Drama

KIRKBY HIGH SCHOOL

Knowledge Organiser

Year 11—Devising Drama

Styles & Practitioners
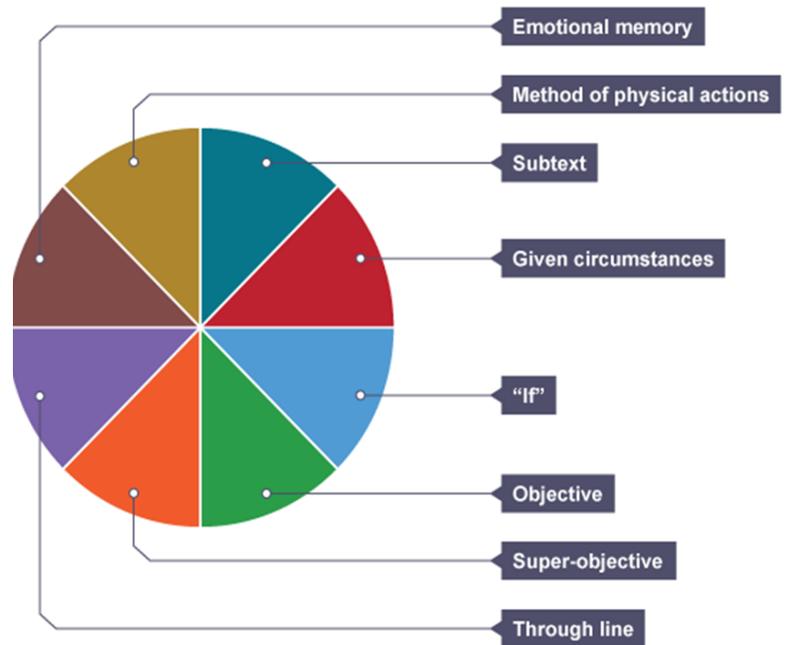
COMMUNICATION

and the KIRKBY CHILD

The Rowan Learning Trust

## Stanislavski's techniques

The System

This term refers to the methods used by Stanislavski to foster a good performance in his actors. It focuses mainly on helping an actor recall the emotions needed for a role. Don't confuse 'method acting' with the System. Method acting is how Stanislavksi's work was interpreted by others, in particular, actors and directors in the film industry.

- Emotional memory
- Method of physical actions
- Subtext
- Given circumstances
- "If"
- Objective
- Super-objective
- Through line

Stanislavski—The System	
Given Circumstances	The given circumstances are the information about the character that you start off with and the play as a whole.
Emotional memory	Emotional memory is when the actor finds a real past experience where they felt a similar emotion to that demanded by the role they are playing. They then 'borrow' those feelings to bring the role to life.
Method of physical actions	Imagine a simple activity like cleaning your teeth and then imagine a husband cleaning his teeth whilst deliberating on how to tell his wife about his mistress. This is a simple illustration of how a physical action can release the necessary emotions.
Subtext	The script of a play could be called the text. The subtext is the actual meaning and motivation behind the lines that are spoken and the actions taken. For example, the heroine might say to the hero, "I love you" and we might assume that it is the happy ending fairy tale moment. But the delivery would be very different if she was worried that he was about to walk out on her.
If	Stanislavski said that the character should answer the question, 'What would I do if I was in this situation?' Also known as the 'magic if', this technique means that the actor puts themselves into the character's situation. This then stimulates the motivation to enable the actor to play the role.
Objective Super-Objective Through Line	An _objective_ is the reason for our actions. The _super-objective_ is an over-reaching objective, probably linked to the overall outcome in the play. A character's objectives are likely to be stages in the journey towards the super-objective. If that journey is perceived as a clear path to the super objective, then you have your _through line_.

The Forth Wall

Naturalism—The performers present the action realistically, without using techniques such as addressing the audience or a still image, which immediately shatter any illusion of real life being played out.
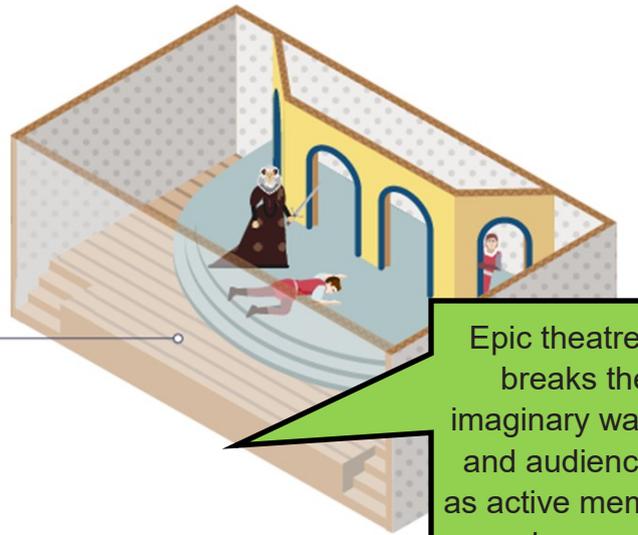
The fourth wall

Epic theatre (Brechtian theatre) breaks the **fourth wall**, the imaginary wall between the actors and audience which keeps them as active members of the theatrical experience—Thinking throughout, not switching off

Brechtian Drama Techniques

Gestus	Gestus, is a clear character gesture or movement used by the actor that captures a moment or attitude rather than delving into emotion. For example, a soldier saluting as he marches across a stage is a gesture. But if he was saluting as he marched over a stage strewn with dead bodies, it would be Gestus as a social comment about the type of person he represents.
Spass	Spass literally translates as 'fun'. Brecht wanted to make his audience think. He realised that while we are laughing we are also thinking. For example, a very serious work addressing suicide might break the action at a key moment in a character's unhappiness to break into a parody of an American advert: The poor taste of this would be shocking for an audience. But it actually highlights the pain of depression through contrast and black comedy. The audience will laugh and then question why they laughed.
Third Person Narration	Commenting upon a character as an actor. For example, midway through a scene the action might break for the actor to comment upon their character in the third person, 'Darius felt his anger rise. He wasn't being listened to and wanted revenge', before returning to the scene.

Category 5—Drama Vocabulary—Spellings

Episodic Drama	Bertolt Brecht
Spass	Epic Theatre
Gestus	Konstantin Stanislavski
Subtext	Objective
Emotional Memory	Given Circumstances