



Drama

General Course Year 12

Selected Unit 3 syllabus content for the

Externally set task 2026

This document is an extract from the *Drama General Course Year 12 syllabus*, featuring all of the content for Unit 3. The content that has been highlighted in the document is the content on which the Externally set task (EST) for 2026 will be based.

All students enrolled in the course are required to complete an EST. The EST is an assessment task which is set by the Authority and distributed to schools for administering to students. The EST will be administered in schools during Term 2, 2026 under standard test conditions. The EST will take 50 minutes.

The EST will be marked by teachers in each school using a marking key provided by the Authority. The EST is included in the assessment table in the syllabus as a separate assessment type with a weighting of 15% for the pair of units.

Unit 3 – Representational, realist drama

Unit description

The focus for this unit is **representational, realist drama**. Students explore techniques of characterisation through different approaches to group based text interpretation, particularly those based on the work of Stanislavski and others. In this unit, students have the opportunity to research and collaboratively workshop, interpret, perform and produce texts in forms and styles related to representational, realistic drama that educate and present perspectives.

Unit content

An understanding of the Year 11 content is assumed knowledge for students in Year 12. It is recommended that students studying Unit 3 and Unit 4 have completed Unit 1 and Unit 2.

This unit includes the knowledge, understandings and skills described below.

In the context of drama in performance and responding to drama, students understand, select and combine:

Drama language

Voice and movement

- voice techniques (posture, breathing techniques, pace, pitch, pause, projection, phrasing, tone and accents as appropriate) to create character and dramatic action in the performance of representational, realist drama
- movement techniques (facial expression, posture, gesture, gait, weight, space, time, energy and proxemics) to create character and dramatic action in the performance of representational, realist drama
- voice and movement techniques in representational, realist drama using the processes developed by Konstantin Stanislavski and others (Stella Adler, Sanford Meisner or Jean Benedetti) in devising or interpreting drama
- focus and spatial awareness in representational, realist drama

Drama processes and the elements of drama

- cooperative group work processes (memorising, improvising, interpreting, listening, accepting, delegation of roles, developing an agreed approach) in drama
- the elements of drama (role, character and relationships, situation, voice, movement, space and time, language and texts, symbol and metaphor, mood and atmosphere, dramatic tension) refined through improvisation and rehearsal to create realistic characterisation and relationships in performance through processes developed by Stanislavski or adapted by others
- the elements of drama shaped to present identified themes, selected approaches and theories about dramaturgy in representational, realist drama
- the elements of drama used in performance preparation processes (improvisation to explore imagination, character mapping, given circumstances) for representational, realist drama
- the elements of drama shaped through viewpoints in improvisation and text interpretation to create dramatic meaning that educates and presents forces

- directing theory that shapes the application of the elements of drama in representational, realist drama refined through improvisation

Drama forms and styles

- interpretation of representational, realist drama forms and styles (Realism, Naturalism) by shaping the elements of drama
- relationships between representational, realist drama and linear narrative structures

Contextual knowledge

Drama conventions

- techniques in representational, realist drama for engaging the audience through suspension of disbelief
- conventions of improvisation (breaking patterns and creating focus) in representational, realist drama
- linear narrative structures, including Aristotle's plot structures ('mythos')
- conventions of interpreting a script (motivation, tempo, circles of attention and psychological gestures) refined through improvisation in representational, realist drama
- conventions of documenting representational, realist drama (script annotations, blocking notations and plan and elevation views)
- performance and audience behaviours (role of observer in realist drama) in representational, realist drama

Values, forces and drama practice

- impact of audience expectations, attitudes, experiences and understandings on drama production and audience responses
- forces that contributed towards the development of representational, realist approaches to acting, design and drama
- development of representational, realist drama with a focus on the ways particular practitioners, such as Stanislavski, have interpreted representational, realist drama

Production and performance

Spaces of performance

- strategies to present space and time (planned uses of space) when working in different performance areas focusing on representational, realist drama
- ways that audiences are positioned to identify and engage with representational, realist drama
- proscenium arch and thrust stages in representational, realist drama

Design and technologies

- the collaboration of designers, scenographers, actors and directors in representational, realist drama

- principles of design (balance, contrast, emphasis, harmony, repetition, unity, variety, movement, scale/proportion, pattern, rhythm), visual elements (line, shape, texture, colour, tone/value, 3D form and space) and design technologies in representational, realist drama
- drama design and technologies to represent real settings and characters (reproduction of reality, selective realism)

Management skills and processes

- effective group work (selecting social and emotional intelligences) to resolve conflicts and problems
- time management skills (self-motivation, prioritisation and goal setting) in drama
- intellectual property rights and performance rights in drama
- safe working practices in drama in purpose built performance spaces
- posters, programs and publicity in representational, realist drama

Oral and written communication

Students are expected to develop skills and abilities in multiple drama-based forms of communication. Students are to address appropriate aspects of written and oral communication through drama in performance and associated learning activities. This includes:

- short and extended answer forms
- graphic organisers, diagrams, and illustrations with appropriate use of annotations, and of colour
- interviews and other oral presentations
- structuring of ideas and responses.

Suggested text list

This course has a suggested text list:

Suggested Australian texts for Unit 3	Suggested world texts for Unit 3
Richard Beynon: <i>The Shifting Heart</i>	Anton Chekhov: <i>The Cherry Orchard</i> or <i>The Seagull</i>
Sumner Locke Elliot: <i>Rusty Bugles</i>	Henrik Ibsen: <i>Pillars of Society</i> or <i>A Doll's House</i>
Ray Lawler: <i>Summer of the Seventeenth Doll</i> or <i>Kid Stakes</i>	Eugene O'Neill: <i>Anna Christie</i> or <i>Long Day's Journey into Night</i>
Alan Seymour: <i>One Day of the Year</i>	August Strindberg: <i>Miss Julie</i> or <i>Creditors</i>
Katherine Thomson: <i>Diving for Pearls</i> or <i>Barmaids</i>	Tennessee Williams: <i>A Streetcar Named Desire</i> or <i>The Milk Train Doesn't Stop Here Anymore</i>

Note: by the end of Unit 3 and Unit 4, students should have studied one Australian and one world text.

Roles

Students are required to engage with the role of actor and director and one other role: scenographer, costume lighting designer or sound designer