



THE HUNGER GAMES

← ON STAGE →

EDUCATION PACK

Education Pack

The activities and resources in this pack have been created to allow Educators to support pupils' understanding and enjoyment of a performance of ***The Hunger Games: On Stage***.

Each section offers suggestions for tasks and activities which can be adapted for use inside the classroom with a range of pupils in mind. With key learning opportunities identified, this pack can be used to support the teaching of ***The Hunger Games: On Stage*** as a live theatre production for GCSE Drama students and also as a devising stimulus.

Opportunities for further development of ideas and cross-curricular learning are also highlighted at the end of this pack.

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Key Learning

This pack aims to meet the GCSE Drama key components and assessment objectives as follows:

1. Understanding drama

2. Devising drama

Understanding drama

Knowledge and understanding of how drama and theatre is developed and performed (AO3), including in connection to a set play and on their ability to analyse and evaluate the live theatre work of others (AO4).

Students will:

- Evaluate the live theatre performance of *The Hunger Games: On Stage* using specialist vocabulary.
- Describe and analyse specific moments of the performance and stagecraft in depth.
- Develop their understanding of how the production was made.

Devising drama

Create and develop ideas to communicate meaning for theatrical performance (AO1), apply theatrical skills to realise artistic intentions in live performance (AO2) and analyse and evaluate their own work (AO4).

Students will:

- Use themes and concepts from the performance as a stimulus for devised work.
- Analyse and evaluate their own work inspired by *The Hunger Games: On Stage*.

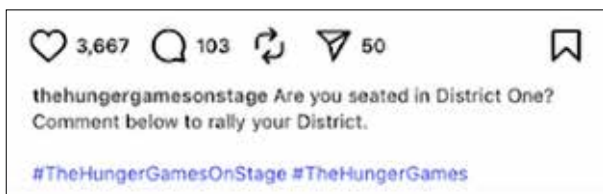
All learning activities in this pack can also be adapted for KS3 drama as a progression of key skills.



Pre-Show

This production of *The Hunger Games: On Stage* offers an immersive aspect to the audience at the moment of booking their tickets. When choosing your seat, you are also selecting which District of Panem you will be joining.

Share the social media post below with students and discuss how this extends the theatrical experience.



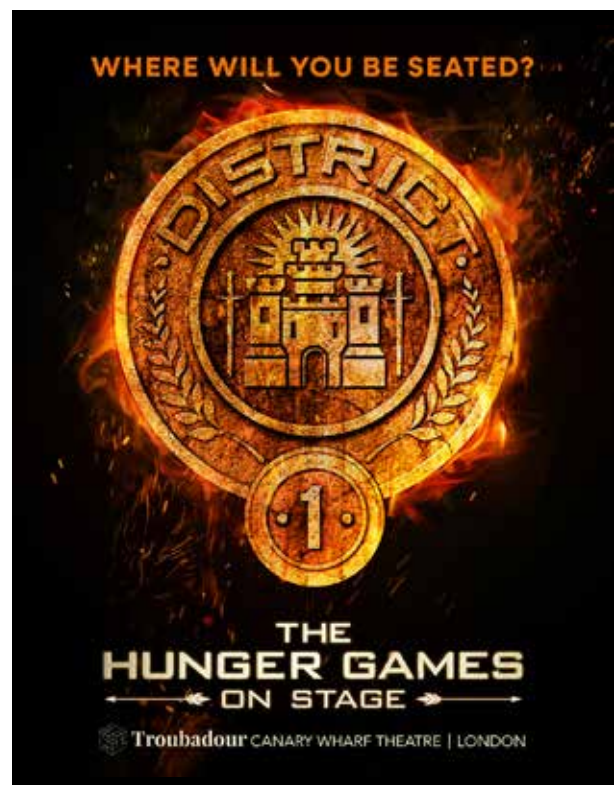
Why do they think District 12 is not part of the seating?

Students could research the 12 Districts of Panem and be randomly assigned one for the duration of the lesson. Discuss the feelings associated with this and make predictions about likely themes of the play.

