



A Level

Drama and Theatre

Death and the King's Horseman (Wole Soyinka)

Introduction/background	Key characters		Acting	Directing
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Tragedy Tragic five-point structure Five scenes in chronological order alternating between Yoruba and British contexts Chorus and exarchos (Women and Iyaloja) – interact; comment; narrate Narrative names - Elesin; Iyaloja Different language style for different characters Metaphysical world and real world co-exist Marketplace symbolic crossroads and centre of community/world Elements of comedy and parody Proverb-dense – used as dramatic devices to communicate subtext to knowing audience 	Elesin	Honourable; vivacious; energetic; loyal; virile; confident; flawed; shamed; articulate; proud; stubborn; traditional; powerful; brave; determined; respected, dutiful, humorous, regretful, decisive.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Underpinned by research and off-text work to establish status, social class, motivation, intent; super objective, relationships, backstory, character arc. Use live theatre performances to inspire you and influence your acting ideas. Consider: what happened, how, why, what did I like, how could I adapt the idea? Experiment and explore practically. Focus on ensuring your performance decisions communicate your intentions and chosen style. Make sure you can clearly explain what you are doing, how you are doing it and why. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Will your production be a faithful interpretation or a reinterpretation? What staging and style are you are using? How are you interpreting the text? What do you want to say through your production? Which themes will your work emphasise? How do you imagine the characters and their relationships? How will you direct your actors to communicate relationships and motivation? How will you use character positioning and proxemics to communicate meaning? How can you link to contemporary context to make the play relevant? What rehearsal techniques might you use with your actors, how and why?
Context			Vocal skills	Design
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Published in 1975 Staged in 1976; Ife; directed by Soyinka Yoruba cosmology understanding needed Concept of abyss of transition British colonial Nigeria; cultural domination Integration of words, drums, singing, chanting, music Second World War Integrates African ritual drama influences Mythology and Isa (Yoruba religion) Egungun 	Iyaloja	Wise; articulate; traditional; honest; respected; guiding; cautioning; praising; angry; accommodating; loyal; respectful; direct; strong-willed.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Communicate meaning via tone, volume, tempo, pause, pitch, intonation, musicality, accent. Also consider vocal sounds: breath, sigh, cry, sing, hum, chant, whisper, hesitation, stutter. Consider vocal skills for more stylised approaches. 	<p>Are you creating a faithful interpretation or a reinterpretation? Use live theatre to inspire you and influence your ideas. How will actors interact with the design elements? Decisions must be consistent with your chosen style.</p> <p>Set and props – location, setting, period, themes, atmosphere, symbols</p> <p>Stage type; style; layout of space; size of space; entrances and exits; colours; materials; textures; shapes; symbols; levels; projection surfaces; floor, backdrop/cyclorama; furniture and props (style, size, colour, material, condition, location, use) above the stage; suspending from above.</p> <p>Costume, hair, make-up – status, age, context, personality, circumstances, location</p> <p>Garment: colour; size; condition; texture; material; time period. Hair: style; colour; condition; accessories, masks. Make-up: face; hands; feet; body; special effects.</p>
Themes	Praise-Singer	Loyal, energetic; intelligent; articulate; respected; guiding; caring; duty-bound; confident; sad; disappointed; honest; traditional; wise.	Physical skills	Lighting – mood, atmosphere, location, time of day, emphasis, emotion
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Power and duty Wisdom and ignorance Death and life Order and chaos Self-control and self-respect Honour and shame <p>Motifs and symbols:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Drums; European music; leftovers; chains; notes; clothing; Egungun 	Pilkings	Dutiful, tactless, unempathetic, brusque, unpleasant, officious, conflicted, honorable, receptive, duty-bound, tense, out of his depth, sometimes considerate, disrespectful, ignorant.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Communicate meaning through posture, gait, body language, facial expression, gesture. Also consider tempo, rhythm, pace, energy, dynamics, direction, weight, speed, flow. Consider physical skills for more stylised approaches, e.g. dance sequences, physical theatre, stylised naturalism: unison; canon; repetition; motif; slow motion; exaggeration. 	<p>Naturalistic or non-naturalistic; colour; intensity; angle; positioning; type of lantern; birdie; special; practical; wash; gel, gobo; moving head; strobe; torches; phones.</p> <p>Sound – location, atmosphere, emotion, tension, pace, amplification</p> <p>Music; atmospheric; ambient; special effect; diegetic; non-diegetic; volume; fade; layering; soundscape; microphones; reverb; echo; delay; effects and treatment; speaker positioning.</p>
	Jane Pilkings	Honest, conflicted, open to learning, empathetic, sense of emotional intelligence, concerned, reflective, sensible, intelligent, sometimes tactless.	Interaction	
	Olunde	Articulate, dignified, honourable, polite, dutiful, traditional, thoughtful, strong-willed, proud, brave, confident, ashamed, decisive.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Communicate meaning through character positioning, spatial relationships, proxemics, vocal choices, physical choices. Driven by motivation and reaction. Needs to effectively communicate the relationship between characters. Between two or more characters, also with audience or even interaction with the space/set. 	
	Bride	Young, shy, silent, honour-bound, dutiful.		
	The chorus of women and girls	Direct, confident, outspoken, in control, wise, respectful, mocking, strong, unified, energetic, joyous, mournful, united, traditional.		