Get presenting

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| Year 9 | The Arts — Drama |
| In pairs or small groups, students prepare, rehearse and present a short piece of scripted text. |
| **Time allocation** | 12–14 hours |
| **Student roles** | Group work, assessed individually |
| Context for assessmentUsing short scenes gives students the opportunity to make their own interpretation of character and stage directions. They may explore various ways of developing the dramatic action to “bring the scene to life” and shape it into a performance. Students choose one scene from a play script and analyse it to gain insights into character and theme. Then, they shape it into a polished and convincing performance. |

******This assessment gathers evidence of learning for the following **Essential Learnings**.

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| The Arts Essential Learnings by the end of Year 9  |
| Ways of workingStudents are able to:* modify and refine genre-specific arts works, using interpretive and technical skills
* present arts works to particular audiences for a specific purpose, style and function, using genre-specific arts techniques, skills, processes and cultural protocols
* identify risks and devise and apply safe practices
* respond by deconstructing arts works in relation to social, cultural, historical, spiritual, political, technological and economic contexts, using arts elements and languages.
 | Knowledge and understandingDrama**Drama involves manipulating dramatic elements and conventions to express ideas, considering specific audiences and specific purposes, through dramatic action based on real or imagined events**.* Roles, characters and relationships are interpreted to define motivation and purpose, using specific vocal and physical techniques.
* Drama elements are manipulated to create tension and status, and are used to express ideas.
* Dramatic action and texts are created and interpreted through specific styles, including realism and non‑realism.
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| Assessable elements* Knowledge and understanding
* Presenting
* Responding
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| Source: Queensland Studies Authority 2007, The Arts Essential Learnings by the end of Year 9, QSA, Brisbane. |

Listed here are suggested **learning experiences** for students before attempting this assessment.

* Improvise around characters, events, and issues in short scenes from play texts.
* Participate in workshops to develop tension through improvisation and from texts.
* Read scripts and interpret dialogue to understand more about the motivations of the characters, their relationships, the theme etc. (i.e. Who, What, Where, When, Why?) See Appendix A: Reading a play for understanding.
* Participate in exercises to develop acting skills in voice and movement for characterisation.
* Practise ensemble skills (e.g. responding to verbal and visual cues, timing, and use of space on stage).
* Practise performance in different places and adjust voice, movement and focus to suit location.
* Develop strategies for memorising dialogue for performance.
* Experiment with various methods and styles of interpreting, analysing and annotating scripted text and preparing for a role.
* Walk through texts with a group to establish blocking (i.e. the needs of the scene in terms of props and sets to establish place).
* Respond and reflect on drama elements and languages in script and performance. Refer to Appendix B: Glossary of drama terms.

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| Icon_Resource | Teacher resources |

**Online resources**

* The Queensland Studies Authority website contains Level 6 Drama sourcebook modules,
“A spotlight on script” and “In my own words”: <www.qsa.qld.edu.au/syllabus/687.html>.
* British Broadcasting Commission guidelines for annotating scripts: <www.bbc.co.uk/schools/gcsebitesize/drama/responding/annotaterev1.shtml>.

**Printed resources**

* *Scenes for young actors: A scene study resource,* Woollams, T 1997, Currency Press, Sydney*.*

This includes short scenes from Australian scripts suitable for young teenagers and organises them under headings of gender and number.

* *Living drama*, Burton, B 1991, Longman, Cheshire*.*
* *Creating drama*, Burton, B 2003, Pearson Education, Melbourne*.*
* *Building plays*, Tarlington, C and Michaels, W 1995, Heinemann, Pembroke, Markham*.*
* *The ultimate scene and monologue sourcebook*, Hooks, E 2007, Watson-Guptill Publications Inc., New York.
* *A challenge for the actor*,Hagen, U 1991, Maxwell Macmillan International, New York*.*

## Preparing

Consider these points before implementing the assessment.

* Select one or more play scripts suitable for performance. Play scripts should have appeal and be sensitive to issues for Year 9 students. You may choose an Australian focus or a Theatre for Young People (TYP) focus.
* Make sure that no groups choose the same scene. The class can choose different scenes from the one play script or choose from a few play scripts. The scenes should be of similar complexity and challenge, and have parts of suitable length.
* Script pieces need to be 1–2 minutes per student. However, this does not mean that the performance should be 8-minutes long for four students. Each student should be actively involved for 1–2 minutes (e.g. a tight piece of dialogue for two may only need to be
1–2 minutes).
* The parts need to be fairly even in length rather than one student having the “main part”.

## Implementation

Consider these points when implementing the assessment.