Before pupils go to see the performance of *The Hunger Games*, find out the following information about the production:

- When are you going to see the performance?
- What can you find out about the venue? (The Troubadour Canary Wharf Theatre).
- What do you already know about *The Hunger Games*?
- Do you have any existing perceptions or opinions? (Based on the novel or film series).
- Who is the director? What else have they worked on?
- Who are the lead actors?

Pupils can add post-it notes to a collective board giving their expectations of the performance based on the initial research.



Share this quote from the Director, Matthew Dunster:

"I want people to feel both exhilarated by the theatrical experience and devastated by the content of the story. I want them to be completely blown away."

Discuss this in relation to their expectations and make a note to return to it after watching the show.

Initial Response

As soon as possible after viewing the show, pupils should be encouraged to complete their own notes detailing their initial response. This can be completed collaboratively by asking groups of pupils to take more specific notes on certain areas of the performance (e.g. lighting) before the whole group shares their feedback.



These key elements should be covered using sketches and notes in as much detail as possible. Encourage pupils to use technical language wherever they can. Remind pupils that this is a response so they should also note any emotions associated with individual aspects of the performance. How did it make them feel as an audience member?

- **The Theatre**
- **Set and Staging**
- **Lighting and Sound**
- **Costume**
- **Actor Performances**
- **Overall Response**

KEY MOMENT

Play music from the show as students enter the room, such as Horn Of Plenty. Invite pupils to walk around the room with a pen and add to blank pages on the walls any key moments that they remember from the performance.

You could start with some prompt moments e.g. first appearance of President Snow, Katniss's dress transformation, the reaping etc.

Once you have a selection of moments around the room, ask pupils to move towards one to form small groups. They should then take time to explore the moment. This can be done by adding notes of key words or emotions for the moment, then acting it out or creating a still image.

When writing about a moment pupils should focus on the command words:

DESCRIBE, ANALYSE, EVALUATE

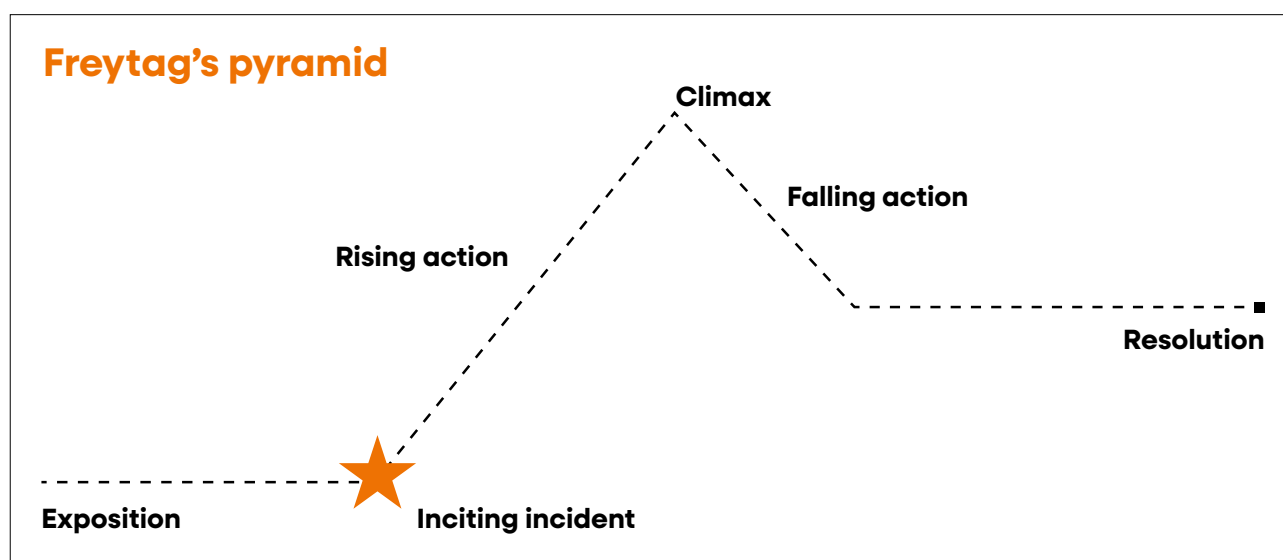
Describe what happened in as much detail as possible using technical vocabulary, suggest why this has happened in this way by offering alternative interpretations, finally give a judgement by saying how successful the moment was in conveying meaning.

