

New York State Learning Standards for the



Theater

Glossary

TOGETHER WE • CREATE • PRESENT
PERFORM • RESPOND • CONNECT
PRODUCE

New York State Learning Standards for the Arts

THEATER

GLOSSARY

of Discipline-Specific Terms & Concepts



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NOTES:

✓ A checkmark in the right-hand column indicates that the definition is a New York State addition or revision to definitions published by the National Core Arts Standards (SEADAE, 2014). When only a small part of a definition has been added by NYS authors, that part is underlined.

NCAS definitions can be found at <http://www.nationalartsstandards.org/content/glossary>.

Definitions	NYS additions to NCAS
A	
<p>Acting techniques The various approaches an actor uses to create a truthful character including, but not limited to, acting conventions (such as aside, soliloquy, stage whispers, etc.) and acting methods (such as Clowning, Pantomime, Improvisation, Stanislavsky, Strasberg, Spolin, Meisner, Hagen, etc.).</p>	✓
<p>Aesthetics A set of principles concerned with the nature and appreciation of beauty, especially in the arts.</p>	✓
<p>Audience perspective The interpretation that an audience member creates after viewing or reading a dramatic work.</p>	✓
B	
<p>Believability, believable Theatrical choices thought to be “true” based upon an understanding of any given fictional moment, interpretation of text, and/or human interaction.</p>	
C	
<p>Character traits Observable embodied actions that illustrate a character’s personality, values, beliefs, and history.</p>	
<p>Conflict The problem, confrontation, or struggle in a scene or play; conflict may include a character against him or herself, a character in opposition to another character, a character against nature, a character against society, or a character against the supernatural.</p>	
<p>Creative drama An improvisational, non-exhibitional, process-centered form of theater, such as story drama or process drama, in which participants are guided by a leader to imagine, enact, and reflect upon human experience.</p>	✓

	NYS additions to NCAS
D	
<p>Design, Design and technical choices (or problems) The specific and deliberate theatrical conventions chosen for a particular performance including, but not limited to, choices made around staging, scenery, costumes, makeup, sound, lighting, and props.</p>	√
<p>Devised drama Creation of an original performance piece by an ensemble.</p>	
<p>Dialogue A conversation between two or more characters.</p>	
<p>Dramatic (or directorial) concept The overarching, guiding decisions of the director and design team about how the ideas, events, and themes of the work will be specifically adapted for a particular performance.</p>	√
<p>Dramatic play Make-believe during which children naturally assign and accept roles, then act them out.</p>	
<p>Dramatic structure A story composed with the elements of exposition, rising action, turning point, falling action, and denouement. Also, see Plot.</p>	√
E	
F	
<p>Focus Commitment by a participant (an actor, technician, director) to remain in the scope of the project or to stay within the world of the play.</p>	
G	
<p>Genre The classification of a theatrical work including, but not limited to, tragedy, drama, melodrama, comedy, or farce. Understanding genre may assist in the historical or contextual grounding of said work.</p>	√
<p>Gesture An intentional movement of the arms, hands, or other parts of the body that expresses or emphasizes a feeling or idea.</p>	√
<p>Given circumstances The underlying actions and events that have happened before the play, story, or devised piece begins.</p>	

	NYS additions to NCAS
<p>Guided drama experience A leader guides participants during a process drama, story drama, or creative drama experience (<i>see the definitions</i>) through side-coaching, narration, and prompting; the action of the drama does not stop in order for the leader to support the students; facilitator may guide participants in or out of role.</p>	
H	
I	
<p>Improvisation, improvise The spontaneous, intuitive, and immediate response of movement and speech; a distinction can be made between spontaneous improvisation, which is immediate and unrehearsed and prepared improvisation, which is shaped and rehearsed.</p>	
<p>Imaginary elsewhere An imagined location, which can be historical, fictional, or realistic.</p>	
<p>Imagined worlds An imaginary world created collectively by participants in a drama experience.</p>	
<p>Inner thoughts The underlying and implied meaning or intentions in the character’s dialogue or actions (<i>also known as subtext</i>).</p>	
J	
K	
L	
M	
<p>Motivation Reasons why a character behaves or reacts in a particular way in a scene or play.</p>	
N	
<p>Non-representational materials Objects that may be assigned a different purpose, meaning, or identity through the imagination to be used as a theatrical device, including, but not limited to, props, scenery, or costumes.</p>	√
O	
<p>Objective A goal or particular need or want that a character has within a scene or play.</p>	

	NYS additions to NCAS
P	
<p>Physicality/Physical choices The ability to select appropriate use of the body on stage; choosing to use the whole body, or isolated parts of the body expressively.</p>	√
<p>Plot The events of the play. This often includes preceding influences, conversation, and every visible conflict. In a play, this narrative is revealed through the action and/or dialogue; traditionally, a plot has the elements of exposition, inciting incident, conflict, rising action, climax, and resolution or falling action.</p>	√
<p>Process drama A non-linear, episodic, process-centered, improvised form of drama in which teacher and students are in-role exploring and reflecting on an issue, story, theme, problem, or idea in a non-exhibitional format that is intended to benefit the performers themselves.</p>	
<p>Production elements Technical elements selected for use in a specific production, <u>including, but not limited to</u>, sets, sound, costumes, lights, music, props, and make-up, as well as elements specific to the production, such as puppets, masks, special effects, or other storytelling devices/ concepts.</p>	
Q	
R	
<p>Research (See Theater research methods)</p>	
S	
<p>Script, Scripted drama A piece of writing for the theatre that often includes a description of the setting, a list of the characters, the dialogue, and the action of the characters.</p>	
<p>Script analysis The study of a script to understand the underlying structure and themes of the play’s story, and the motives and objectives of its characters.</p>	
<p>Setting The given place(s), time(s), and emotional or cultural environment(s) in which the action of the play develops and gives a story or series of events context.</p>	√
<p>Staging Movement <u>and timing</u> in a scene or play, including, <u>but not limited to</u>, stage crosses, entrances, and exits, which help to convey meaning.</p>	

