movement states will you help you choreograph movement?

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Part One: Ed Confronts Christopher (pp. 33-35)

Summary

Ed has found and read Christopher's book and realises that Christopher knows he is angry because he told Christopher to keep out of other people's business, and not to talk to Mrs Alexander again. Ed grabs Christopher's arm and they begin to fight. Ed shakes Christopher until he falls on the floor. Ed leaves the room with the book, and then comes back without it. Ed tells Christopher that he loves him. Christopher asks where his book is.

Stage Combat

In this scene, we see Ed completely lose his temper with Christopher. Ed becomes extremely angry, not only that Christopher has disobeyed him and spoken to Mrs Alexander again, but because of the reminder that his wife had an affair with Mr Shears. Here, we see that his patience with Christopher completely dissipates and he tries to grab Christopher. We know that Christopher is going to overreact to this, and they get into a physical struggle. This results in Ed lashing out and hitting Christopher. The stage directions instruct that Ed shakes Christopher until he becomes unconscious, but a punch to the floor might also be as effective.

When taking part in any physical activity onstage, you must be completely in control of your actions and you must know exactly how to perform every action safely. Every movement should be precisely planned, agreed and rehearsed by the actors – there must be no room for improvisation. If you are not prepared, you could become injured. Never attempt to perform any stage combat without professional supervision. It is also extremely important that you develop a very strong sense of trust with your partner. Trust is essential for stage combat with – this is to ensure safety and enjoyment for both actors!

ACTIVITY 1 - TRUSTING YOUR PARTNER

Choose a partner and label yourselves Person A and Person B. Person B should be blindfolded. Person A stands behind Person B. Person B should walk slowly around the room. Person A must direct them around the room without speaking. Person A should communicate with Person B by tapping on the shoulder: they should tap the left shoulder, right shoulder, or centre of the back. One tap will either mean stop or go.

It is important that this activity is carried out in complete silence to ensure the safety and safety for the person blindfolded. After 2 minutes, Person A and Person B swap roles and perform the activity again.

ACTIVITY 2 - STAGE COMBAT LESSON

Watch these videos from the BBC which show you how to safely perform a stage combat move with a partner.

www.bbc.com/1/av/education/2014/08/140821_stage_combat

www.bbc.com/1/av/education/2014/08/140821_stage_combat2

After watching each video, you should practise performing each of these actions with your partner. Remember, talk through your movements and decide upon every action before you perform it. Do not practically explore anything! Keep concentration, eye contact and an awareness of your partner's safety.

How might you be able to incorporate these movements into the fight between Ed and Christopher?

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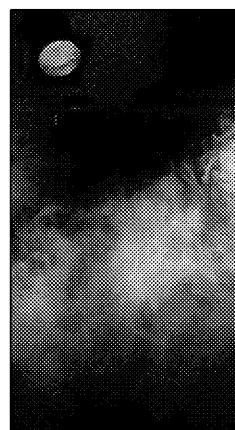
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Lighting

During this fight, it is going to be very overwhelming and frightening for Christopher. He will be for his father, for example. One way of showing the audience what Christopher is feeling is through **lighting** to create an overpowering atmosphere. *Curious Incident* is a very technical play that uses lighting in a number of exciting and innovating ways in order to convey Christopher's feelings. This means is, Christopher is extremely sensitive and easily overwhelmed by light. Therefore, onstage we can heighten the effect of lighting so that it is at a level for Christopher that becomes uncomfortable and larger than life.

There are also many other ways that lighting becomes useful in the play. For example, we know that Christopher would probably be extremely interested in the technical aspects of theatre and the lights; therefore, it helps to create a world which is true to Christopher's interests. The lights also allow switching between locations very easily, and they could also be used to make the fight scene seem more realistic. For example, if there is a flash of light as Ed's fist is supposed to hit Christopher's face, it helps the actors by emphasising the punch and helping to create the illusion that Ed's fist might actually be coming into contact with Christopher's face.



Types of Light:

Profile/Spot	These light a specific point onstage, and the edges of the light are soft.
Fresnel	A light which gives a generic effect, providing a wash across the stage and are used to light an entire stage or space.
Strobes	These provide rapid flashes of bright light. They can be used to create a sense of urgency. Warnings are usually needed when using strobes as they can be very bright.
LED Strips	These can give a thin strip of light to a particular area of stage or walls of a stage to create shapes, or areas of light.
Smoke Machine	This can exaggerate the effect of lights, or create a mood which is dreamlike. It can also help to portray events which are imagined or dreamed.

Lighting Design

There are lots of different ways you can achieve effects with lights. Here are just a few:

Levels	Having bright light, or dimming lights at appropriate moments can create a sense of mood. Dim lights may suggest mystery, terror, sadness, or night.
Positioning	Where the lights are focused can emphasise certain characters or actions. Lights can even create the effect of separate places, and can be used to create a sense of depth.
Colours	Coloured gels can be used to highlight the themes or setting. For example, red may suggest love or a death. Alternatively, a mixture of blues may be used to suggest a night sky.
Transitions	You can set lights to fade up and down slowly, or to instantly change. A sudden change might highlight an unexpected change in the scene.

ACTIVITY 3 - SHEPPING LIGHT ON A FIGHT

As a class, discuss how lighting might enhance the fight between Christopher and Ed. What atmosphere do you want to create? Are there any movements which could be emphasised? Are there any particular moments which might need specific light? How could you achieve the desired effect?

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Part One: Christopher Looks for His Book (pp. 35-39)

Summary

Siobhan asks why Christopher has a bruised face, and Christopher explains the fight. Christopher says that he must find his book. Christopher searches for it and eventually finds it in a box in Ed's cupboard. He also finds an unopened letter but doesn't have time to read it because he hears Ed pulling up in the car. He is confused by the letter, which is dotted with little circles instead of dots, and recalls that he only knows three people: Siobhan, a Mr Loxley, and his mother. Christopher takes the book and the letter. When Ed comes home and tells Christopher he is going to put up some shelves. Christopher is confused because the letter is from his mother. In the letter, she talks about Roger (Mr Shears) as a secretary. Christopher is confused because his mother had never done detective work. The letter says October 2011, which is 18 months after his mother had died. Christopher is interested in the letter until he could do more detective work, because he might jump to the wrong conclusion.

Searching the Space

In this scene, Christopher is looking for and finding his book – however, in the original production, there has been no 'set' of a house or bedroom for him to 'search' in. At this point, Siobhan is looking for her book, which allows Christopher to be free to re-enact the scene – Christopher can be seen to be doing his detective work. Since there is no set, this can be done in an abstract or representational way. If the design is like a blank canvas, this can give actors a lot of freedom to create their own world of theatre and relevant props. The ensemble might also be used, for example, by using furniture to create a space for Christopher to search around – two actors might become a bed for Christopher to search through. In order to take advantage of the space in theatre, the use of props should be **minimal** – only use those which are absolutely necessary. Christopher seems to be interested in.

Key Definitions

Mime – portraying a character, action or emotion using exaggerated gesture and movement

Minimalistic – limited amount, reduced

ACTIVITY 1 - RESEARCHING MIME

Working independently, use the Internet and YouTube to research mime. Watch videos and make notes on the following:

What are the common features of mime? How do people use gesture when they act? How do they use exaggerated movement? Are there any examples of mime? Are the movements always literal? Do mimes usually use props?

ACTIVITY 2 - PILES OF PROPS

In this scene, Christopher finds many different items while he is looking for his book. Between pages 35 and 36 (beginning with Siobhan: 'when I got home from school') there are many different locations to move between and lots of different items to be taken on stage. The stage is cluttered and confusing!

Try to discuss and make notes on ideas for portraying these locations and items on stage. Are there any locations which could be represented through a sound? Christopher seems more interested in some than others? Perhaps these could be taken on stage in other ways. Perhaps one item could be continually thrown away to show his disinterest. Be as creative as you can!

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ACTIVITY 3 - USING THE ENSEMBLE

Working in groups of three or four, look at the extract between pages 35 and 36 (Christopher and Siobhan: 'when I got home from school'). One person will need to read for Siobhan and Christopher and the rest of the group will be the ensemble.

Look through the speech and think about all of the different actions Christopher does. What does he find? What can be shown through mime and physical theatre?

In your group, rehearse this extract and make sure you use the ensemble throughout. Be involved in every new movement or decision that Christopher makes – they should be showing his mind! Spend 20 minutes creating this scene.

Perform your scenes to the class. Give feedback to one another, and discuss which scene you liked best. Suggest ways that ideas could be improved or expanded upon.

At the end of this scene, the plot of the play thickens considerably. Now, Christopher not only needs to find out who murdered Wellington, but he must also find out where this mysterious letter has come from – was it written before his mother died? Was it written by an imposter? Christopher either doesn't consider or ignores the possibility that his mother might still be alive. Christopher is very logical and decides not to jump to any conclusions until he is able to do more detective work.

The first act of *Curious Incident* is like a detective story in lots of ways: Christopher does some investigating, searches for clues, and explains all of his theories to Siobhan. A production of *Curious Incident* might use the detective genre to make production and design decisions – for example, perhaps Christopher will wear a Sherlock cap, or he might be seen playing Cluedo onstage. He could even take notes when he does his 'investigating'.

ACTIVITY 4 - RESEARCHING MURDER MYSTERIES

Working independently, you should create a large mood board or poster which shows examples of detective stories as you can. Look at *Sherlock Holmes*, *Agatha Christie*, or famous examples of detective stories being staged – how is set or props used? What about the characters?

ACTIVITY 5 - THE DETECTIVE GENRE

As a class, discuss the detective genre in relation to *Curious Incident*. In what ways is it different from the traditional sense of the genre?

How might you incorporate the links to *Sherlock Holmes*, or the genre in general, into the second half of the play doesn't deal with the mysteries any more as Christopher discovers the truth in the first act – how might you make that transition?

Did you know?

The title '*The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-Time*' is a phrase taken from a Sherlock Holmes story: 'The Adventure of Silver Blaze'. In the original book, Christopher is a huge fan of Sir Arthur Conan Doyle's detective stories, and references them many times throughout the book.



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Part One: Letters from Judy (pp. 40-45)

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Summary

When Christopher comes home from school the next day, Ed tells him that there is an emergency at work. Ed asks if Christopher will be okay, and he goes upstairs to find the letters - there are 43. Judy reads her letter aloud. In it she wasn't a very good mother because she isn't very patient. She explains to Ed because they always ended up arguing, and that this was when she fell in love. She remembers when Christopher had become very cross and thrown a chopping block at her toes. While she couldn't walk properly, Ed looked after Christopher more. Happier Christopher seemed. So, Judy decided it would be better if she moved to London, but then Ed wouldn't let her see Christopher to say goodbye. Christopher is distressed, begins to hit himself on the head, and is sick. He rolls up in a ball.

Representing Emotional Truth

In this scene, Christopher reads one of the letters from his mother, but it is Judy who speaks the words aloud. There are a few reasons for this, the first being that it allows the audience to understand the emotions attached to the letter. Christopher has trouble understanding emotions or tone of voice; therefore, if he were to read the letter, the audience might receive a distorted or biased representation of the letter. However, if the writer of the letter speaks those words, the audience are able to receive an honest emotional representation, and it might be easier for the audience to empathise with Judy or begin to understand her actions (regardless of whether or not they agree with them).

Another reason why it is helpful for Judy to read the letter is because it allows the audience to see the fractured nature of their relationship. The stage directions suggest that while Christopher is frantically building a train track. This might suggest a few things: that Judy is allowing Christopher to channel his frustration and represent his inability to communicate with her. Judy is desperately trying to reason with Christopher but that she cannot reach him in a way that he can fully participate in. This might be representative of their past relationship barriers which separated them, but also the physical barriers which are between them now. This is more complex and exciting for an audience, in comparison to them listening to Christopher sitting in his bedroom.

The image created is enhanced by the use of staging and physical skills, such as **proxemics** and eye contact. For example, Judy might always be facing Christopher and speaking straight to him - this would show her desperation to be contacted. On the other hand, Christopher might not make any eye contact. He might constantly be turning his back or moving away from her - this represents Christopher's desire to be dead, because he is unaware that she is trying to contact him, and also his inability to communicate on an emotional level.

Key Definitions

Proxemics - the distance between people

ACTIVITY 1 - BODY LANGUAGE

In pairs, perform the scene so that Judy is wanting to gain Christopher's attention but he is ignoring her. Think about how you will use proxemics, eye contact, and other body language.