Highly effective - Effective - Somewhat effective

Plot

Based on the original '**The Hunger Games**' story and film, this gripping tale of courage, defiance and unbreakable human spirit, follows the fearless heroine Katniss Everdeen on her journey of self-discovery, as she emerges as a beacon of rebellion and hope.

Discuss the structure of the play by plotting the key events according to tension. Discuss how far the events of the play align with the traditional dramatic structure:



Discuss some of the key dramatic structural features used and how these affected the overall pace and development of tension (e.g. flashback, cliffhanger, change in setting/POV, climactic events)

"I want them to see the parallels between the fascism in the world that Suzanne Collins depicts and events in the real world we are living in."

Director, Matthew Dunster

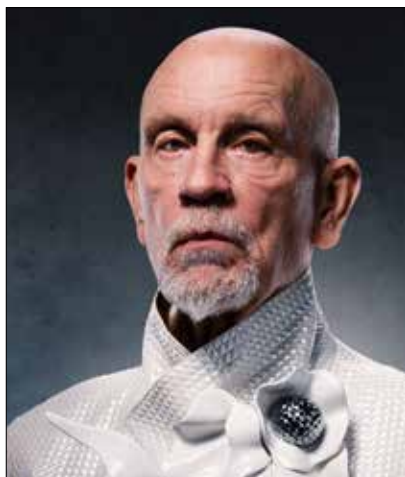
Consider the key themes of the play: war, survival, the influence of power. Mind map these ideas drawing on pupils' own understanding from both fiction and real world information. As a prompt for discussion use these thematic questions from the writer of the original text, Suzanne Collins:

"Suzanne revealed to me that her central theme was the question: What is a just war? When is it right to use violence? Is it ever right?"

Playwright, Conor McPherson

Pupils could extend their responses to the performance by researching the themes and impact of other dystopian Sci-Fi texts e.g. *Mad Max*, *Divergent*, *The Handmaid's Tale*, *The Matrix*.

Characters



President Snow

Mixing live and pre-recorded footage on screen has a significant impact on performance by blurring distinctions between the real and the constructed and offering new storytelling possibilities. This mixed-media approach is used in *The Hunger Games* to present the character of President Snow through a screen. This can enhance a production in several key ways, but it also creates some unique challenges. Ask pupils to suggest some of these likely challenges.

Discuss how the character of President Snow is presented in the production. Can you define and then use some of the adjectives below to describe the character? Remember to make reference to specific moments in the performance. Which of these character traits were enhanced by the choice to present Snow slowly on screen?

- Domineering
- Controlling
- Impassive
- Omnipresent
- Tyrannical
- Unsympathetic
- Villainous
- Cold
- Detached

Watch the clip below as a prompt for your response:

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hq-RZHC9_jc



Katniss Everdeen

A crucial aspect of the show is the first person perspective of Katniss. Within the story there are moments of direct narration to the audience from Katniss (monologue) that give us an insight into her true feelings. Discuss what challenges this presents the actress playing Katniss and what decision it reveals about how significant Katniss is to the story. Add to your notes some performance comments about this central character.

- Voice Volume
- Pitch
- Articulation
- Resonance
- Timbre
- Physicality
- Rhythm
- Movement
- Posture
- Gait
- Gesture
- Positioning

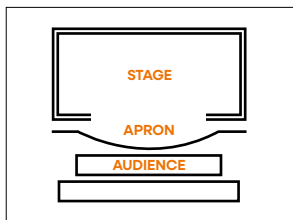
As you watch the show, notice how the audience are signalled that we are switching between the internal and external worlds of our protagonist. What other ways could there be to achieve this distinction in a production?

