

WICKED

ACTIVE LEARNING



Secondary Drama KS4

Introduction:

This pack is designed for Secondary Drama teachers and students to explore and analyse **Wicked** in more depth, after seeing the show. Included are a range of activities and warm-up games for **Key Stage 4** and a structured lesson plan, focusing on the evaluation and response to the live theatre section (Component 3) in the Drama GCSE exam.

We encourage schools to use this pack in conjunction with the **Wicked Active Learning Introduction Pack**, **Production Images** and **Script Extracts** packs.

Curriculum links and learning outcomes:

- Analyse and evaluate an experience of a live theatre performance as informed members of the audience.
- Develop skills to recognise the meaning created in the theatre space in order to communicate ideas to an audience.
- Develop a critical and varied approach to their own work as theatre makers.
- Develop knowledge and understanding of the ways in which drama can create meaning for an audience through performance.
- Understand theatrical choices that are made by crucial members of the creative and production team in order to communicate ideas to an audience.
- To practise and prepare a written response to watching live theatre (Lesson Plan).

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Staging: warm up activities and shorter lessons

1. Balancing a Room

Ask students to imagine how they position themselves in space relative to each other.

Ask students to imagine the floor of the room is balancing on the tip of a pencil.

To ensure they don't lose the game, students must keep the whole room balanced, making sure that people are not clustered together, that they are always equally spaced out.

Teacher should call out "Freeze" every minute or so. Each time, examine the room – is it balanced?

Remind the students they shouldn't walk in a circle and to keep moving at a decent pace.

2. Me and My Shadow

Similar to the game above, students should space themselves out in the room and begin to move around the space, being careful not to walk in a circle. They should be aware of each other in the space.

Ask students to choose 1 other member of the class in their head, but not to let that person know they have been chosen. That person is the "nemesis" – they want to keep as far away from them as possible. After running the activity for a minute or so, ask the students to choose another person. They are their "shadow". They should always try to keep their "shadow" between them and their "nemesis."

They should keep moving round the space always trying to keep their "shadow" between them and their "nemesis". When you call freeze, ask some other students to decide who is the "nemesis" and who is the "shadow". How well did they do?

You can split the class in two at the start, so they take it in turns to be active.

3. Building a Picture

This exercise is designed to help students understand how staging and position on stage can help to tell a story and give characters status. Split the class in half. One half sits down to watch the exercise. Cast one of the students as Elphaba.

The group will create the following scene as a frozen image:

Elphaba Arrives at Shiz University

One by one, the students enter the scene and assume a frozen position, and facial expression. Begin with Elphaba, then the students can enter and take up their position in relation to her. This exercise should happen in silence.

Once all students have entered the scene, the characters deliver the following lines:

ELPHABA

Oh, and this is my younger sister, Nessarose! As you can see, she's a perfectly normal colour.

FATHER

Elphaba, stop making a spectacle of yourself! Remember – I'm only sending you to this school for one reason –

Give the performers a chance to readjust their body language, facial expressions etc and then re-freeze.

Ask the students watching to analyse what they see.

Where are the allegiances between the characters? Who has the status in the scene?

How can we tell? Who in the scene might be Glinda? Who might be Madame Morrible? Why?



Working in groups, repeat the exercise, creating the following frozen pictures:

The Ozdust Ballroom Dance

Cast character: Elphaba

Lines:

FIYERO: I'll say this much for her-- she doesn't give a twig what anyone else thinks.

GALINDA: Of course she does. She just pretends not to.



Dr Dillamond Is Arrested

Cast Character: Dr Dillamond

Lines:

DILLAMOND: You're not being told the whole story! Remember that, class--!

ELPHABA: Doctor Dillamond--!

(to the class) Well are we all just going to sit here? In silence?

MORRIBLE: (sympathetically) Miss Elphaba, I'm afraid there's nothing we can do.



4. Extension Exercises

- Ask students to add an extra line of improvised speech into the scene – it should be about the character's inner thoughts.
- Move the students around the room, giving directions like:
 - Make the scene as small as you can
 - The whole classroom is your stage, use all of the space
 - Place the scene through a doorway, under a table, out in the corridor.

How does the space change the feeling of the scene?

Character: warm up activities and shorter lessons

1. Character Analysis

Photocopy the eight worksheets supplied at the end of this pack and ask students to fill in the details they can remember about each character.

Use your experience of seeing **Wicked** to complete this worksheet and write down any details you can remember.

Try to note down **why** the costume and make-up designers chose specific details, and what effect they wanted to have on the audience, and **how** it made you **feel**?

Use the space around the production photos to label any of the costume, hair and make-up or prosthetics designs.

2. Gesture

In **Wicked**, we see Glinda establish herself with a particular gesture: the dramatic tossing of her hair. What does this gesture tell us about Glinda?

Working individually, ask students to find a space in the room and choose one of the characters to become. Students should create a gesture which typifies how their character presents themselves to the world.

Walk around the room. When they meet another character, they should introduce themselves using only that gesture to do so, and receive a gesture back in return.

Now, ask students to create a gesture which communicates one of the inner qualities of their character, something which is not usually seen.

Repeat the exercise above with their second gesture. How does this feel different? Think about when the character might show themselves as one or the other – ask students to choose which gesture to use when they meet another character. How does it feel to expose that side of yourself to the other characters in the room?



3. Physicality

A gesture is a good way for students to gain a sense of the overall physicality of the character. Ask one student to do their gesture then hold their pose.