Now, perform the scene again, but this time as if Christopher is listening attentively. How does this change the scene? How does it affect Judy's reaction? How does it affect Christopher's reaction?

Choose a pair to perform the first version of the scene, and then another pair to perform the second version. After each performance, a class discuss the following: How did the change of staging affect the scene? How did it change your opinion on the character, or influence the mood of the scene?

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ACTIVITY 2 - SWITCHING NARRATION

Ask someone from the class to volunteer to read the letter as Christopher. They should read it as if they are sitting in Ed's bedroom. They may not necessarily need to class discuss how that felt as an audience. What was the effect of Christopher reading the letter? Any emotional ambiguities? Did you feel as though you understood how Christopher felt? What about Judy?

ACTIVITY 3 - BUILDING EXPRESSION

In this scene, Christopher builds a train track while his mother reads the letter. What could he be taking part in? In pairs, try to perform this scene but with Christopher doing a different activity. Remember, it must be something he can do frantically and potentially loudly. It should also be something which is on a big enough scale that it creates a visual distraction. Christopher is playing Jenga, or trying to solve an equation on a board, for example. Perform your scenes to the class. Give each other feedback. What was effective? How did it enhance the scene? Could anything be clarified, improved or developed?

Justifying Actions

Although this letter is functioning as an explanation to what has happened to Christopher and the audience, this is not the purpose with which it was written. Christopher knows that his mother has gone to London to live with another man. He is justifying those actions, and explain why Judy felt it necessary to leave her son. Some of the few mishaps involving Christopher and arguments with Ed – in a way, she blames Ed. Then she also blames herself for not being a good enough mother to deal with it. It is difficult to understand people and their emotions, Judy found it very difficult to understand you think the play presents Judy? Is she meant to be seen as a villain or a bad mother? complex and sympathetic?

ACTIVITY 4 - PHYSICALISING THE FLASHBACKS

In the letter, Judy describes a day when Christopher had a meltdown in a shop.

- In groups of three to five, you should devise a small scene which portrays the flashback – just play out the scene as it would have happened. Try to think about how you might have felt, and how others in the shop might have reacted. You can either play out the scene, or a more abstract portrayal. You might choose to include physical theatre. 15 minutes rehearsing your scenes.
- Perform these scenes to the class. After everyone has performed, discuss what the scenes make you feel about Judy? Did you feel pity or empathy? Do the scenes play to or challenge any stereotypical judgements or misconceptions?
- Discuss whether or how you might incorporate these scenes into the play. Could they be performed while Judy reads the letter? Or perhaps it could be played on screen. What effects might be created?

ACTIVITY 5 - AUTISM AND PARENTING

Looking after a child with autism can sometimes be difficult, challenging, and emotional. What do you think she didn't have a good temper and wasn't patient enough. What other sort of things might have happened if Judy had had more support? Do you think she should have left Christopher? Do you think she was doing him more harm than good? Other options which she might have ignored?

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Part One: Ed Explains (pp. 45-49)

Summary

Ed finds Christopher in a ball, and realises what he has read. Ed begins to stutter and tries to explain himself. He tries to touch Christopher so he lets him. Christopher lets him. Ed comes back after a while and tells Christopher that again. Ed then reveals that he was the one who killed Wellington. He tells Christopher that Mrs Shears had become close, and that he had hoped they might eventually live together. Ed and Mrs Shears had a big argument and the dog had begun to be angry. Christopher refuses to respond.

Christopher decides that because his father murdered Wellington, this means he decides to leave the house, and decides the only place he can go is to find his mother.

Lies and Betrayal

The theme of betrayal runs throughout *Curious Incident*. Mr Shears and Judy both have an affair, Ed betrays Christopher by lying to him about his mother dying and Wellington. Mrs Shears for caring more about Wellington than him or Christopher. Lies always cause confusion during the play – there doesn't seem to be any reason for lying to be a good thing.

Christopher keeps telling people that he is unable to tell a lie, and this is why he is so trusting. It seems pretty bad that someone would knowingly lie to Christopher – especially when it's about whether someone is lying. Christopher is completely trusting and literal – he relies on people to help him understand the truth.

The audience should be as shocked as Christopher when they discover that Ed has lied. If Ed told Christopher that Judy had died, there should have been no clues that he was lying. The audience feel completely Christopher's side, and it should feel as though they have another example of *Curious Incident* creating an extremely tight bond between the characters.

ACTIVITY 1 - ANALYSING THE THEME OF LIES AND BETRAYAL

- Do you think there is ever any good reason to lie? Do you think that lying to Christopher protected him in any way?
- Why might it have been easier for Ed to lie to Christopher about his mother's death?
- Christopher says that he cannot tell a lie. However, there are many occasions where he tells the truth either – he disobeys his father and he just chooses to completely ignore the truth as lying? Is this as much of a betrayal as telling a lie?
- Is hiding the truth the same as, or worse than, telling a lie?
- Do you think a relationship can recover from a betrayal? Can trust ever be rebuilt? Do you think Christopher builds and maintains trust in the same way that his parents do?

ACTIVITY 2 - HOTSEATING

As a class, form a circle. One person should go into the centre and sit in the 'hot seat' and become Ed, and answer a series of questions from his perspective. The rest of the class should ask him questions to him. You should ask questions specific to the play, such as why he told Christopher that Judy died, but they might also be more generic – e.g what has been the best thing about being Ed?

Each student should answer three questions as Ed. Afterwards discuss what you have learned about Ed. Portray different versions of Ed? Were some more sympathetic than others?

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Part Two: Play-within-a-Play and Swindon Town Centre

Summary

Siobhan asks Christopher if he would like the people at school to perform his play. Christopher seems reluctant at first, but then goes along with it. Christopher goes to school to see whether she will look after his rat, Toby, while he goes to London. He tells Mrs Alexander that his father lied about his mother being dead. Mrs Alexander thinks there might be a chance and asks Christopher to come inside that so they can ring Ed. Christopher looks at Ed's debit card.

Christopher asks a lady in the street where he can buy a map, but she gives him a bus station instead. Inside the station there are lots of voices, adverts and signs. A police officer asks Christopher if he is okay, and Christopher tells the police officer that he is a police officer. The scene continues with the police officer asking Christopher to help him take money out. Christopher then tries to buy a ticket for the train but the police officer finds Christopher once he is on the train and tells him that his father is looking for him. The police officer leads Christopher off the train, but Christopher screams when he tries to touch the police officer. The police officer decides they will have to get off at the next stop.

Switching Form and Metatheatrical Moments

We have already discussed that Siobhan narrated the first part of the play because it is our world and Christopher's world. In the second half of the play, that world is reversed so that the play is now going to become a play-within-a-play – it could be argued that this has been the way too, but this is when the idea is fully introduced and established. For example, the police officer will break the action to make comments on staging, characterisation, or accuracy.

During the scene in the train station, there is a great moment when a police officer asks Christopher if he is okay but Christopher replies by telling him that he is too old to be a police officer. This is a moment where the actor at the police officer, but at the actor who is playing the police officer – Christopher is making his own decisions made in his play! **Metatheatrical** is a name for any quality of a play which breaks the action up in this way as a piece of drama and distinguishes it from reality. The form of having a play-within-a-play is itself, but Christopher breaking the action up in this way also reminds the audience that this is a play. Metatheatrical can allow audiences to understand and recognise the metaphorical nature of the play, but it also encourages emotional responses from the audience – particularly comedy. The audience can laugh at a play because in *Curious Incident* they are reminded that the events have already happened.

Comedy

Even though *Curious Incident* is about dark events and themes, comedy runs throughout the play. Finding the comedy in a play such as *Curious Incident* is important because otherwise it would be all tears! We learn to love and care for characters such as Christopher because he is endearing and his world is playful: he turns the murder of a dog into a detective game and suddenly everything seems a bit more innocent. Of course, this also means that the real dramatic tension, these seem even more dramatic in comparison to the comedy.

Christopher is extremely logical and literal; therefore, he doesn't tell or understand what the audience comes from his view of the world being somewhat at odds with those people he meets. His honesty and matter-of-fact tone is funny for the audience because it is refreshing. Sometimes the way he sees the world is frightening and confusing, it can also be important that the audience know they are allowed to enjoy the portrayal of his world. This is to invite the audience to laugh.

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Here are a few different types of comedy:

Low comedy	comedy characterised through physical action, foolishness, and
Parody	satirical or ironic comedy which imitates or comments on another
Black comedy	comedy which is dark, where serious or taboo issues are treated inappropriately
Reversal	comedy which reverses expectations, or where the action is set in motion and then takes place after a series of repetitions.
Slapstick	a physical form of comedy which involves exaggerated or violent actions
Farce	a genre of comedy which sees characters become tangled up in increasingly extravagant or disorganised, situations

In *Curious Incident*, the types of comedy which appear most obviously are **reversal** and **farce**. Christopher as a character often behaves in ways which are contradictory to an audience's expectations because a lot of the events within the play are very dark or challenging – as we have seen. The comedy, *Curious Incident* might be a very heavy and upsetting play!

ACTIVITY 1 - RESEARCHING COMEDY

Working independently, research the different types of comedy above. Try to find examples from television or film. You should spend more time researching the types of comedy that you think could easily be incorporated. Make notes and remember to think about what might have which might inspire staging or performance decisions for *Curious Incident*.

ACTIVITY 2 - LAUGHING AT OR WITH?

It is very important to create comedy in the play, but to avoid creating any scenes that cause an audience to laugh at Christopher rather than with him. Discuss how you might approach to comedy among the complicated and potentially upsetting situations in the play. How might characterisation affect the comedy created?

ACTIVITY 3 - PERFORMING A REVERSAL

As a class, students should go up to the front of the class one by one and perform a short scene. The scenario should involve walking into a room expecting it to be one thing, e.g. walking into the wrong room, e.g. a plastic surgeon's room. Each person should perform a short scene. Then you should introduce something which will stop that person leaving the room, e.g. the door is locked, or another person might enter and play the surgeon!

After each scenario, discuss as a class what made the situation funny. What about the situation was funny?

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Sound Effects

We already know that Christopher and other people who are on the autistic spectrum are often overwhelmed by sounds. We also know that Christopher sees and notices everything. At a train station he becomes bombarded with all of the information that he needs to understand the world: voices, the sounds of announcements and adverts, and also written words, adverts and signs. He has never been further than the end of his street by himself and has never been inside a train station, a terrifying ordeal for him.

Using sound is an extremely effective way of literally showing the audience how Christopher receives his information – these pre-recorded voices might be very loud and fast, and constantly overlapping one another. There are two types of sound in the theatre: **diegetic** and **non-diegetic** sound.

Key Definitions

Diegetic Sound – sound which comes from within the world of the play. This includes voices, music and sound effects such as a gunshot.

Non-diegetic Sound – sound which comes from outside the world of the play. This can include narrative voice, music and sound effects used to create atmosphere.

The sound effects in this scene are interesting because technically they could be considered as non-diegetic as they are pre-recorded and some of them are representing written words, not actual sounds from the train station. However, in *Curious Incident*, the ‘world of the play’ is Christopher’s world. Therefore, the sounds are a representation of what is happening inside his head; therefore, in this context, they are as **diegetic**.

The script suggests that these voices are pre-recorded and this might be for a number of reasons: to make it easier for the ensemble to focus on their physical work; to ensure that all of the sounds are heard clearly enough to be overwhelming; and to possibly introduce effects such as the sound of a train passing or a voice.

However, these sounds could also be created live onstage by the actors – Christopher could be surrounded by them aloud as he reads signs. The effect of this might emphasise that Christopher is completely surrounded by everything that is happening inside the train station.

ACTIVITY 4 - CREATING A SOUNDSCAPE

As a class, you should create a soundscape using the phrases in the script on page 10 (including Christopher’s line ‘And that was how I found the station’). Everyone should choose a different phrase.

Experiment with different ways of creating the soundscape. Will you say your lines quickly, slightly overlapping, or will you say your lines at random? Remember to keep everything audible. There’s a fine line between an overwhelming soundscape and a clear one.

ACTIVITY 5 - INCORPORATING MOVEMENT

As a class, perform your soundscape again, but this time incorporate movement. Choose one person to be Christopher and then try to devise some movement around him. This could be moving through the station and weaving between one another, or maybe everyone is moving closer.