Read the following review of the performance of Katniss and consider your own response to the interpretation of the character:

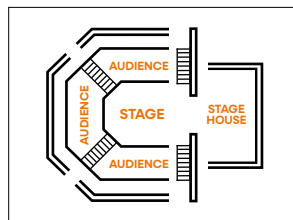
“On stage, Carragher does a wonderful job narrating the story ... providing context to the days that pass in the arena and her innermost thoughts and feelings. Barely leaving the stage, she’s an absolute force ... and adds a new calm, almost shell-shockedness, to the character.”
WhatsOnStage.com

Staging

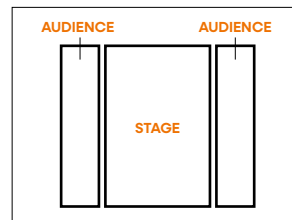
“I think about how my design can contribute something to the show that the play itself cannot.” **Miriam Buether, Set Designer.**



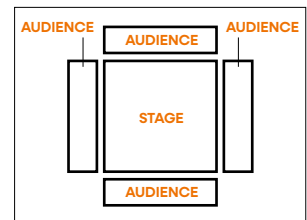
PROSCENIUM ARCH



THRUST



TRAVERSE



IN THE ROUND

Ask pupils to revise the 4 main types of stage and suggest advantages and disadvantages for each.

Proscenium Arch: Common in large theatres and opera houses. The proscenium refers to the frame around the stage; the area in front of the arch is called the apron. The audience faces one side of the stage directly and may sit at a lower height or on tiered seating.

Thrust: The stage extends into the audience on three sides, with the audience seated close around the projecting area. This layout creates an intimate, immersive feel while still keeping a clear back wall for entrances and scenery.

Traverse: The acting area is a long central space and the audience sits on two sides facing each other. This type of staging can feel like a catwalk show.

In the round: The stage is positioned in the centre of the audience who are seated around all areas of the stage. The stage/audience area can either be curved (circle) or four sided.

The Hunger Games: On Stage is unique in its using of set design alternating between traverse and In the round during the performance. Additionally, the audience experience these physical shifts in staging. Work through the following aspects of the stage design with pupils:

At what points during the production did the stage move? Why? What was the effect of these changes?

Discuss the feeling of being in the audience as your viewpoint literally changes.

Choose a moment from the play that you feel was enhanced/heightened due to the staging layouts.

How would the characters/emotions/mood in this moment have been changed by an alternative stage design?

Pupils should set up the space in the round using chairs and take turns improvising a short scene. Now move the space to a traverse set up, or traditional proscenium arch and ask them to attempt the scene again. Consider their response as both performers and audience members on the impact of the scene and revisit the quote from the Set Designer on this page.



Staging cont.



“When something’s in the round, then you’ve got people looking at it from all directions. There are some techniques that you can’t use here because you’re exposed to all angles.”

The stage feels vast but at the same time it’s quite intimate, so we’ve got to play out these big fights pretty close to the audience. We’re using illusion techniques to create fights, to create deaths and to create individual moments.”

**Kev McCurdy, Fight Director
and Chris Fisher, Illusions**

When considering the role of staging in the production the following aspects are crucial to consider:

- **Practical use of performance space and spatial relationships on stage**
- **Actor and audience configuration**
- **Relationships between performers and audience**

After seeing *The Hunger Games: On Stage*, pupils should be able to add to their performance notes with some comments on the effect of the audience configuration with specific reference to themes or ideas in the play.

Pupils could be given time to research the technical aspects of the design of sets such as revolves, trucks, lifts, pyrotechnics, smoke machines, flying, and stage combat. Find examples of other productions which have used these successfully in theatrical shows and discuss the skills needed to design, create and perform these effects.



Set Design

After seeing *The Hunger Games: On Stage*, pupils should work in pairs to sketch the stage from memory. List the different locations that were presented in the production and identify which of these utilised specific staging effects to achieve them.



“Lifts & fly towers scenery from above and below transform from District 12 to the Everdeen home, to the Reaping, to the train, to the Capitol, to the arena. District 12 would be quite makeshift, with the cast building the set in front of the audience.”