* Teachers may wish to outline other methods for students to record their actor’s preparation (e.g. a journal or video documentation and analysis of rehearsals). Monitor all forms of actor preparation throughout the process. Guide, question and encourage students as needed.
* Students complete the annotated scripts individually and submit them as “working scripts”. Advise students that they should hand in preparation notes that show how they were used for blocking and not rewritten notes that focus on presentation.
* Encourage students to do personal preparation prior to rehearsals. Students may need to organise time out of class to rehearse with their group. Rehearsal schedules that outline deadlines for aspects, such as blocking or when students are “off book” may help organise the rehearsal process.
* Ensure that students apply safe working practices, including a vocal or physical warm-up. See Appendix C: Vocal and physical warm-ups.

Sample implementation plan

This table shows one way that this assessment can be implemented. It is a guide only — you may choose to use all, part, or none of the table. You may customise the table to suit your students and their school environment.

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| **Suggested time** | **Student activity** | **Teacher role** |
| **Section 1. Prepare as an actor** |
| 2 hours | Students work in pairs or small groups (up to four people) to choose one scene from the scripts available.Students read the script, highlighting their own character and dialogue.Students, in their pair or group, discuss the questions on the Actor’s preparation worksheet in the *Student booklet*.Students complete the Actor’s preparation worksheet. | Organise groups.Provide a selection of scripts.Distribute Appendix A: Reading a play for understanding and Appendix B: Glossary of drama terms.Guide and assist as needed. |
| **Section 2. Annotate or block your script** |
| 5–6 hours | Students work in pairs or small groups to walk through their scenes, discussing blocking.Students work individually to complete their annotations on the script, outlining the blocking for their character in the scene.Students rehearse the script to clarify and amend their annotations. | Guide and assist as necessary. Provide feedback on blocking and reinforce key areas. Develop awareness of the need for adjusting annotations during planning and rehearsals. |
| **Section 3. Perform your scene** |
| 5–6 hours | Students rehearse and polish their performance skills.Students use the Actor’s checklist in the *Student booklet* to gather feedback from the teacher and other groups to improve their performance.Students present the polished performance to their peers. | Organise rehearsal and performance spaces.Provide feedback on performances.Video performances for future informal feedback. |

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| Icon_Resource | Resources for the assessment |

Appendix A Reading a play for understanding

Appendix B Glossary of drama terms

Appendix C Vocal and physical warm-ups

Copies of play scripts

Folders and notepads

Rehearsal and performance spaces

Video recorder

Simple props and costumes – only enough to create a sense of place and character

During the learning process, you and your students should have developed a shared understanding of the curriculum expectations identified as part of the planning process.

After students have completed the assessment, identify, gather and interpret the information provided in student responses. Use only the evidence in student responses to make your judgment about the quality of the student learning. Refer to the following documents to assist you in making standards-referenced judgments:

* *Guide to making judgments*
* *Indicative A response*
* *Sample responses* (where available).

### Making judgments about this assessment

Gather evidence from the preparation notes and annotated script, carefully monitoring the individual’s contribution within the group.

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| Icon_ForFurtherHelp | For further information, refer to the resource *Using a Guide to making judgments*, available in the Resources section of the Assessment Bank website. |

Evaluate the information gathered from the assessment to inform teaching and learning strategies.

Involve students in the feedback process. Give students opportunities to ask follow-up questions and share their learning observations or experiences.

Focus feedback on the student’s personal progress. Emphasise continuous progress relative to their previous achievement and to the learning expectations — avoid comparing a student with their classmates.

### Giving feedback about this assessment

Provide feedback on the processes of presenting and responding to drama. This may be given individually to particular students, to the small groups or to the whole class as particular needs are identified.

When students are providing feedback to each other, encourage the use appropriate drama language. Students will be able to use peer feedback during rehearsal and after the final performance to enhance and refine their acting skills for future performance situations. Use the Actor’s checklist to provide focus areas for discussion.

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| Icon_ForFurtherHelp | For further information, refer to the resource *Using feedback*, available in the Resources section of the Assessment Bank website. |

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| Reading a play for understanding |
| Reading a dramatic text for understanding* Read the text for story. Be clear about what is happening in the scene: What is the action? What are the events? What happens?
* Read the text to find out about the characters. Find obvious, basic information: age, size, temperament, relationships. Avoid making value judgments (e.g. good person).
* Read the text to discover where each action takes place. Fill out in your imagination what the surroundings look, feel and smell like.
* Read the play for period (historical location), if applicable, and see what else you can find out about the:
* history and social life of the period
* art, architecture and fashion of that period
* music from that time
* biographies of people from that time.
* Read the play for geographical background (the country, urban or rural, season, climate, weather, and physical surroundings).
* Read the text for political background. Does the scene suggest a strong political background? If so, how does it affect the characters in relation to authority, power, security and influence?
* Read the text for social background (class, social standing). What social group does your character represent and what are the values and lifestyle of that group?