ACTIVITY 6 - SOUNDSCAPE AND LANDSCAPE

As a class, discuss how you might use set design and staging area to reflect the soundscape. How would you use lighting? Could you use projection in any way? How about having the sounds incorporated somehow?

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Part Two: On the Train (pp. 61-65)

Summary

Christopher notices everything outside the train windows. The police officer goes to the toilet because he has wet himself. Christopher gets up to go to the toilet, hides himself in the luggage rack and begins to list the prime numbers to himself. A police officer notices that Christopher is missing and gets off the train to look for him. Christopher notices some people noticing him, until he arrives in London. Another police officer gets on the train and finds Christopher. Christopher leaves.

Physicalisation of Fear

In this scene, Christopher has become extremely nervous and frightened. Not only is he travelling on a train, which he has never done before, but he is also sitting next to a police officer who is trying to take him back to Swindon. Christopher nervously describes every tiny detail from the train window and then is sent to the toilet after he wets himself. He then goes and hides in the luggage rack, curls up and counts prime numbers to try to calm himself down.

Although the stage directions in *Curious Incident* are normally quite sparse and do not indicate movement, the stage directions in this scene provide us with clues as to how Christopher might be behaving: 'raps out a nervous rhythm with his hand', 'raps out a nervous rhythm with his hand', 'raps out a nervous rhythm with his hand'.

There are many ways that **posture** and movement can portray fear. For example, Christopher's posture might be tense, sunken and weak – when he hides he makes himself as small as he possibly can and tries to make the world around him disappear.

Key Definition
Posture –

Other physical clues might include shaking, sweating, nervously moving a leg, winking, covering ears or eyes with hands or arms, or rocking back and forth. All or a combination of these can show fear.

ACTIVITY 1 - MAKING YOURSELF DISAPPEAR

Everyone in the class should stand in the space in a neutral position. Very slowly, contract your body – you should begin to shrink and make yourself as small as possible. Focus on a section of your body and do what you can to make this smaller. Take up as little space as possible.

ACTIVITY 2 - ACTING AFRAID

As a class, walk around the space in neutral. Every time there is a clap (ask your partner to clap), you should pretend you are becoming more and more afraid. After the first clap, you should add another movement which suggests fear, and then on the second clap add another, and so on. You can build on previous movements on top of one another, or drop the previous movement and adopt a new one. Experiment with it.

ACTIVITY 3 - FEELING THE FEAR

As a class, discuss how these practical activities made you feel. Did your physical state of mind change? How did you emotionally react to your body's movements? What do you think Christopher would have been feeling while on the train? Why is he feeling this way?

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Part Two: Waterloo (pp. 65-70)

Summary

There are even more signs, adverts and voices. Christopher finds it difficult. A guard tries to help him, but Christopher pulls out his Swiss army knife and information desk how to find his mother's postcode. She tells him to take to know what this is. Ed appears in Christopher's mind and tries to stop and insists that he can and will make it to his mother's house.

Creating Orderly Chaos

The scenes which involve Christopher's journey between Swindon and London and they must emphasise how epic this journey is for Christopher. The production is and physical theatre, and the audience sees Christopher struggling to navigate his. However, the trick is that there must not ever be actual chaos onstage – that would be involved! Therefore, lots of rehearsal and planning must go into creating these required desired effect. One way of achieving this, would be to create a stylised representation of theatre.

ACTIVITY 1 - NAVIGATING THE GRID

The floor of the original set design for Curious Incident was a grid, and this grid is orderly movement. Imagine the floor of your classroom is a grid, and that you can and at right angles.

- As a class, begin to move slowly around the grid. You must walk in silence and aim is to always keep moving, but you should try to avoid stopping. If you are someone else in the room, you should change your direction at a right angle.
- Once you are all becoming comfortable with moving along the grid, try to increase are moving with a sense of urgency – as though you are trying to catch your high, and again, trying to avoid stopping (although, definitely stop rather than this for five minutes.
- Once this speed is comfortable, try to introduce someone as 'Christopher'. Christopher as he pleases – he can break the grid, or stop. You must now be extremely moving, while concentrating on your own movements and not looking at his.
- Discuss as a class what the effect of the activity was. What was helpful? What

ACTIVITY 2 - WRITING CHRISTOPHER'S BOOK

- Working independently, write an extract for Christopher's book as if you are what he might write about Waterloo station. What would he have liked, or notice? What kinds of emotions would he be feeling? How might he articulate minutes writing.
- Read over your extract. Is there anything you have written about that you think dramatised or portrayed visually?
- Read your extract to the class. After each reading, the class should discuss interesting moments or observations which could be dramatised. Discuss how be feeling while at Waterloo. Was this exercise helpful in trying to understand

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A New World

Christopher has never been to London or seen the inside of Waterloo station – everything is new for him. Therefore, the aesthetic of the play needs to reflect that. One of the great things about using an abstract set is that the location is clear but it also conveys how Christopher is experiencing this location. The original set design for *Curious Incident* used multimedia and projection in order to smoothly and instantaneously move between locations without having to move or wait for any set changes. Set changes can sometimes stunt the pace of the play and break the audience’s interest – especially if they are sitting waiting for a long time!

Multimedia and Building Set

Curious Incident was extremely innovative for its combination of set and multimedia. It essentially used a blank canvas and it allowed them to project and create any image they wanted. This was a really effective way of creating set because it is seamless, transitions instantly through the use of video. For example, in the scenes when Christopher is on a train, they use moving film footage of the view from a train window. Multimedia can also create a dynamic way – perhaps there is projection of lots of different signs and adverts which are constantly changing. It would be far easier to create with multimedia than if a set was constantly changing.

BUILDING A SET
Flats – 2D painted boards which act as the backdrop to a scene. They can be placed to give the impression of walls, such as in a building, or be used more creatively to suggest other locations.
Revolve – A revolving stage can be useful for logistical reasons, i.e. swiftly changing set without the need for lifting anything on or off stage, or, can be used to enhance the action or themes of the play.
Projection – Video projection can be used as scenic backdrops, to show a full scene or snippet of a scene which would be difficult to create onstage, or even to provide relevant information to the audience.
Lighting – The lighting design can sometimes act in lieu of set, or can be used to give the impression of a space – a small, dark space, for example.
Props – Handheld props (such as a torch) or much larger props (such as a tree) can give a strong indication of a setting. However, you must be able to reasonably move these on, off, and around the stage!

SET DESIGN
Naturalistic – Set design that replicates the real world, or the environment of the play.
Abstract – Set design which is not realistic, but is not meant to represent a specific location or theme, but is not meant to represent a specific location or theme.
Minimalistic – A set design that uses a minimum – one or two elements to suggest a location.
Site-specific – A play designed to be performed in a specific location outside the normal theatre. For example, a site-specific play for <i>Curious Incident</i> might take place in a real train station.

There are lots of different ways you can style a set design. The original production of *Curious Incident* used multimedia to create something abstract. A more naturalistic design would have to create a very detailed set, whereas a minimalistic set might just show a few Waterloo station signs.

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ACTIVITY 3 - CREATE A SET DESIGN MOOD BOARD

Research Waterloo station, train stations, and London. Use the script to find clues about what Christopher can see. Create a mood board of images which might be incorporated into your set design. Use A3 paper if possible, and annotate your board with any ideas about how you’ve chosen, e.g. projection, signs, colours.

ACTIVITY 4 - CREATING A SET DESIGN

In the space below, draw a floor plan and set design for the section of the play at Waterloo station. Annotate your sketch with information about materials, colours and lighting.

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ACTIVITY 5 - PRACTICE ESSAY QUESTION

As a designer, how would you create a set which portrays Christopher's chaotic Waterloo station? (200–300 words)

IN MY ANSWER I HAVE:

- ✓ described the style of set design I have chosen, and why
- ✓ explained the context of the scene in relation to the rest of the play
- ✓ explained and justified my design decisions with reference to Christopher's character
- ✓ made specific reference to the text
- ✓ explained and justified my design decisions, e.g. how the set would be built
- ✓ explained how my set would be practical and how it might be interpreted



Part Two: Tube (pp. 70-75)

Summary

Christopher imagines his father talking him through how to get on the tube. that he has lost Toby, and sees him on the tube tracks. Christopher goes to find him, and two people on the platform try to get him to get back up onto the tube. One is angry with Christopher, but then runs to get his train. The girl touches Christopher and threatens her, so she leaves him alone. Christopher watches the tubes go past. He is then bundled on a tube. There are more voices and adverts. Christopher is in London so that he can find his mother's house.

Dramatic Tension

This is one of the sections in the play which feels the most dramatic, the most dangerous. Christopher, who has never been to a tube station before and isn't sure of the underground but realises that he has lost his pet rat, Toby. Christopher sees Toby jumps down off the platform to try to find him, while other people on the platform run over at any second – and he doesn't seem concerned! For the first time, the audience just how dangerous it is that Christopher is making this journey alone – many parents take 15-year-old child to London by themselves; therefore, the risk is even higher with Christopher.

There are a few staging challenges that this section offers a director or designer. Where there would be a place for Christopher to physically jump down into – so perhaps placing the other people on the platform on a higher level? Or perhaps having other people looking down at him, might be enough. Performance will also be crucial – Christopher's calmness in contrast to the sheer panic and terror on the faces of the other people is effective, because their terror should reflect the terror of the audience.

The other challenge is the tube itself. There needs to be a sense that the tube is getting closer and closer and could run down Christopher at any moment. One way of creating this is through sound or lighting. Pre-recorded sound might give the impression that the sound is getting closer while lights could be used to create a disorientating or intense atmosphere. Light in a particular way so that tube headlights seem to be coming closer or brighter – or perhaps a stage floor to mark out the tube tracks!

ACTIVITY 1 - DIRECTING DRAMA

In groups of three, discuss any potential ideas you might have for staging this section. One person to create an individual directorial plan – try to share your strengths and weaknesses and design aspects. You should make notes and also sketch out designs and floor plans for your ideas.

Consider the practical aspects of staging – will it be clear what you are creating? Will it create the intended atmosphere? Are you practically able to move this on stage?

ACTIVITY 2 - PRACTICE ESSAY QUESTION

As a director, how would you use performance, staging and design to create the atmosphere of the approaching tube? (200–300 words)

IN MY ANSWER I HAVE:

- ✓ explained and justified how I would direct my performers
- ✓ explained and justified how I would use design, e.g. set, lights, sound, or props
- ✓ explained and justified my decisions with regards to the context of the scene
- ✓ given specific references to the text
- ✓ referenced the audience and how they might interpret my decisions
- ✓ explained and justified all my decisions with regards to the threat of the approaching tube

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Part Two: Living in London (pp. 75-90)

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Summary

Judy and Roger (Mr Shears) enter and are arguing. Christopher stands up and because they weren't in. Judy goes to hug Christopher, but he pushes her sorry for forgetting, and holds up her hand for Christopher to touch. Christopher alone on the train. When they are inside Judy asks why Christopher never tells her that Ed had told him that she had died. Judy cries hysterically and Christopher's hand, but he says no. A police officer comes to ask Christopher London with his mother, and Christopher says yes.

Ed appears and argues with Judy about her leaving. Ed goes into Christopher points his Swiss army knife at him. Ed apologises but Christopher won't respect take Ed out. At breakfast the next morning, Roger and Judy argue about Christopher interferes to give them some acting notes. Christopher tells Judy that he wants to take his Maths A Level, but Judy says it might not be possible. Christopher the view. Judy has lost her job because she had not gone in for the past two is threatening her with court. She tells Christopher he won't be able to talk screams until he can't scream any more.

Judy makes Christopher a chart so that he knows he is eating enough. Roger Christopher tunes a radio so that he can listen to white noise. Roger comes He grabs Christopher, but then Judy comes in to pull Roger out of the room drives them back to Swindon.

Family

When Judy sees Christopher, it is the first time she has seen or heard from him in the maternal love for him and immediately rushes to embrace him – and then she is in how her relationship with Christopher must be when he pushes her away. Christopher warning, that he had been told she was dead. Judy is devastated by this news, and her hold his hand. However, Christopher reminds her that he doesn't like people like

A situation which should have been wonderful is immediately tricky and not the probably wants and needs. Although Judy insists that Christopher can stay, it quickly will not be simple – her efforts to care for Christopher are mocked by Roger, who The audience watches as Judy tries to create a situation whereby everyone can be is constantly being reminded of the difficulties she faced before she left to go to play, we move swiftly between scenarios and problems, until they build up and Judy Christopher back to Swindon.