Miriam Buether, Set Designer



The role of Set Design is crucial for any production and requires technical skills, design knowledge and an understanding of world building to effectively support and enhance the style of the production.

One of the steps undertaken to achieve this is creating a model box of the set. A model box is a small cardboard version of the set and characters, used by the Set Designer and Director to conceptualise the show. Look at the aspects that have been included in the design and consider how these developed into the final version that they saw in the play.

Set Design cont.

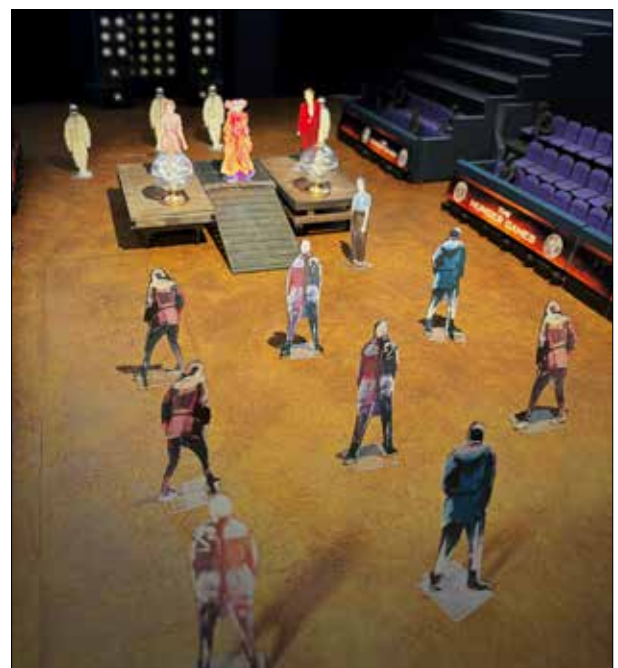
Next, consider the starting point of the process by discussing the mood board below created for the reaping platform.



What aspects of design have been considered in this mood board? (colour, texture, atmosphere etc.)

Choose one element of staging from the production and create your own mood board to represent the design choices. Label the mood board with clear explanations of your choices.

Everdeen home, interview stage, chariot, train etc.



Set Design cont.

The Hunger Games: On Stage used some innovative staging and design elements. When creating the set, the designer must consider every aspect of the space. This includes exits and entrances, levels, props, furniture and physical features. Discuss how these elements of staging can be considered in pupils' own work and what limitations they face.

Particular moments of the production that students could analyse in more detail include the use of lifts, the use of vertical spaces, and set-pieces such as The Capitol train and chariot.

Pupils should choose one the aspects to describe in detail and analyse the effectiveness on the production as a whole.

How did the actors interact with the set? How would you describe the overall set design? How effectively did set design enhance the mood and atmosphere at a particular moment of the play?



Lighting

The production utilised a range of lighting effects. Lighting was even used to create the illusion of physical features.



After watching the production, pupils should discuss the impact of lighting choices with a focus on the scenes below. Consider the use of colour wash LEDs versus spotlights and how these have been employed to build space and mood.

Research some of the following lighting effects and describe their uses here:

- Wash
- Backlight
- Spot
- Blackout
- Bean
- Gel
- Ambient light
- Rigging

When analysing lighting in a production it is useful to consider the impact of the design choices on the production as whole, including for specific moments. Pupils can be split into groups to brainstorm some ideas about the potential effect of lighting choices on the following: illuminating the action, creating pace, conveying atmosphere or mood, directing the attention of the audience, creating physical space.

Following the production, pupils could extend their learning by creating a presentation on the impact and effectiveness of the lighting in one specific moment of the production.

Consider the following in your response:

How would you describe the lighting choice?

How did the lighting help to create or change the atmosphere on stage?

How effectively did it create a sense of location?

How would a different lighting choice have changed the moment?

Costume

Pupils should brainstorm any costumes that stand out from the production. Discuss the different aspects of costume design that are required for a production: colour, fabrics, patterns, fit, comfort, connotations.

