

The key elements of
a drama production :
characterisation,
lighting, sound and
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**ASSIGN
BUSTER**

In a drama piece the design of the set is very important.

It can distinguish the places in which different scenes are set and create mood or atmosphere. When designing a set for a piece various things must be taken into consideration: the plot, the places that scenes are set, the lighting, along with the money that can be used for it. The set (as mentioned above) is the biggest hint to the audience as to where each scene is taking place and the era that the piece is set in. Using different height levels in the set helps to keep the audience interested. The colours, artwork and materials used to make the set are the biggest giveaway to the audience as to what time and place the piece is set.

In the piece that I have just finished (Trojans-set in ancient Greece, on ramparts, the ground and palace steps) the set production team used all of the above factors to create the right effect. They used paintings of old Greek ruins as a background (to show era), blocks of various heights to show the ramparts, and blocks with grand looking seats upon them to show the palace steps. The set used must also work with the lighting to create the right moods and shadows. The set production team has to be careful when designing the set because of the lighting. If the set was too dark/light the lights may make it look bad or unreal in some way. The plot is the main factor in the creation of the set.

The plot tells the designers what will happen so that they know what areas of set need to be created. For instance a piece set in an office would not have deckchairs in it or the audience would be very confused! The budget is also important. If the team has a very large budget then they could build a set

almost as vivid as the real thing, but most of the time the budget is very small so the team must wisely choose a few things which will give the audience a definite idea as to where the scene is set. Lighting and Sound When creating a piece of drama the lighting and sound are very important. They create mood, the lights distinguish between night and day and the sound can show important things that are happening. The lights can create moods and atmospheres using different brightness' and colours.

These moods that are created can be used to help set scenes or to frighten or startle the audience, this keeps them interested. In the piece that I mentioned earlier (Trojans), there was a scene where one actor had to say a scary and very atmospheric speech. The main lights were shut off and she was left in the centre of the stage with others, shining a torch onto her. This definitely worked to create the mood, and also symbolized her feelings of being alone at the time.

The sound can be used during blackouts to keep the audience entertained, but it is mainly used in the actual piece. It can be used to startle the audience or to show that something is happening. Background music can also be used sometimes if the actors are miming or if the scenes setting permitted this. For instance, in Trojans there was a battle, but we did not have the resources to act that out so we had a blackout and used recorded gunfire and shouting etc. to show this. In many cases the lighting and the sound can be combined to give various effects.

For instance, if lightning was needed then the lights would flash and this would be followed by a crash of thunder. The sound and lighting are best

combined to give mood. For instance in horror movies, it's dark, then the high pitched scary music plays and then...

Boo! The atmosphere is created by the sound and the lights; they prepare the audience for the 'jumpy' part! Characterisation Characterisation is the development of the character dictated by the plot and what the character says. It is important for the character to be well developed for the audience to find what the character does believable. The character of the player is set by the plot and the writer of the script. The things that a character says and the way he/she acts must endorse the things that she does. There are various ways of developing a player's character.

Using monologues is a very effective way of showing the character of the player as this shows the audience what the character is thinking and what he/she is about to do. What the character says gives an insight to the audience and the other characters of what the character is like. For instance, if a player says (in a monologue) " I'm going to kill Mrs. Jones", then only the audience and the player knows. If that player just says the line then the other players also know that he/she is going to kill Mrs.

Jones. The things that the character does and the way that characters speak give an insight into the character also. Small things often give large insights into the character. For instance, giving an actor a slight stutter can show that the character is of a nervous disposition or a player always fiddling with something could demonstrate this also. As mentioned above the audience must believe that the character is capable of doing the things that he/she does.

The characterisation also helps to give twists and turns in the plot. For instance, a person who tells the audience that he hates Mr. Moscow in a monologue would be the prime suspect for the audience when Mr. Moscow is found dead, though it may not have been that person who actually committed the crime. Characterisation, Lighting, Sound and Set Design all help to make a drama piece what it is but the piece would not work if the above didn't work together along with other elements also.