The theme of family is integral to *Curious Incident* because the play focuses on the family. Christopher's family and their struggle is representative and reflective of

ACTIVITY 1 - ANALYSING THE THEME OF FAMILY

- Christopher doesn't like strangers and insists that he must go to find his mother live with anyone who isn't family. Why does Christopher have such a huge family? Do you think that everyone does?
- Do you think that Christopher would have coped well if Judy and Ed had simply he feels about his mother leaving him to go and live in London?
- Does the perfect family exist? Do all families fight? Do you think that fighting is different to fighting with anyone else?
- Do you think that Ed and Judy both attempt to create ideal situations? Do they family? Do you think they do this on Christopher's behalf or for themselves?

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Levels

During this section of the play, the character of Roger seems to be becoming increasingly impatient with Christopher's behaviour and is not portrayed as particularly empathetic. Roger seems to be a dominant and controlling character, who eventually Judy and Christopher must run away from.

In one small section of action, Christopher is sitting in his room and Roger enters, apparently very drunk. Roger angrily tries to grab at Christopher, but is quickly stopped by Judy.

Christopher would clearly have been very frightened by this

– Roger is a stranger and one who tries to touch him. One way of portraying how powerless Christopher is in this situation would be to use levels. Positioning actors using height can suggest a number of things to the audience.

Key Definitions

Levels – the height between

For example, in this section of the play, Christopher might be curled up on his bed in a lower position than Roger, who might be towering over him. Levels are here suggesting force and Christopher will not be able to raise his power or status in this situation. Levels enhance the effect of levels; for instance, Christopher's posture of being curled up

On the other hand, if Christopher was sitting upright on his bed, and Roger's posture was slumped (thanks to consuming alcohol!) then this might change what the audience sees. In this situation, Christopher is far more pathetic and lower in status, especially if whatever Christopher is sitting on is lower than Roger's height.

Higher or lower levels can also give the audience an indication of hierarchy, social status, remembering that not all circumstances of power are negative or controlling – for example, a parent leaning down on a child might be an affectionate or protective power.

ACTIVITY 1 - LEVEL IT OUT

- As a class, students should walk around the room in neutral. When a number is called out, students should change their levels and posture in order to fit that number. For example, if the number 10 is called out, your status is that of a God, while one is the lowest you can get. Spend five minutes practising this.
- Now, students can choose their own status but the room must be balanced. For example, if one student is standing, another must be sitting on the floor.
- In pairs, improvise a scene. It can be devised around *Curious Incident*, or not. The scene should be performed again and halfway through the characters should switch statuses. How did the audience react?

ACTIVITY 2 - STAGING POWER

Working in pairs, stage and rehearse the scene between Roger and Christopher from the play.

- ✓ Roger has the most power
- ✓ Christopher has the most power
- ✓ Roger and Christopher have equal amounts of power
- ✓ Roger and Christopher are both fighting to have equal amounts of power

You should use **levels** and posture in your scenes. Spend five minutes rehearsing your scene. Each group should perform one of their scenes, and the class should discuss the effect. Which scene do you think felt the most appropriate? How far does the change of levels change the effect?

Part Two: Back in Swindon (pp. 90-94)

Summary

Back in Swindon, Judy and Ed argue. Ed lets Judy and Christopher stay in the house with a friend. Judy is taunted by Mrs Shears on the way to school. Judy meets Siobhan who tells her she can still sit his Maths A Level if he wants to. He is very tired but he says he will come to invigilate. Christopher can't read any of the questions and begins to panic. He can read the questions, but Reverend Peters says no. Christopher begins to tell him that the answer to a maths question isn't exciting enough to put into a play. He will solve the question after the curtain call. Ed comes to see Christopher to ask him to tell him that he is very proud. Christopher tells Siobhan that he doesn't like to go to his father's house for two hours every day. He locks himself in his room.

The Exam

During the exam, Christopher becomes very upset and confused – he cannot read and is tired and stressed. He groans, breathes erratically and counts numbers to try to calm down. This scene might feel very static – it is Christopher sitting at an exam desk. There are a number of things to make this moment significant and theatrically exciting!

There are a number of problems or factors to consider during the staging of this scene:

- How will you help the audience understand Christopher's panic?
- The audience can't see Christopher's little exam paper, so how can you include it?
- How will Siobhan function in this scene? She wasn't actually in the exam, so how can she be as narrator of the play?

The original set design of *Curious Incident* heavily relied on multimedia: on video screens. How can you incorporate this into the exam scene? Perhaps you can project an image of the exam paper. A projection will show abstract imagery of muddled words and sentences? Could you use sound to emphasise this? If multimedia wasn't available, how else might you be able to portray Christopher's confusion? Could you somehow use physical theatre to show that Christopher is muddled? Perhaps you could have him to take the exam while he is on his side? Perhaps the ensemble are holding letters for him?

ACTIVITY 1 - WHO SAYS MATHS ISN'T FUN?

Choose three members of the class to perform the Maths exam scene as literally as possible. The rest of the class should watch. Afterwards, discuss ways it could be made more interesting. Where were the moments which didn't include or ignore the audience?

Ask the three to perform this again, but send five other members of the class up to perform. They should interrupt or interact with Christopher in order to try to show the audience that he is confused and overwhelmed. Be as creative and crazy as you can!

ACTIVITY 2 - PRACTICE ESSAY QUESTION

As a director, how would you stage Christopher's A Level Maths exam? (300 words)

- Explain and justify your choice of staging and positioning
- Explain and justify how you might use the set or multimedia within the scene
- Explain and justify how you might use physical theatre within the scene
- Explain what atmosphere you hope to create for the audience
- Explain and justify how you will use other characters or ensemble within the scene
- Explain and justify how you will direct Christopher's character
- Reference relevant social or cultural context
- Reference the audience's interpretation of your decisions

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Part Two: The End (pp. 94-99)

Summary

Ed tries to speak to Christopher, and sets a timer for five minutes. Ed apologises to fix their relationship. He calls it a difficult project that he and Christopher gives Christopher a puppy as another apology. Ed says that the puppy will live and can visit any time.

Siobhan gives Christopher his A Level result, which is an A*. Christopher is happy because he has been staying with his father and that he is going to take his Further Education. Christopher tells Siobhan of all his plans for the future. Christopher tells Siobhan these things because he went to London alone, discovered who killed Wellington, wrote a book, and turned it into a play. He asks Siobhan 'Does this mean I can do a degree'.

The Final Appeal

At the end of the play, Ed does his best to make amends with Christopher by apologising that he knows he was wrong and he also knows that it will take a long time to fix their relationship. Ed says they need to try because nothing is more important in the world. He suggests that they must do together. As with all dialogue in the play, it's important that you have a clear emotional state and motivation for speaking to Christopher. There are certain things to look for when looking at dialogue in any given scene, and sometimes breaking up bigger chunks of dialogue into smaller types of question can help you make sure that everything said counts.

Purpose	What are Ed's intentions? What is he trying to convince Christopher of?
Spontaneity	Has he planned this dialogue? Are these ideas he has considered things he is saying in anger? Will he regret anything he is saying?
Motivation	What has provoked him to speak? What are his ideas influenced by? What is attached to his ideas?
Emotions	Are there any moments where his emotions clearly change? Does his emotional state suddenly change him? Which emotions are sustained throughout the scene?
Interpretation	Are there different ways you could approach this scene? Could he be overwhelmed throughout? Or is he calm and trying to hold himself together?
Pauses	Where are the pauses? Where will he need to breathe, to collect his thoughts, or how to phrase his next thought?
Emphasis	Where is his emphasis? Are there any specific words or phrases that he is particularly trying to stress? Does he repeat any ideas?
Movement	How does his body reflect his speech? Will he use any gestures? How will he interact with Christopher?
Context	What has just happened to Ed? Have his expectations been changed? What is his feeling for the past few months? What incidents have affected him?
Relationships	What is his relationship to Christopher? Is he addressing him differently than how he normally would? What has changed?
Subtext	Is there any hidden meaning in the dialogue? What about the monologue to comment on the play or its theme?

ACTIVITY 1 - ANALYSING THE DIALOGUE

Working independently, look closely at the dialogue given by Ed at the end of the play to analyse the dialogue, interpret the character and begin to decide upon how you will perform it.

You should be considering character motivation, intentions, vocal skills and physicality. Write brief answers to the questions but also annotate the dialogue in the script to reflect back on and a guide to performing that section of the play.

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ACTIVITY 2 - PERFORMING THE DIALOGUE

Using the analysis and notes you have just made, rehearse this extract and perform work with a partner to rehearse to one another, discuss and compare your answers and another feedback on your performances. While one person is performing as Ed, the

Remember to think about vocal delivery and how you will complement this with. Perform to the class. After each performance, the audience members should try to have answered some of the questions from the analysis. Discuss how the analysis. Did you change your mind about anything once you started to rehearse?

ACTIVITY 3 - PRACTICE ESSAY QUESTION

As a performer, how would you use performance skills to portray your interpretation of sections of the play? (200–300 words)

IN MY ANSWER I HAVE:

- ✓ explained and justified my use of vocal skills
- ✓ explained and justified my use of physical skills
- ✓ referred to specific moments in the text and explained my decisions with reference to the play
- ✓ referred to the character's intentions and relationships
- ✓ referred to relevant social, historical, or cultural context
- ✓ explained how my decisions might be interpreted by an audience

Happy Endings

The final speech made by Ed is very emotional and signifies the beginning of the new era. It is clear that the future for Christopher is not going to be without difficulties, but there is hope. The play ends with an extremely uplifting scene between Siobhan and Christopher. A* he wanted, has solved the mystery of Wellington, has found his mother, went to the States AND put on a play – not bad work! The play ends with Christopher asking Siobhan 'anything?' As an audience, we are pretty sure that the answer is going to be 'yes'.

ACTIVITY 4 - AN UPLIFTING END

Why do you think the ending of Curious Incident feels so emotional and uplifting? What is the relationship to Christopher at this point? What have his struggles represented to you? What has been shared between Christopher and the audience at the end of the play?

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The Maths Appendix (pp. 100-102)

Summary

After the curtain call, Christopher comes back to solve the Maths problem. In 10 minutes, which is the amount of time he spent in the exam. Christopher solves it 'with as much theatricality as we can throw at it'. At the end, he declares 'and then he exits after confetti is thrown.'

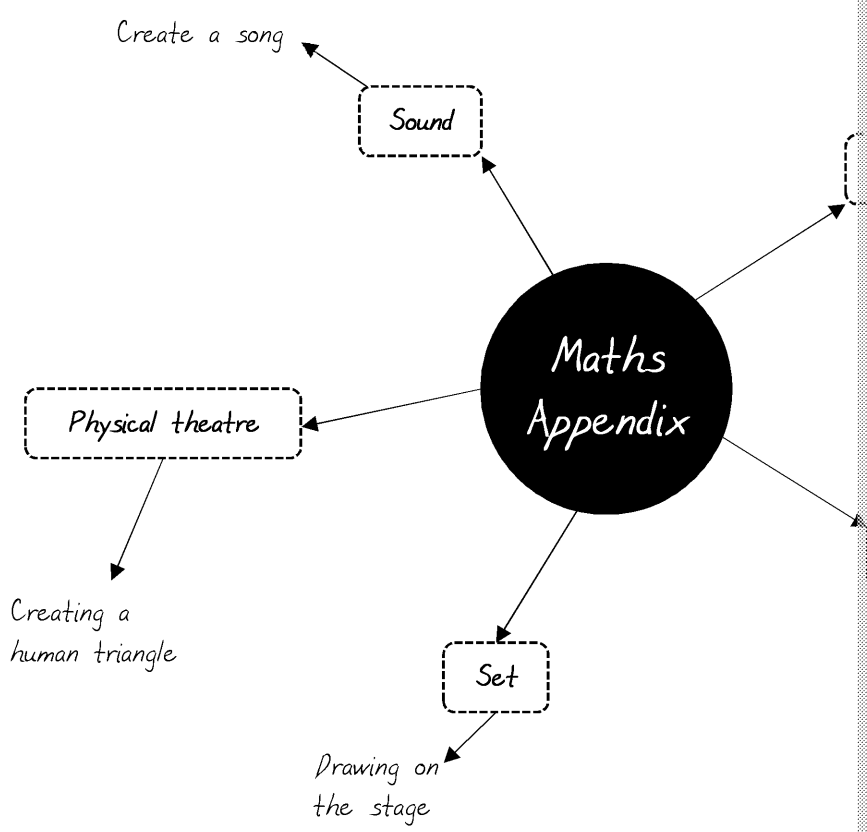
An A* Ending

The Maths Appendix is a really exciting part of the play (believe it or not) because it's completely free and goes absolutely crazy! The play finished with Christopher claiming he wanted, and this part of the show is kind of a way to let the theatre do whatever it wants. 'With as much theatricality as we can' at the answer to a Maths question means that a director can let the show to create one great big spectacle – the stage directions even suggest you can...