	NYS additions to NCAS
<p>Story drama Episodic, process-centered, improvised form of drama that uses existing literature as a starting point for drama exploration. The drama explores moments (before, after, or within) that may not exist in the story, and is presented in a non-exhibitional format that is intended to benefit the performers themselves.</p>	
<p>Story elements Characters, setting, dialogue, and plot that create a story.</p>	
<p>Storytelling The process of orally interpreting a story from a script or from memory by using voice, facial expression, gestures, and/or technical theatre elements.</p>	√
<p>Style The use of a specific set of characteristics or distinctive techniques, such as realism, expressionism, epic theater, documentary theater, or classical drama; style may also refer to the unique artistic choices of a particular playwright, director, or actor. (See Dramatic concept.)</p>	
<p>T</p>	
<p>Tactic(s) The means by which a character seeks to achieve their objective; the selection of tactics is based on the obstacle presented. In acting and directing, a tactic refers to a specific action verb.</p>	
<p>Technical design, Technical design elements The elements of spectacle, such as sets, sound, costume, lights, music, props, and makeup used to create a unified and meaningful design for a theatrical production.</p>	
<p>Theater research methods (or Theatrical research) Investigation of the primary and secondary sources related to the drama or theater work, such as (but not limited to): viewing related live productions, filmed productions, and/or movies; researching related literary sources, artwork, cultural artifacts, and other historical sources.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Critical research is the investigation of theater critics’ writings, in particular. 	√
<p>Theatrical conventions Practices and/or devices that the audience and actors accept in the world of the play, even when they are not realistic. This can include anything from Technical Design Elements to Acting Conventions (such as aside, soliloquy, or stage whisper) and Dramatic Conventions (such as the accelerated passage of time, flashbacks, or the inclusion of a narrator).</p>	√

	NYS additions to NCAS
<p>Theatrical design (See Technical design elements)</p>	<p>√</p>
<p>Theatrical experiences Including, but not limited to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dramatic play • Guided drama experience • Role-playing • Devised theater • Pantomime • Improvisation • Puppetry • Solo performance • Monologue • Dialogue • Scene work • 10-minute play • One-act play • Play • Musical • Staged production • Viewing professional productions • Viewing local school/community groups • Collaborative performances 	<p>All NYS additions √</p>
<p>Theatrical processes Including, but not limited to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stagecraft (<i>Costume, Lighting, Set design, Sound production, Make-up, Mask, Props, Theatre technology</i>) • Play-making techniques (<i>Researching, Brainstorming, Improvising, Scripting, Editing, Rehearsing, Refining</i>) • Performance skills (<i>Actor–Audience relationship, Energy, Focus, Timing</i>) • Stage management • Directing • Theater business and management (<i>House and box office, Publicity, Administration, Producing, Scheduling</i>) • Playwriting • Dramaturgy 	<p>All NYS additions √</p>

	NYS additions to NCAS
<p>Theme What the play means, as opposed to what happens.</p>	<p>√</p>
<p>U</p>	
<p>V</p>	
<p>Visual Composition The integration of staging and technical elements to create a unified and effective stage picture that communicates the dramatic concept.</p>	
<p>Voice/Vocal technique With the support of good posture and breathing, vocal clarity and flexibility can be achieved through the effective use of: articulation, clarity, emphasis, inflection, pace, pause, pitch, projection, resonance, rhythm and variety, tone, and vocal dynamics.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Articulation The precision used in the formation of sounds and speech to ensure that a live audience can understand what is being said. • Clarity The accurate formation of sounds with the voice to communicate the words and sounds in performance. • Emphasis The use of particular stresses in the spoken delivery of a sentence to highlight important words or phrases to improve comprehension for a live audience. • Inflection The variation of the pitch and tone within a sentence to clarify emotional quality and intended meaning within a sentence for a live audience. • Pace The speed with which a sentence or passage is delivered to balance the needs of a live audience (variety and maintaining energy) with intended meaning (importance, subtext, emotional state, etc.) • Pause A planned break in the delivery of a phrase, sentence or passage. These breaks can denote many important meanings to a live audience, and are therefore used with control and careful selection. Pause lengths also are important to making meaning for a live audience. Pauses can also indicate change in 'objectives' for a character. • Pitch Refers to the intensity of the vibrations in the voice, which can make the voice seem higher or lower. Variation in pitch creates inflection. • Projection The strength or power used to carry speech when speaking to a live audience. • Resonance The use of muscle control and focused projection to intensify the use of the body's resonators that supports and enhances projection as well as the tonal qualities of a vocal performance. 	<p>All NYS additions √</p>

	NYS additions to NCAS
<p><i>List cont'd from prior page</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rhythm and variety Variation in vocal performance including the use of pace, inflection and beats (the use of patterns of soft and hard syllables) sometimes called 'iambus.' Rhythm also refers to shifts in an overall vocal performance and the structure of that vocal performance. • Tone The emotional qualities added to a vocal performance by adjusting the types of sounds produced by the voice. These in particular can help convey a sense of a character's subtext. • Vocal Dynamics Appropriate variation of vocal techniques to denote intensity of emotion, meaning and mood. 	<p>All NYS additions ✓</p>
W	
X	
Y	
Z	