Costume Designers work closely with the Director to bring a vision to life for each character. Think about the different groups of characters and mind map some of the design elements that were included for each: District 1 compared to District 12, The Capitol, training, combat wear etc.

Use the design sketches here to analyse the costume choices for the show and offer specific analysis of the choices made and how they are effective for a particular moment of the production:



Choose a character from the production, sketch and label in detail your own costume design. Consider the following questions when completing your sketch and be ready to share your ideas.

What does your design suggest about the character you have chosen?

What are the connotations of your colour choices?

Is your costume naturalistic or stylised? Why?

How visible to an audience would your costume choice be?

How does your costume distinguish the character from others?

Look at the image of Katniss in her combat costume and compare it to the sketch above. How closely were the design aspects recreated in the final production? Explain the overall effectiveness of costume at communicating character to the audience.



Devising



Activity 1:

Work in groups to create a mind map of one of the issues or themes from the play. Think about how you could explore this theme/issue from a different starting point (e.g. how the theme of childhood is presented in the dystopian world of Panem). Use these ideas as the basis for a devised piece of drama.

Activity 2:

Explore the lyrics to *The Hanging Tree*, a song which features in the play. Create a series of tableaux images to represent the key moments or ideas in the song. Connect the still images through movement or dance to reflect the mood, tone and atmosphere of the lyrics.

**Are you, are you
Coming to the tree?
Where I told you to run
So we'd both be free**

**Strange things did happen here,
no stranger would it be**

If we met at midnight in the hanging tree

Activity 3:

Look at the image above and imagine that you are one of the characters. Improvise a short monologue expressing how you are feeling and what you are thinking about. You could take the characters out of the world of the play by improvising any moment of conflicted or challenging emotions. Follow your improvisation by writing a monologue about a character faced with a difficult decision. It can be based on a real life experience or an imagined event.



Script Performance

Use the following script excerpt to work in pairs and deliver the lines with a focus on the emotion of the scene. Peer assess the choices made by each pair using theatrical terms and offer comments on effectiveness.

Effie: What an exciting day! But more excitement is to come! It's time to choose our boy tribute!

The Mayor wheels the ball full of boys' names across the stage. Katniss stands watching. Effie reaches in and pulls out a slip of paper.

Effie: Peeta Mellark!

Katniss (To us): Oh no... not him. This boy saved my life. It was outside the back of his parent's bakery. My mom had been sick for weeks. It was a brutal winter. We hadn't eaten for days. I was on my knees scavenging in their alleyway – looking for something, anything, in the garbage. Suddenly I looked up. It was Peeta. He quickly handed two loaves of warm bread and disappeared before I could even...

Peeta is greeted onstage by Effie.

Effie: Anyone want to volunteer to take his place? I'm joking. Although... does anyone? Don't be shy! Come forward you two! Shake hands!

Katniss (To us): I have never spoken to him. Never thanked him.

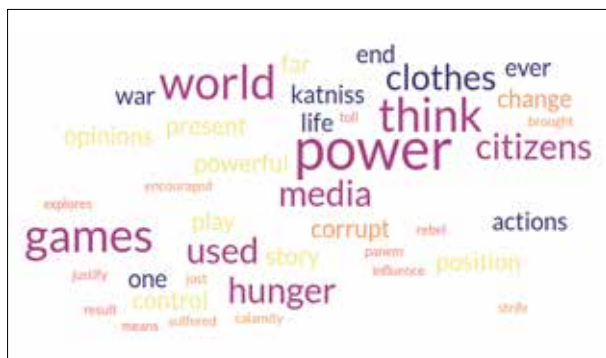
Katniss and Peeta shake hands. Effie turns them to face out.

Effie: District 12! I give you your tributes for the 74th Hunger Games!

At GCSE level students should be familiar with the following terms, both as an aid to their own performance of scripted work and as areas of focus when writing about a live performance:

- **Performers' vocal interpretation of character**
- **Performers' physical interpretation of character**
- **Character motivation and interaction**
- **The creation of mood and atmosphere**
- **The development of pace and rhythm**
- **Dramatic climax**
- **Stage directions**







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