Another thing that this final appendix should do is prove that, even though we meet Christopher, we can appreciate his way of seeing the world if we look at things a little differently. We normally find Maths very exciting, but Christopher is going to show us exactly how super exciting – and he can do this by making this the most exciting part of the show.

ACTIVITY 1 - THROWING AS MUCH THEATRICALITY AT IT AS YOU CAN

In the space below, mind-map as many different ways as you can think of to make the Maths Appendix exciting. We have given some suggestions, but add many more and also elaborate on them. Share and discuss your ideas as a class.



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Section Three: Developing a Production

What is a Production Concept?

A production concept is a director's stylistic and dramatic interpretation of a play upon the focus of the play – which themes are going to be most important in this then decide upon the best way to communicate their interpretations and ideas to production concept will be simple; however, sometimes a production concept can to alter the play completely, e.g. moving the play into a different time period or st perspective of a different character.

A director needs to consider the following things when devising their production

- What is the play about?
- What are the themes? Which themes are important to my production?
- Who are my audience?
- What is important about putting on this play today? How is it relevant to a r
- How do I want my audience to feel or think throughout the play? Do I want anything?

Everything that makes a performance should be influenced by the production con

- Performance aspects such as line delivery, physicality, proxemics, and actor,
- Selection of scenes, or dialogue
- Set
- Lighting
- Sound
- Projection/multimedia
- Costume and props
- Choice of space/stage

A Curious Incident is written so that the stage directions are sparse and this is larg the director. None of the physical theatre or the elaborate routines are describe someone who has never seen the entire play, they have complete imaginative fr going to use physical theatre – or not. We also already know that *Curious Incident* different ways – how do you think it would work if it were staged in a third way?

Practitioners

Depending upon your production concept, you might want to research the metho practitioners. Their work might inform or influence your play throughout, or only Practitioners might be playwrights, such as Shakespeare himself, directors or the practitioners who might be worth researching, depending upon your area of inte include physical theatre, researching other practitioners of that field would be be

Headlong – innovative ensemble theatre	Konstantin Stanislavs
Frantic Assembly – physical theatre	Bertolt Brecht – epic t
Kneehigh Theatre – multidisciplinary storytelling	DV8 – physical and ver
Punchdrunk – immersive theatre	Steven Berkoff – expres
Katie Mitchell – naturalism and multimedia	Gecko – physical thea
Polka Theatre – children's theatre	Augusto Boal – forum
Antonin Artaud – theatre of cruelty	PUSH – physical thea
Complicité – surreal, physical theatre	Pina Bausch – experim

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ACTIVITY 1 - CREATING YOUR PRODUCTION CONCEPT

Answer the following questions to help develop your directorial concept for Curious

What are the themes I am most interested in portraying?

.....
.....
.....

What do I think the play is about? What is the key message?

.....
.....
.....

Why is this play, and the themes I have chosen, relevant to modern audiences?

.....
.....
.....

What kind of adaptation am I interested in?

Conservative Update Reworking Experimental

What initial ideas do I have for the setting?

.....
.....
.....

Are there any storylines or plots which are particularly important to my vision?

.....
.....
.....

Are there any practitioners or styles I will be using to influence my piece? Will I use any specific moments in the play?

.....
.....
.....

Any other initial thoughts?

.....
.....
.....

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Performance

You should consider:

- Will your production concept affect any elements of characterisation?
- Will your production concept affect any social or historical context which will affect characterisation or plot developments in the play?
- Will the journeys of the characters change?
- Will you adopt any stylistic techniques? Will your performance be realistic? Will you incorporate any physical theatre, dance, or physical comedy?
- Will you adopt the style of any practitioners?

The script of *Curious Incident* is extremely flexible: it offers the storyline and dialogue, but no clues as to how the play should be performed, and it gives no clues as to how the play was created. Creating your own production of *Curious Incident* gives you complete freedom! You can take inspiration from the original staging, ideas or themes, or you can create a production based on your own understanding of the script.

A performance concept doesn't need to be overly complicated or change the play. Identifying your audience will affect the performance aspects of a production. When the novel was published, it was published in two editions – one for adults, and one for children. Perhaps you could create a production of *Curious Incident* for a group of children. This might mean that you decide to omit some of the text, or stage it in the round so that the performance can be more immersive for children to remain engaged. *Curious Incident* could also potentially be performed in a way which case you might choose to remove any strobe lighting or particularly piercing

Curious Incident is a challenging and complex play to perform in a lot of ways, because it is based upon stereotypes. There are no heroes and villains that you can attach objects to. The lives of the characters are conflicted and have many layers, experiences and intentions. A detailed study of all of the main characters is extremely important! On the other hand, some characters are symbolic. The smaller, supporting roles such as Reverend Peters, Police Officer, and the other characters who could be played by anyone in the ensemble. These characters are not the focus of the portrayal is more focused on how these people affected Christopher, and many of the other characters. It is a play-within-a-play!

ACTIVITY 2 - PITCH YOUR PRODUCTION CONCEPT

Working independently, you should work to create a 5–10 minute presentation of your production concept. Imagine that you are going to pitch your concept to a board of artistic directors. How would you convince them to produce your play? What aspects of your production concept are most relevant to audiences?

You will need to explain how you intend to direct and perform the play, and why. You should also explain how you aim to use design elements to enhance your production concept. If you are intending to stage the play (although, you don't need to go too in-depth here if you haven't planned these ideas out yet!).

As part of your pitch you should also try to use some form of PowerPoint or Prezi. You should also find other plays, images or videos which have inspired your production concept. You should also mention any practitioners you have researched.

You should also explain how you intend the main characters to be portrayed and why. You should also mention ideas – ages of the characters, regional identity, etc.

Present to the class. After each presentation, the class should discuss each production concept and give feedback or ideas which might develop the production concept. Aim to solve any problems which haven't been made yet.

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Lighting

You should consider:

- Will you use artificial lighting?
- How will your lighting work alongside your set design?
- What kind of symbolism could you create through the use of colour?
- How can you reinforce the location or time period through lighting?
- Will there be any specific moods or atmospheres that will require a change?
- How will you use lighting to transition between scenes, if at all?
- Will any particular style or methodology affect your use of lighting?
- How will your lighting enhance your overall production concept?

ACTIVITY 3 - FAMILY FORTUNES

Split the class into two 'families.' You are going to play a game of family fortunes. Questions are going to be related to lighting. Take it in turns to nominate a member of the other family to buzz – you will have to select a team buzzer noise! You must try to guess all the categories.

Nominate a class member, or your teacher, to read the categories and keep score. When you give an answer, you buzz. Whoever buzzes first must give an answer. If their answer is correct, they get a point. If not, the other family must try to guess the rest of the answers. If they give a wrong answer, the question goes back to the original nominator, who can then try to fill the board. (The questions and answers are at the back of the book.)

ACTIVITY 4 - PSYCHOLOGY OF COLOUR

As a class, discuss the associated emotions and moods of the following colours: RED, BLACK, BLUE, GREEN, GREY, BROWN, PINK, YELLOW, PURPLE, WHITE. Make notes of the suggested moods and themes. Highlight any which you think are particularly interesting.

ACTIVITY 5 - PLOTTING LIGHTS

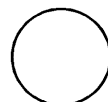
Choose any scene from the play. Draw a stage diagram and include any scenery, furniture, and the positioning of characters. Use the key below to create a lighting plot for the scene. Label each light with a number, and label them 0–100% in terms of their brightness. Annotate with notes on the lighting transitions. The symbol 'other' can represent any lights which are also props.



Fresnel



Strobe



Profile



Other

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ACTIVITY 6 - CREATE A LIGHTING CUE SHEET

Write a cue sheet for *Curious Incident*. Do this scene by scene. Continue on a separate page.

<i>Cue</i>	<i>Light</i>	<i>Description</i>

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Sound

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You should consider:

- Will you use pre-recorded or live sound?
- Will you use sound throughout, or at specific moments?
- How will your use of sound create a mood or atmosphere?
- Will you use music? What about instruments? Will musicians double as actors?
- Will the sounds be diegetic or non-diegetic?
- How will you use silence, or lack of sound?
- How will you use volume or pitch?
- How will your use of sound enhance your overall production concept?

ACTIVITY 7 - WHAT CAN YOU HEAR?

Shut your eyes and be as quiet as you can. Listen to what noises are around you. What foreground or background of your location? Spend five minutes listening, and write down what you hear.

After the five minutes are up, share what you found with the rest of the class. What clues do you have? Discuss which noises and sounds you think would be important in defining your location. What clues as to where you are?

ACTIVITY 8 - MAKING SOUNDS

As a class, form a circle. One by one, each person must take a step forward and make a sound with their voice or their body. Each person must make a different sound – think laughs, etc. The rest of the circle must then mimic this noise, and then the next person.

Repeat this exercise, but this time choose a sound which represents an object or action. You might use your voice to create the sound of a phone ringing. Instead of the class mimicking, what your sound is – like backwards charades! Do not use your body to give any clues.

Split into groups. This time, and as a group, you must choose to create an environment. You must not use movement or gestures. Potential environments might include: a storm, a race, or a party. Think about noises you might hear in the background or foreground. You might want to use appropriate props to create sound too; for example, a whistle. Spend five minutes and then perform these to the class. Discuss what was effective about each group's sound.

ACTIVITY 9 - CREATE A CUE SHEET

Write a cue sheet for Curious Incident. Do this scene by scene. The example is for the scene 'Christopher Investigates'.

Cue	Sound	Description
After the line: Siobhan: I decided to do some more detection. I decided to go out on my own.	A doorbell ringing.	Pre-recorded sound effect played from offstage.

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Staging and Set Design

There are many different types of stage you can use in a theatre production, all providing their own specific benefits and challenges.

- Proscenium Arch** the most common type of stage, where the 'arch' creates a picture frame for the action to take place within. This kind of stage easily helps to create the fourth wall.
- Traverse** a rectangular stage where the audience are sitting on two sides.
- Thrust** a rectangular stage where audience are sitting on three sides, with the fourth side acting as a background.
- In the Round** a circular stage where the audience are sitting all around, and there is no background.
- Promenade** there is no set stage space, and the audience are free to walk around the space.
- Site-specific** the play is not performed in a conventional theatre space, but in a location relevant to the play,

Stages such as the traverse, thrust and round are all good for encouraging audience interaction and intimacy. However, the traverse and round staging can sometimes be difficult when staging the actions because you must be far more aware about what any given audience member can see at any given time. One benefit of these kinds of stage is that they can be very flexible – different areas of the stage could be in different locations, or even different times.

Key Definition:

Fourth Wall – an invisible barrier between the audience and the action onstage, allowing the audience to see the play, but preventing the actors onstage from acknowledging the audience

ACTIVITY 10 - LOCATION, LOCATION, LOCATION

Go through the script and find all of the points in the play where the location changes and then write down as many ideas as to how the set design might change on a table like the one below, and try to think of set design ideas which are naturalistic.

Page no.	Scene Change	Naturalistic	Abstract
16	Christopher's neighbourhood street	Flats of houses with doors, backdrop of the sky or hills, etc.	Lighting used to spotlight different neighbours he speaks to

ACTIVITY 11 - DESIGNING A MODEL SET

Set designers normally build a model so that they can get a strong sense of how it will look in real life. Once you have created your set design, build a 3D model to check for any other practical problems! Remember to think about all entrances, exits, and so on. You can use cardboard, straws or Lego – be as creative as you can!

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Costume and Props

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You should consider:

- Will your costumes be of the period?
- Will your costumes be realistic or stylised/abstract?
- How will you use colour and materials to represent your characters, or the production?
- Will you be using masks or disguise? Will your production concept affect this?
- Will a character's costume change alongside their journey/experiences?
- How will your costume or prop design fit in alongside your set design?
- Will you use costume influenced by any styles or practitioners, e.g. Brecht?
- Will your use of props be minimalistic or extensive?
- Are there any key props in your production?
- How will your use of costume and props enhance your overall production?