As a class, discuss the following:

- Where is their eyeline?
- Where is their centre of gravity (you may need to explain this)
- Do they stand tall or bent?
- Is their weight on one side of their body or another
- Which parts of their bodies are tense, and which are not?
- How are they holding their head?
- How far apart are their feet?

Working individually again, ask the students to do one of their gestures again.

Talk them through each of the questions and get them to analyse their own character's physicality and make choices in case they want to change anything.

They should now begin walking around the room maintaining their physicality.

Their movement may feel like their whole body is becoming this other character.

Once they have a sense of how their character moves, they can introduce a word or phrase which they think their character would use.

Moving around the room, they can meet other characters, using this phrase to interact with each other.

4. Transformation

Each character in **Wicked** goes through quite a transformation.

In what way does your character change?

Identify 3 stages of the story which are meaningful to your character, for example:

Elphaba: First day at Shiz University, Defying Gravity, Going into Hiding.

Students should title the 3 stages, as above. Now students should create a frozen pose of their character for each moment.

Once they have the 3 poses, find a way to slowly transition between them so that we see a physical transformation of their character.

Watch the transformations of each set of characters together, and, perhaps, perform to music.

What do the students notice about the difference as the character changes?

How does this exercise help them to develop their character's physicality?

Response to Live Theatre Analysis lesson plan

Aim:

- To begin the preparation to write a Response to Live Theatre evaluation.

Introduction:

Set up the following exercise in your classroom before the students enter:

- Scatter images from the **Production Images pack** around the room.
- Give each image a line from the production.
- Play music from **Wicked** as the students enter (a selection of tracks can be found on the **Wicked** website link [here](#)).

Students have to keep moving. When the music stops, they have to be equally spread out around the pictures.

DIFFERENTIATION - Assign specific students to each image so that there is a mix of students to explore the following topics. Allow the students to wander around whilst looking at the images and listening to the music and have pre-planned the groups that they're assigned to.

Ask each group to discuss and then briefly explain:

- What it was about that moment that they particularly enjoyed?

General points:

In these groups ask the students to write down a sentence for the following points:

- **The date they saw the show and in which theatre** (it is currently permissible to reference an onscreen production if that is relevant).

Then fold up the paper and pass it on to another group.

- **A summary of the production in as succinct a way as possible.**

Then fold up the paper and pass it on to another group.

- **The aim of the production.
What effect did it have on its audience?**

Then fold up the paper and pass it on to another group.

- **The type of theatre it was performed in.**

Then fold up the paper and pass it on to another group.

In groups look at what people have written and compare to what their group came up with. If necessary, tweak their answers.

Share with the class and come up with a series of sentences that the group are happy with. Explain that this is the introduction to their essay. Take these notes in. Type them up and share with students as they work on the next activity.

Choosing a moment:

Next, return the students' attention to the pictures that they're sat next to and the answers they previously gave when they first came in. Narrow these pictures down to two - they should be from two different parts of **Wicked** that ideally show development.

Have copies of these pictures and then assign the class to one of two pictures. This will make the groups bigger, but for each photograph, have some focusing on **performance** and some on **technical**. In these groups ask the students to work together to discuss the following:

- A written paragraph that encapsulates the following points:
 - **WHAT** happens in it.
 - **HOW** the actor or technician did what they did - physically and vocally, technically.
 - **WHY?** - why did the actor/designer do this? What effect did they create for the audience and how did the student sitting in the audience at the specific moment being analysed, **FEEL?**

Ideally, the students would want to work as practically as possible, so they would stand up and act out these specific moments.

If working technically and lacking equipment, they can be encouraged to draw designs or label existing photos.

Provide students with the following list and encourage them to use the terminology as much as possible:

- Performance conventions.
- Use of performance space and spatial relationships on stage.
- Actor and audience configuration.
- Relationships between performers and audience.
- Design fundamentals such as scale, shape, colour, texture.
- The design of props and the design of sets such as revolves, trucks, projection, multimedia, pyrotechnics, smoke machines, flying.
- The design of costume including hair and makeup.
- The design of lighting such as direction, colour, intensity, special effects.
- The design of sound such as direction, amplification, music, sound effects both live and recorded.
- Performers' vocal interpretation of character such as accent, volume, pitch, timing, pace, intonation, phrasing, emotional range, delivery of lines.
- Performers' physical interpretation of character such as build, age, height, facial features, movement, posture, gesture, facial expression.
- Stage positioning: Upstage (left, right, centre); downstage (left, right, centre); centre stage.
- Staging configuration: Theatre in the round; proscenium arch; thrust stage; traverse; end on staging; promenade.

Conclusion:

Explain to the students that they now have the basis to put together an essay needed for the exam. They've written what they need for the introduction and show them the **general points** they put together at the start of the class.

They've written what they need for the next part of the essay and go through their **choosing a moment** notes.

For homework ask them to put these ideas down on paper and hand in. Again, stress the point about how specific we have made the discussions and encourage them to do that in their notes.

DIFFERENTIATION - Some will be happy to do this in full sentences, whilst others should just aim to put together bullet points.

Next lesson:

Get the students to share their work with each other and help to tidy it up if it is vague at any points.

Again share, and then ask students to expand the moments they're exploring, so rather than focusing on one line of dialogue, they're now focusing on a moment that covers three or four lines - they would already be doing this for their study of their set text.



Character name:

Key costume and any costume changes:

Current performer:

Hair:

Key scenes:

Make-up and prosthetics:



Character name:

Key costume and any costume changes:

Current performer:

Hair:

Key scenes:

Make-up and prosthetics:



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