

THEATRICAL STAGING

Staging can help you explore these KEY QUESTIONS by asking students to SHOW the answers...

WHO (Character): What are the characters' relationships to each other? Who has the highest status? Who has the lowest status? (That is to say...who has the most "power" in regards to money, confidence, social stature...etc.) Which character is the focus of the scene?

WHAT (Conflict): What is the conflict? What is the problem?

WHERE (Setting): Where does the scene take place? What physical, sensory details can you use to describe the scene? (Is it cold? Dark? Musty? Noisy? Etc.) How large is this place? Is this place rural or urban? Are there lots of people or few people here?

WHEN (Setting): What time of day is it? What time of year? What time period is it?

WHY (Objective): Why do the characters do what they do? What is their motivation? What does each character NEED in the scene (chose tangible things...money, safety, a hug, etc.) and from WHOM? (every character should need something from AT LEAST one other character in the scene).

HOW (Action/Tactic): How do the characters behave? What do the characters do to get what they want? What do the characters do when faced with the problem? What are the actions of the scene?

Staging may also communicate tone...

- Is the scene meant to feel real or fantastical? Serious, funny, ironic? Etc.
- How do people move in this space normally? How do they move in the space when we are in song or the action is at a high point?
- Can you pick an "as if" to help define what the scene feels like? (i.e. It feels as if we are stuck on the moon...it feels as if we are at a beach party)

You may want to explore gradations in staging, looking at something at a level of 1 to 10 to indicate intensity or energy level.

The Staging TOOLBOX:

Tableau: A still/frozen stage picture. Tableau is a versatile tool that can be used to explore a line (what the characters NEED), a problem or conflict, a setting, a character or even a tone. A tableau can use elements of your toolbox such as different levels, proximity, posture, facial expression, etc.

Gesture: An expressive movement made with the body. A character might have a "signature gesture." The characters can explore a line and gesture all at once which can lead to movement based on the line and gesture.

Improvisation: Spontaneous creation of scenes without advance rehearsing or scripting; an "on the spot" reaction to given circumstances. You can pick an "as if" to describe the world of the scene to incite an improvisation.

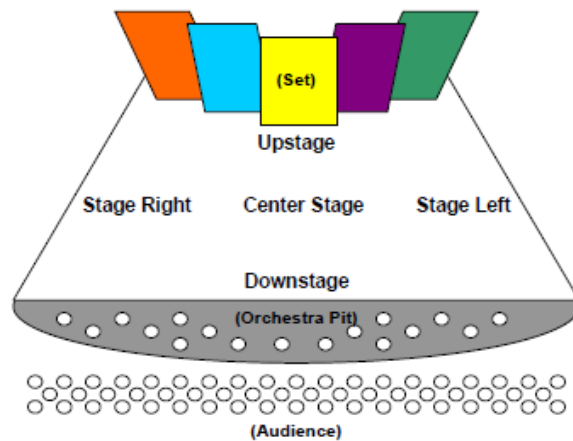
Facial Expression: The manipulation of the actors faces to communicate character or emotion. How is the character feeling? How can the audience see how the character is feeling?

Posture: How does the character stand or sit? What is the shape of the character's body?

Juxtaposition: Will you make choices that feel like the music OR will you contrast the music? Try it both ways.

<p>USING THE ACTORS</p>	<p>CLARITY: how can you make the main character clearly the center of the scene? How can you show ensemble? How can you show solo/duet?</p>	<p>LEVEL: how near or far from the ground are the actors? Do the levels vary? Could the levels show status? Relationships?</p>	<p>ORIENTATION/ FOCUS: where is the "face" of the actor pointing? Where do they look? Are the actors performing to the audience OR is there a "fourth wall?"</p>	<p>PROXIMITY: how near or far are the actors are from each other? Can you use proximity to create tension and drama?</p>
<p>USING THE SPACE</p>	<p>TABLEAU: where are the actors placed in relation to the audience? What is the stage picture that has been created?</p>	<p>AUDIENCE: where does the audience sit and in what formation?</p>	<p>STAGE: what shape is the stage and how big?</p>	<p>TRANSITIONS: how will the actors get from one formation to the next? How do the characters enter and exit? How do the actors move?</p>

Stage Directions: The directions that tell the actors where to move; refer to the perspective of the actor on stage.



ASSESSING Staging...

Students can assess staging choices by asking the following **KEY QUESTIONS:**

Are the WHO, WHAT, WHERE, WHEN, WHY, HOW clear?

Does it feel more dramatic than real life? Is that how we want it to be?

Are there characters or moments where you aren't sure what someone is doing?

Does it feel like all the characters are in the same world? If not, is it a choice? Is that choice clear?

Did you know where to look as an audience member at all times? Did the audience ever look at something other than what you intended?

Was it clear who the main character is?

In order to *REVISE* you can make changes to the elements in your toolbox to adjust...

An actor's gesture, facial expression, posture, or focus/orientation

The tableau or stage picture

The levels of the actors

The proximity of one actor to another