An audience will almost definitely judge a character by what they are wearing – what they speak, so first impressions are everything! Certain styles of costume, or even accessories, suggest a lot about the characteristics of the people onstage – or give the audience a clue to the action which is about to take place. Costumes can also be symbolic or abstract, and can reflect a character's personality or intentions. Brecht used costumes to portray the character's stereotype, for example, a character who is old, vulnerable, slow or feeble.

ACTIVITY 12 - JUDGING A CHARACTER BY ITS COVER

Write the following costumes and props below onto scraps of paper and put them in a bag. In class, form a circle and nominate one person to pick a piece of paper from the bag and read it aloud. The rest of the class must then shout out what they associate with that item. Words that might suggest old, vulnerable, slow or feeble.

Each person in the circle must give one description, and when it reaches someone else's name, they then go into the circle and choose a new scrap of paper.

Fancy suit	Ballgown	No shoes	Parka	
Red dress	Football shirt	Bikini	Fur coat	Turtleneck
Bowler hat	Male vest	Hawaiian shirt	Corset	Black dress
Sweatbands		Tutu	Leather jacket	

ACTIVITY 13 - DRESS THEM UP

Working independently, go through the play and decide upon what costume and props your characters will need – your characters may wear the same throughout. If they are going to change, perhaps just choose two or three characters to focus on. Create a table, and decide upon key moments. Do they need to be dressed appropriately for a specific event? Perhaps consider their state of mind or intentions in that scene? Remember to consider colour and texture, and how they fit the production concept, setting and time period.

Character and Section	Costume/Props	What will it represent?
Siobhan's costume throughout	Red shirt, white trousers, white trainers	Siobhan's red shirt will represent her appreciation of her as it is a sign of her awareness of him and her feelings for him. Her trousers and trainers should represent that she is practical and hands on – able to move

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ACTIVITY 14 - DRAWING A COSTUME DESIGN

In the space below, draw a costume design for Christopher. Annotate and explain the use of colour and materials.

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ACTIVITY 15 - PRACTICE ESSAY QUESTION

As a designer, how would you create a costume for the character of Christopher in the play? (200 words)

In your answer, make sure you refer to relevant contextual, historical or social context.

Glossary of Key Terms

Abstract	performance or design which infers meaning or is surreal or realistic
Accent	a specific way of pronouncing your words, associated with a particular region
Autism Spectrum Disorder	a cognitive, behavioural disorder which affects individuals differently
Black Comedy	a genre of comedy which is dark, where serious or taboo issues are treated inappropriately
Cross-cutting	placing together scenarios which jump back and forth in time
Diction	the clarity with which you speak words
Diegetic Sound	sound which comes from the world of the play. This can be created at the scene, or sound effects such as a door opening offstage.
Epistolary	a story told through a series of letters or diary entries
Exposition	insertion of important background information without the characters knowing it
Farce	a genre of comedy which sees characters become involved in usually extravagant or disorganised, situations
Flats	2D painted boards which act as the backdrop to a stage, creating the impression of walls, such as in a building, or being in other locations.
Fourth Wall	an invisible barrier between the audience and the actors, preventing the audience from seeing the actors and preventing the actors from seeing the audience
Fresnel	a light which gives a generic effect, providing a wide beam of light with soft edges and are used to light an entire stage or a large area
Gesture	a movement of the body used to express an idea or emotion
Idiosyncrasy	a mode of behaviour particular to an individual
Inflection	changing vocal qualities at particular moments for emphasis
Intonation	the rise and fall of the voice
In the Round	a circular stage where audience are sitting all around the stage
Juxtapose	to place two ideas close together for contrasting effect
LED Strips	these can give a thin strip of light to a particular area, such as on the floor or walls of a stage to create shapes, or to highlight the height between actors or objects onstage
Levels	the height between actors or objects onstage
Low Comedy	comedy characterised through physical action, focusing on boisterous jokes
Metatheatre	any quality of a play which draws attention to the fact that it is a play, distinguishing it from reality
Mime	using only movement to suggest actions or feelings
Minimalistic	a set which uses the bare minimum – one object to represent many
Motif	a reoccurring idea or image in an artistic work
Naturalistic	a set which closely resembles the real world, or the characters and their actions
Non-diegetic Sound	sound which is created outside the world of the play, such as voice-overs, or sounds/music used to create atmosphere
Parody	satirical or ironic comedy which imitates or comments on another work
Physical Theatre	a form of theatre which is removed from naturalistic representation, emphasises the use of physical movement, such as acrobatics
Pitch	raising your voice to be higher or lower

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Profile/Spot	these light a specific point onstage, and the edges controlled
Projection	speaking in a way which allows your voice to be heard projection can be used as scenic backdrops, to show a scene which would be difficult to create onstage, or to give information to the audience
Promenade	there is no set stage space, and the audience are part of the action
Props	handheld props (such as a torch), or much larger objects strong indication of a setting
Proscenium Arch	the most common type of stage, where the 'arch' is the main action to take place within
Proxemics	the distance between actors onstage
Reversal	comedy which reverses expectations, or where the audience's expectations are reversed This normally takes place after a series of repetitions
Revolve	a revolving stage can be useful for logistical reasons without the need for lifting anything on or off stage action or themes of the play
Site-specific	a play which is performed outside the normal rehearsal space site-specific performance of <i>Curious Incident</i> might be an example
Slapstick	a physical form of comedy which involves exaggerated actions
Smoke Machine	this can exaggerate the effect of lights, or create a mood of confusion or spooky. It can also help to portray a dreamt.
Stress	placing emphasis on particular words
Strobes	these provide rapid flashes of bright light. They can be used for motion effects. Warnings are usually needed when used to affect audience members.
Subtext	a hidden, but normally obvious, meaning in any text
Tableau	a still picture which represents a scene or moment
Tempo	the speed at which lines are delivered
Thrust	a rectangular stage where audience are sitting on three sides acting as a background
Tone	using voice to express a particular mood or feeling
Traverse	a rectangular stage where audience are sitting on two sides
Volume	using your voice to be louder or quieter

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Teacher's Answers and Notes

Nearly all practical activities involve the students being asked to share their work with the class. In the absence of these constraints, it might be impossible to always share everyone's work with the class. In that case, the teacher should watch a rehearsal performance of every group's work so that each student has the opportunity for feedback and opportunity to share their efforts.

Section One: Context

ACTIVITY 1 – CHARACTER PROFILES

This activity could be completed as a homework task, or alternatively set as a homework task for the next lesson. The character profiles should give information relevant to the play as a whole, not the information about the person when we first meet them. For example, it should be noted that Judy had an affair with a man who had been living in London while Christopher has believed her to be dead.

Example Profile:

Christopher

Age: 15

Important Relationships: Ed, his father, Siobhan, his teacher, Toby, his pet rat and best friend, Mrs Alexander and his new 'closest-thing-to-a-friend', Mrs Alexander.

Three Key Facts: Christopher is a mathematical genius, he loves animals, and he notices details that others miss.

ACTIVITY 2 – DRAW A COMIC STRIP

Place emphasis on the task rather than on the students' ability to draw – stick men will be fine. Use the speech bubbles to explain the scene!

Students may find it useful to draw their comic strip on larger paper, e.g. A3. They might also be encouraged to use markers.

ACTIVITY 3 – REDUCE THE PLAY

Students may use their 20 moments from the previous activity to help them find dialogue and can look elsewhere!

ACTIVITY 4 – MOVEMENT TO REFLECT FEELINGS

Remind the class to be aware of the space and their fellow students when moving about. Discuss that an ensemble could reflect Christopher in two ways: either to reflect his state of mind or to reflect how he might be behaving if he could articulate his feelings properly.

Chaotic movement might suggest confusion, anger, being overwhelmed, or distress.

Precise movement might suggest focus, concentration, calmness, or tension.

ACTIVITY 5 – RESEARCHING FRANTIC ASSEMBLY

Allow students to research the themes of the plays and their backgrounds, so that they can bring their own ideas and regards to these.

Facilitate this discussion by encouraging the students to notice that the movements tend to be either chaotic or precise. For example, *Othello* and *Beautiful Burnout* both feature violent movements, while the movements in *The Curious Incident* are more lyrical and dance-like.

ACTIVITY 6 – MIME IT

The aim of this activity is for students to explore features of mime and exaggerated movement. The focus is on creating and understanding physical theatre. Students should recognise that they should be using their bodies to show action, but also of emotion.

ACTIVITY 7 – FROM HERE TO THERE

Complete concentration is key to this activity in order to ensure the safety of students. It is important that the students are used during this activity.

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ACTIVITY 8 – WHAT IS AUTISM?

Encourage students to make notes on this video. It can be shown to the entire class via p

ACTIVITY 9 – RESEARCHING THE SPECTRUM

Students should be given access to computers / the Internet or this task could be set as a completed in class).

ACTIVITY 10 – DISCUSSING THE SPECTRUM

Remind students to be sensitive and considerate during class discussions, and ask them to voicing their opinion.

Section Two: Scene-by-scene Analysis**Part One: The Murder and Police Station****ACTIVITY 1 – DEAD DOG**

Facilitate this discussion by encouraging students to consider abstract ways of creating a include using projection, using a toy dog, having the police tape outline of a dog, etc.

ACTIVITY 2 – INTERACTING WITH CHRISTOPHER

The outcome of this activity is to help students understand that the audience learn about act around them, not just through watching the character themselves.

Students should adopt appropriate vocal and physical skills, such as gestures or tone of vo officer's frustration, confusion and discomfort.

ACTIVITY 3 – ATTENTION TO DETAIL

The aim of this activity is to engage with Christopher's personality in ways which are slight thinking around the play and enable students to create their own interpretation of charac

ACTIVITY 4 – CHRISTOPHER ON THE SPECTRUM

Students should use the research they carried out in the Context section of the resource this activity.

Students should be able to justify their understanding of Christopher's condition and sym would be expected to do in the exam.

ACTIVITY 5 – NEVER TO TOUCH

The aim of this activity is for students to be able to consider how they might feel in the c character motivations or reactions.

ACTIVITY 6 – PASS THE GESTURE

The aim of this activity is for students to experience the atmosphere a gesture or motif ca allows an opportunity to consider the feelings of the characters involved.

Part One: Siobhan and Ed**ACTIVITY 1 – CREATING TABLEAUX**

The aim of this activity is for students to analyse the moments selected for performance, chosen, e.g. excitement, dramatic tension.

This task might also be useful as a stimulus for devising physical theatre around that part

ACTIVITY 2 – STAGING SPACE

The aim of this activity is for students to have explored different methods of staging, cross audience. Students should be aware of how cross-cutting can be confusing or unclear.

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ACTIVITY 3 – TEACHER’S VOICE

The aim of this task is for students to gain experience experimenting with vocal qualities and work as a team to create an accurate portrayal of this character.

Suitable vocal qualities might include, but are not restricted to: exaggerated projection, exaggeration, animation, and having a slightly slower tempo in order to promote clarity and allow Christopher time to process her words.

ACTIVITY 4 – PRACTICE ESSAY QUESTION

Indicative content:

- Use of clear projection to mirror the need to project to a classroom and to an audience
- Slow tempo in order to promote clarity and allow Christopher time to process her words
- Exaggerated intonation to create vocal animation and a teacher’s enthusiasm
- Accent might be RP which is very clear and easy for all to understand, making it accessible
- Reference specific examples from the text
- Context of a teacher-figure needing a certain emotional distance
- Context of character of Siobhan as always kind, enthusiastic and trustworthy

Part One: Christopher Investigates**ACTIVITY 1 – LIKES AND DISLIKES**

The aim of this activity is to use the text in order to build knowledge of the protagonist’s likes and dislikes. Consider that Christopher’s likes and dislikes might not be built in the same way that our own and disliking certain things might be different from what we might imagine.

ACTIVITY 2 – MEET AND GREET

This improvisation task will allow students to explore their characters outside of the play and consider the character’s behaviour and reactions.

An extension to this task would be to ask students to devise a short scene of two or three characters and perform for one reaction.

ACTIVITY 3 – CHRISTOPHER’S VOICE

The outcome of this task is for students to work both independently and then together in creating their own portrayals of Christopher, beginning with vocal qualities and idiosyncrasy. The focus is on characterisation, so encourage students to discuss if their portrayal of Christopher was too similar to their own and how they could do to make their interpretations unique?

Indicative content for dialogue analysis:

- Adopting a ‘matter-of-fact’ tone – using little intonation, for example – to emphasise the importance of giving facts and doesn’t really understand the concept of faith
- Place stress on ‘isn’t’ in the first two lines to highlight that Christopher is sure he is not a dog
- Purposefully not taking breaths unless there is actual punctuation given because Christopher wants to give as much information as he could at once
- Fast pace to emphasise his enthusiasm but also his nervousness about talking to people

ACTIVITY 4 – FACIAL EXPRESSIONS

The aim of this activity is for students to explore performance aspects which have not been mentioned in the text (in this case, the influence came from the novel). This activity will encourage students to think about when imagining staging possibilities, and ask them to think outside the box.

In order to save on supplies/time, each group could simply use little paper drawings to represent the facial expressions of signs between the groups for performance.

Facilitate this discussion by suggesting that sometimes ideas might only work in the rehearsal room but do not translate to the performance. On the other hand, sometimes silly exercises can develop into integral staging and performance.

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Part One: School**ACTIVITY 1 – CHANGING SPACES**

Curious Incident is a fantastic play to study when considering staging because of its change of great way to visually understand how a set can adapt to different spaces. Encourage students to be more effective, in terms of the design and performing the play.

ACTIVITY 2 – DISCUSSING STAGING

Facilitate this discussion by encouraging students to think critically about performances that are beneficial to the live performance section of the exam, but will also develop their ideas as problem-solvers!

ACTIVITY 3 – PERFORMING IN THE ROUND

Ask for volunteers to perform the extract. If you are explaining this activity and students are reading them the 'top tips for performing in the round' gradually as they play the task. Perhaps after each time they are 'BLOCKED'.

ACTIVITY 4 – STAGE DESIGN POSSIBILITIES

Facilitate this discussion by helping and prompting students to question the ideas given to the scene but what are you going to do in this scene? How will you move the set from a to b? Is there something that happens later in the play? Etc.

ACTIVITY 5 – FATHER-SON BONDING

The aim of this activity is for students to improvise around the text and develop their understanding of the communication between Ed and Christopher should enable students to explore their relationship.

Part One: Mrs Alexander**ACTIVITY 1 – BUZZ WORDS**

The aim of this task is for students to share their initial ideas about a character and begin to develop them from simple buzzwords.

ACTIVITY 2 – PUTTING BUZZWORDS INTO ACTION

The aim of this activity is for students to be able to practically explore their initial ideas about a character. Students should think about how personality and descriptive words can be translated into movement. e.g. what does a 'kind' voice sound like?

ACTIVITY 3 – A FRIENDLY CHAT

The aim of this activity is to allow students to gain understanding of how differently Christopher communicates as himself in his place. This should enable students to understand how to change in order to portray Christopher.

ACTIVITY 4 – AN APOLOGY LETTER

The aim of this activity is to allow students to independently consider the thoughts, opinions and feelings of a character such as Mrs Alexander.

Depending on class size, you might ask students to volunteer to read their letter.

ACTIVITY 5 – EMBARRASSING MOMENTS

Facilitate this discussion by reminding students that anything disclosed in the classroom should be that students should not share anything they do not want to share. You should also warn students about 'embarrassing stories' on anyone else's behalf, if they might be easily identified or known.

ACTIVITY 6 – AWKWARD CONVERSATIONS

The aim of this activity is that students should be able to identify subtext and apply performance techniques to it and convey meaning.

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ACTIVITY 7 – PRACTICE ESSAY QUESTION

Indicative content:

- Student has explained that the subtext lies beneath Mrs Alexander trying to tell Christopher she is 'not good' or her pitch might become very high.
- **Vocal skills:** While trying to communicate the subtext, Mrs Alexander might put her voice in a 'good' or her pitch might become very high.
- **Physical skills:** Mrs Alexander might nod her head in an exaggerated manner. She might look at Christopher, or look to the side, in order to convey embarrassment. Mrs Alexander might cross her legs uncomfortably.
- Student should recognise that Mrs Alexander believes she is doing the right thing but she is wrong and feels guilty for asking Christopher to lie to his father.
- The audience might interpret that Mrs Alexander doesn't want to say outright that she is doing sex, e.g. she might deem it socially unacceptable to discuss sex, especially when she is young.
- The reaction expected from the audience might be that they find the exchange very awkward. Mrs Alexander is using exaggerated gesture, or if she reacts shocked to Christopher saying 'I'm doing sex'.

Part One: Remembering Mother**ACTIVITY 1 – ACTING A MEMORY**

When students are re-enacting a flashback, they must realise that they are not merely showing a memory but they are back in that moment – therefore, they must re-enact everything and not just talk about it.

When discussing the flashbacks, encourage the students to think about how movement can be used to convey emotion. Emphasise that theatre is about showing as well as telling.

ACTIVITY 2 – CHOREOGRAPHY IDEAS

Encourage students to share their ideas and explain any relevant inspiration and influences. Students might suggest that the ensemble could be used to create the waves of the sea, or to allow her to physically fall back into the sea.

ACTIVITY 3 – EXPLORING THE EIGHT EFFORTS

Material to enable students to watch examples of Laban's efforts has not been provided. Experimenting with movement based upon the stimuli of these descriptive words will allow students to take initiative, and find their own ways to inhabit their body rather than copying someone else. There are many videos on YouTube if visual aids are necessary.

The most obvious ways to explore the characters' movements might be to move as Judy and Christopher might be more suited to dabbing and pressing. However, these are not restrictive.

The aim of swapping genders is to allow students to explore how all of Laban's movements can be used. Also allow them to become familiar with inhabiting an unfamiliar body.

Part One: Ed confronts Christopher**ACTIVITY 1 – TRUSTING YOUR PARTNER**

Silence and concentration within this activity are extremely important to avoid health and safety issues. It is recommended that any students who are not willing to comply to this are removed from the activity. Establishing trust between actors is vital because it means that stage combat can be performed safely without fear of injury.

ACTIVITY 2 – STAGE COMBAT LESSON

It is recommended that, if possible, the teacher also performs a live demonstration, after the students to perform the stage punch after watching the stage punch video. Then move on to ensure the instructions are fresh in the students' minds and do not become confused with the video.

ACTIVITY 3 – SHEDDING LIGHT ON A FIGHT

Potential lighting suggestions could include using strobes to create an overwhelming effect. Flashing lights could be used to mask a moment of impact during the fight.

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Part One: Christopher Looks for his Book

ACTIVITY 1 – RESEARCHING MIME

Students are encouraged to source research and inspiration from many different places in order to develop their ability to explain their own design and performance decisions based upon the work they have seen. This could be completed as a homework task.

ACTIVITY 2 – PILES OF PROPS

The aim of this activity is for students to consider abstract and stylistic approaches to props and how to select necessary props.

ACTIVITY 3 – USING THE ENSEMBLE

The aim of this task is for students to practically explore physical theatre. Encourage students to creatively involve an ensemble in a scene which only includes one character.

Remind students of health and safety: to be mindful of one another's space and comfort.

ACTIVITY 4 – RESEARCHING MURDER MYSTERIES

The aim of this task is to encourage students to seek inspiration from places which aren't obvious. Remind students to understand that their interpretation can focus on any aspect of the text and can be imaginative.

This could be set as a homework task, perhaps if not completed within class.

ACTIVITY 5 – THE DETECTIVE GENRE

Facilitate this discussion by encouraging students to draw parallels using the information that is given in the text.

Part One: Letters from Judy

ACTIVITY 1 – BODY LANGUAGE

The aim of this activity is for students to explore how different staging and use of proxemics can be used to help us understand a scene, or feel about a character.

ACTIVITY 2 – SWITCHING NARRATION

The aim of this activity is for students to develop their understanding of Christopher, who is a character who uses an alternative narration. This is also one way of demonstrating some of the challenges with using a character who is not emotionally communicative very well.

ACTIVITY 3 – BUILDING EXPRESSION

The aim of this activity is to encourage students to think imaginatively about interpretation and how to be able to realistically achieve their ideas for performance, in order to take full advantage of their own ideas.

ACTIVITY 4 – PHYSICALISING THE FLASHBACKS

The aim of this activity is for students to devise and improvise around the characters of the play to help their understanding of their history and experiences.

Facilitate the post-activity discussion by encouraging students to consider whether or not they can relate to Christopher or his mother in a particular way. Students should be able to acknowledge the challenges of portraying relatable and sympathetic representations of every character – they are not perfect people, they are real people.

ACTIVITY 5 – AUTISM AND PARENTING

Remind students to be sensitive during their discussions, and avoid making comments which are hurtful to anyone else. It should be recognised that every character in the play faces some kinds of challenges, and that they face them in different ways. All of the characters make mistakes and don't always make the right choices.

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Part One: Ed Explains**ACTIVITY 1 – ANALYSING THE THEME OF LIES AND BETRAYAL**

- Students might choose to consider white lies, lying to protect someone's feelings, lying to avoid embarrassment. Students might consider that there might be some concepts that Christopher would understand, so lying to him might prevent his confusion.
- Students could consider that had Ed told the truth to Christopher, he would have had a harder time understanding because she had fallen in love with someone else, and Christopher's understanding of love and relationships had been very undeveloped. Ed would also have had to explain she had left him, and that she had been with Christopher. Christopher might have reacted very badly to this.
- Christopher is very logical, so he defines a 'lie' as directly speaking and being untruthful. Ed's lies are not being so black and white. When Christopher doesn't tell the truth, but doesn't tell a lie, it's not a lie. However, others might consider this to be as much of a betrayal – especially if they know Ed is lying.
- Students should give their personal opinion here.
- Students might consider that Christopher needs to be trusting, because he relies on Ed for information about things. He cannot recognise when he is being told a lie, so this betrayal might seem more significant to him. He knew that he would never be able to recognise or doubt what they were saying.

ACTIVITY 2 – HOT-SEATING

The aim of this activity is for students to develop their understanding of the intentions, reactions and feelings of Christopher's father.

Part Two: Play-within-a-play and Swindon Town Centre**ACTIVITY 1 – RESEARCHING COMEDY**

The aim of this task is for students to gain a broad understanding of comedy, while also exploring specific techniques which would be appropriate for *Curious Incident*.

This could be set as a homework task. Famous examples of each comedy type include:

- Low Comedy: The Three Stooges; Shakespeare's *Mechanicals* in *A Midsummer Night's Dream*
- Parody: *Rosencrantz and Guildenstern Are Dead*; Charlie Chaplin's *The Great Dictator*
- Black Comedy: *Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf?*; *Fargo*; *American Psycho*; *Shaun of the Dead*
- Slapstick: Laurel and Hardy; *Tom and Jerry*; *Fawlty Towers*
- Farce: *The Play that Goes Wrong*; *One Man, Two Guvnors*; *The Comedy of Errors*

ACTIVITY 2 – LAUGHING AT OR WITH?

Facilitate this discussion by asking students to consider how to sensitively create comedy from situations which are sad. What makes it okay to laugh with someone? When does laughing with become laughing at?

ACTIVITY 3 – PERFORMING A REVERSAL

The outcome of this task is for students to break down comedy techniques and begin to apply them to their own writing. Ask students to consider exaggeration, comedic timing, and honest reactions. Encourage them to create scenarios and insist that any 'situation' can be made funny if a reversal is introduced effectively.

ACTIVITY 4 – CREATING A SOUNDSCAPE

Before beginning the soundscape, decide upon a class signal for silence – so that the sound effects can be commented upon.

The outcome of this activity is for students to experience how the pre-recorded soundscapes would have sounded, while also experimenting with organic, live sound.

ACTIVITY 5 – INCORPORATING MOVEMENT

The aim of this activity is for students to remember to consider the multisensory potential of their writing. Ask students to think about how their movement can reflect and enhance the atmosphere created by their writing.

ACTIVITY 6 – SOUNDSCAPE AND LANDSCAPE

The aim of this activity is for students to build upon their knowledge of the scene further. Ask students to use design elements among their devised scenes or movements. For example, if the lights are on at the station at random, the lights might also seemingly move frantically or at random to enhance the atmosphere.

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Part Two: On the Train

ACTIVITY 1 – MAKING YOURSELF DISAPPEAR

The aim of this activity is for students to explore inhabiting their bodies and using their bodies to communicate. This activity allows the students to think about how Christopher might have been feeling during this scene.

ACTIVITY 2 – ACTING AFRAID

The aim of this activity is to allow students to experiment with different movements and gestures to express Christopher's state of mind.

ACTIVITY 3 – FEELING THE FEAR

Facilitate this discussion by encouraging students to think about how Christopher is limited by his disability. How does he limit himself. Do you think he is more physically able to express himself than vocally?

Part Two: Waterloo

ACTIVITY 1 – NAVIGATING THE GRID

Talk the students through this activity step by step. Concentration will be key during this exercise. Use this as an example of how exercises can be taken and developed into the basis of scenes or movements. Encourage students to consider how the design is an integral part of a production, and can completely dictate or control the mood of a scene.

ACTIVITY 2 – WRITING CHRISTOPHER'S BOOK

The aim of this activity is for students to try to gain a deeper understanding of how Christopher might have felt during the scene and how he might articulate these feelings.

Facilitate the post-activity discussion by encouraging students to think about whether any of Christopher's letters could be staged, either through dialogue, physical theatre, the ensemble. Encourage students to demonstrate how text can be manipulated into becoming theatrical – which would have been the case with *Curious Incident*, as it was originally a novel.

ACTIVITY 3 – CREATE A SET DESIGN MOOD BOARD

Encourage students to use images, news clippings, colours, materials and buzzwords on their mood board. This should be created on A3 sheets if possible.

This could be set as a homework task.

ACTIVITY 4 – CREATING A SET DESIGN

Place emphasis upon the students' ability to think about creative and practical set design (this is often a common complaint from students when asked to draw!). This is merely an exercise to allow students to think about set design. Encourage students to annotate their work and think about their justifications.

For students who are struggling, prompt them to think about train stations, the type of architecture used in London, and to focus on trains themselves.

ACTIVITY 5 – PRACTICE ESSAY QUESTION

Indicative content:

- Explanation of style e.g. abstract in order to most accurately reflect how Christopher might have felt
- Use of larger than life, distorted signs and advertisements to emphasise Christopher's experience
- Use of revolving stage, which creates a sense of being not fully in control of movement
- Use of many clashing colours, including lots of yellow – to emphasise an environment that is alien and confusing
- The set should also feel very alien to the audience – not a Waterloo station that they can relate to, but one that provokes sympathy for Christopher

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Part Two: Tube**ACTIVITY 1 – DIRECTING DRAMA**

The outcome of this activity is for students to be able to discuss their ideas and develop

ACTIVITY 2 – PRACTICE ESSAY QUESTION

Sample Answer:

As a director, I want to create a sense of terror as the tube approaches. I would stage the the tube are either side of the tracks, so that they can both be looking down on Christopher lines, which will be created through the use of LED strips. When Christopher jumps down blackout, other than the LEDs and three spotlights on each character. When the lights black which move out from the back wall which will raise the two Londoners onto a higher level Christopher. I would use a projection of tube headlights on the back wall, which will become to create the image of a train travelling straight towards Christopher – and towards the a a sense of danger and empathy for Christopher. Sound effects will also be played, so that becomes louder and louder, exaggerating the threat of the ever-closer tube. I would direct platform will begin by being worried and bewildered, but then as the tube comes nearer hysterical – leaning down over the tracks to give Christopher a hand and shouting at him aspects both need to work together to create a tension which rises and rises until finally

Part Two: Living in London**ACTIVITY 1 – ANALYSING THE THEME OF FAMILY**

- Christopher depends completely on his family and trusts them because he puts confidence aren't strangers. He has a very literal understanding that family will look after him and would explain to a young child about 'stranger danger'. Christopher must depend on an average child, because they must help him understand day-to-day life and accommodate eating anything yellow.
- Christopher probably doesn't really understand his mother leaving – and by the time she is likely just glad that she is not dead. It is also likely that he would judge her actions as a conclusion that murdering a dog is worse.
- Students should give their own opinion here.
- Judy tries to escape and move to London, where she does not find a perfect life, and enters into her London world, although she knows in the back of her mind that it will not work out about Judy passing away. Both probably try to tell themselves that they do things for an actual fact, they mostly act selfishly.

ACTIVITY 2 – LEVEL IT OUT

Randomly call the numbers for students to react to, leaving enough time for them to explain. During part C, students should take care not to change their characters' personalities, etc. status.

ACTIVITY 3 – STAGING POWER

Students should recognise that a combination of levels and posture will help to create a convincing audience.

Students can choose which of their scenes they show, but make sure that, as a class, one scene is performed.

Part Two: Back in Swindon**ACTIVITY 1 – WHO SAYS MATHS ISN'T FUN?**

The aim of this activity is for students to create a scene by watching, reacting, exploring, and discussing elements will allow students to recognise that they are building the scene and can add different

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ACTIVITY 2 – PRACTICE ESSAY QUESTION

Indicative content:

- Explain and justify use of staging and positioning, e.g. will Christopher be sitting centre stage?
- Explain and justify use of multimedia, e.g. using projection to scramble maths questions.
- Recognise that the atmosphere created should signify to the audience that Christopher is nervous about the exam.
- Explain and justify your use of (or lack of) ensemble, e.g. using the ensemble to create a claustrophobic experience by having them taunt Christopher or represent numbers, etc., or isolating Christopher so he has no help.
- Explain and justify your use of mathematical lexis or subject knowledge, or standardised questions, projecting a full-size exam question, or having the invigilator pace.
- Explain and justify how Christopher will respond to the atmosphere, e.g. moaning, grunting, or referring to how he has previously reacted to uncomfortable situations.

Part Two: The End**ACTIVITY 1 – ANALYSING THE DIALOGUE**

The aim of this task is for students to be able to analyse dialogue to find meaning, intention and to allow them to make informed performance decisions.

ACTIVITY 2 – PERFORMING THE DIALOGUE

The aim of this task is for students to gain a practical sense of whether or not their performance is effective or accurate.

ACTIVITY 3 – PRACTICE ESSAY QUESTION

Explain and justify use of vocal skills: strained, holding back tears, kind tone, sense of spontaneity, 'trust me'.

Explain and justify use of physical skills: use of gesture to create a calming or safe motion, Ed is of equal status to Christopher, keeping an adequate distance to show he is respecting Christopher's space. Recognising Ed's intentions as being genuine – knowing that he has done wrong and is now in a difficult way and be as patient as he must.

Refer to the broken relationship between Christopher and Ed – that Christopher has been abandoned by his father and that trust has been destroyed.

Audience should feel empathy for Ed, recognise the pain that the distance between him and Christopher and understand his desperation to put things right.

ACTIVITY 4 – AN UPLIFTING END

Facilitate this discussion by asking students to reflect on their personal response to the end of the play and also be able to describe the potential for the audience to feel empathy for Christopher, and how this is in some way representational of every person's struggles – whether that be in their identity or in their life.

The Maths Appendix**ACTIVITY 1 – THROWING AS MUCH THEATRICALITY AT IT AS YOU CAN**

The outcome of this task is for students to be able to create a plan which will enable them to perform and encourage them to build upon the ideas which are given to them.

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Section Three: Developing a Production Concept

ACTIVITY 1 – CREATING YOUR PRODUCTION CONCEPT

As the students develop their production concept, remind them to consider how the audience will react to their decisions. They should be able to justify every creative decision in terms of their production concept and what they want their audience to feel.

Encourage students to be thorough, and to carefully consider each aspect of their production concept.

Advise any students who are struggling that their production concept need not be complicated. A simple production concept which is true to the original play is great – as long as they can justify their decisions.

Remind students to always consider their decisions in contrast to the original context of the play. Students will be expected to display knowledge of historical and social context.

ACTIVITY 2– PITCH YOUR PRODUCTION CONCEPT

The aim of this task is to allow students to share their ideas and give one another feedback. Start with an initial idea of how an audience might react to their concept, so that they can then make their decisions accordingly.

ACTIVITY 3 – FAMILY FORTUNES

This activity is modelled on the television programme, which asks questions and then asks the audience to vote on which might be the most popular answer. The more popular answers have higher points. Record every answer on the board.

1. What atmosphere might a smoke machine create?

Fog	30
Creepy	25
Non-naturalistic	10
Confused	5

2. What is associated with the colour green?

Jealousy	30
Sickness	25
Nature	10
Safety/Go	5

3. How could you light a scene to portray a murder?

Red light	30
Dark or dim fresnels	25
Spotlight on the crime or body	10
Flashing light at the moment of the murder	5

4. How could you light a scene to show there is a party?

Different coloured lights	30
Use strobes	25
Moving lights	10
Flashing lights	5

5. Lighting controls

Colour	30
Positioning	25
Levels	10
Transitions	5

6. Types of stage light

Profile	30
Strobes	25
Fresnel	10
Smoke Machine	5

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ACTIVITY 4 – PSYCHOLOGY OF COLOUR

Possible answers and suggestions include:

- RED: love, passion, seduction, anger, fire, romance, blood, murder
- BLACK: darkness, death, night, sophistication, emptiness, fear
- BLUE: calm, water, sky
- GREEN: jealousy, nature, harmony, growth, safety
- GREY: boring, empty, lonely, dull, neutral
- BROWN: earth, full, comfort, nature
- PINK: femininity, romantic love, innocence, fun, optimism
- YELLOW: happiness, energy, joy, sunshine, attention-seeking, garish, brightness, positive
- PURPLE: royalty, power, luxury, wealth, wisdom, magic
- WHITE: light, goodness, innocence, clarity, cleanliness, clinical, positive, purity, safety

ACTIVITY 5 – PLOTTING LIGHTS

The aim of this task is for students to visualise where lights will fall and to actively consider how to visualise their lighting plan, which can be invaluable if you are working without a prop.

ACTIVITY 6 – CREATE A LIGHTING CUE SHEET

Depending on how complicated the student's lighting concept is, this task may take a long time, so consider this as a homework task.

ACTIVITY 7 – WHAT CAN YOU HEAR?

Organise this activity so that the class are all completing the task at the same time – this allows students to hear as much as they can. Talk them through the activity for the first few minutes, then listen to noises in the room, or noises outside, or the noises which are barely there.

During discussion, students should be able to identify which noises are irrelevant to their scene. A low hum doesn't really give any indication of where they might be, but the sound of children playing is more likely to be heard.

ACTIVITY 8 – MAKING SOUNDS

- Possible noises might include hand claps, slaps, finger clicks, knuckle cracks, whistling, tongue, sirens, hissing, groaning, screaming, kissing, blowing raspberries, making noise, coughing.
- Possible objects might include a phone, doorbell, frog, cow, other animals, crying baby, water, wind, door knock, ambulance, thunder, typewriter, train, alarm clock, racing car.
- Either delegate environments to the groups or allow them to choose. Students should consider weather, animals, people, technology, vehicles, and music.

ACTIVITY 9 – CREATE A SOUND CUE SHEET

Depending on how complicated the student's sound concept is, this task may take a long time, so consider this as a homework task.

ACTIVITY 10 – LOCATION, LOCATION, LOCATION

The aim of this task is for students to know exactly what locations they need to stage and how the design must work at every section of the play. It also encourages students to consider different locations.

ACTIVITY 11 – DESIGNING A MODEL SET

This activity could be set as a homework task.

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ACTIVITY 12 – JUDGING A CHARACTER BY ITS COVER

For students who are struggling, prompt them to think about what the item of clothing might say about the character's age, gender, hobbies, wealth, class, or personality.

Remind students to be sensitive when categorising by gender, age, and class, and to use language that is respectful and inoffensive.

ACTIVITY 13 – DRESS THEM UP

Students should be able to choose costume and props based upon their character's personality and the setting. They should consider colour psychology, material and other features which will affect the character's appearance. Their own production concept and setting – a character from the 1920s would not be wearing modern clothing.

ACTIVITY 14 – DRAWING A COSTUME DESIGN

Place emphasis upon the student's ability to think about creative and practical costume design (a common complaint from students when asked to draw!). This is merely an exercise to allow students to think about Christopher's personality and quirks; for example, his favourite colour and maths.

ACTIVITY 15 – PRACTICE ESSAY QUESTION

Indicative content:

- Design choices might reflect Christopher's personality; for example, a red shirt because he likes the colour, or a shirt with lots of pockets because he tends to carry lots of gadgets – showing knowledge of his own character.
- Design choices should also reflect the modern-day setting, e.g. trainers and casual wear to reflect his working class background – not designer gear or particularly smart clothing.
- Design choices might also reflect upon Christopher's role in the play involving lots of lifting, thus choosing costume which will allow him to comfortably move and be lifted, etc.
- Refer to the audience and how they might interpret Christopher's costume.

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