Reading a dramatic text for characterEmotional/psychological traitsTo find out about your character, look for:* everything said about the character when they are present
* everything said about the character when they are not present
* everything the character says about themself
* everything the character says about other characters when they are present
* everything the character says about other characters when they are not present.

Note who it is said to, and in what circumstances. Sometimes you will have to supply information from your imagination, but make sure it is in line with the play and the production.Physical traits* Appearance — height, width, weight, posture, age, physique, quality of movement, quality of voice, clothing and accessories.
* Senses — what does your character like to see, feel, hear etc? Which sense predominates? Which senses are undeveloped?
* Temperament — are you a person of “thought” or “feeling”? Have you any weaknesses or flaws? What is your attitude to people and things about you?

Vocal traits* What is the subject matter of your speech?
* What slang or jargon do you use?
* What is the energy level of your speech?
* What is the phrasing and sentence structure like?
* What are the tempo and rhythmic patterns?

Social traits* How do you interact with others?
* What relationships are important to you?
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Adapted from “[A](http://www.qsa.qld.edu.au/downloads/syllabus/kla_arts_sbm_dr_601.pdf) spotlight on script”, *The Arts — sourcebook modules*, The Office of the Queensland School Curriculum Council 2000.

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| Glossary of drama terms |
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| articulation | The way words are spoken and enunciated. |
| audience | The spectators of an event or play. The location and expectations of an audience will impact on the staging of any performance. |
| blocking | The plan of the positions and moves of the actors. This is usually done early in the rehearsal period. |
| cast | The actors who will rehearse and play the roles of the characters in the play. |
| costume | The clothing worn by an actor to designate character. |
| design | The conceptualisation of the staging of the play. The overall design concept includes lighting, staging, sound, costume and make-up. |
| dialogue | Speech delivered by more than one speaker. |
| givencircumstances | Background information, at any given moment, that helps with the interpretation of the text. It may include information about previous incidents or events, relationships between characters, motivation and so on. |
| interpretation | The meaning made of a given piece of text, based on the evidence found within that text. |
| layout | The way the text is presented on the page. |
| lighting | The way lights are used and modified by changing focus, colour or intensity to draw attention to aspects of a production. |
| modulation | The combination of pitch, pace, pause, intonation, tone, volume and emphasis. |
| motivation | The driving force behind the words and actions of a character. |
| plot | The story or sequence of action of a play. |
| props | Moveable objects used by characters as part of the dramatic action. |
| scenes | The sections that a play is divided into by the playwright. |
| set | Stage or acting area complete with furniture, decorations, props and scenery. |
| setting | The location of the action of the play. |
| stage directions | Information in the written play text that gives advice to the actors and director about the setting, characters’ actions or movement, or how lines are to be delivered. |
| style | The way or manner in which a play is written or performed. |
| subtext | The underlying idea behind what is said. |

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Adapted from “[A](http://www.qsa.qld.edu.au/downloads/syllabus/kla_arts_sbm_dr_601.pdf) spotlight on script”, *The Arts — sourcebook modules*, The Office of the Queensland School Curriculum Council 2000.

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| Vocal and physical warm-ups |
| It is vital to do these vocal and physical warm-ups before performing. They will help you avoid vocal or physical strain during the performance. It is also useful to do some warm-ups before any rehearsal to help you focus on the task that follows. Daily practice with these exercises will improve your vocal and physical flexibility.Only do those exercises that you have already experienced in class.VocalOne of the most important things to do to maintain good vocal health is to keep your vocal chords lubricated. When you are rehearsing, performing, or just doing a lot of talking, keep water nearby and sip it as often as you can. Don’t let your vocal chords dry out.**Clarity of speech** can be helped by exercises and tongue twisters. It is important to try to make the sounds as clearly and quickly as possible. Try these:* Divide the group into four. Each sub-group takes a turn at the following phrases:
* boom boom boom boom (keeping a steady beat)
* baba baba baba bah
* dah digga digga digga digga digga dah
* shika tika shika tika shika tika shah
* Look around the space and name everything you see with its real name. Then give them gibberish names such as “blof” for clock.
* Choose a phrase to “speak” silently. Open your mouth wide and exaggerate the articulation so observers can guess the phrase.
* Give a “silent” scream.

**Breathing and projection**The basis of all voice projection is breathing and breath control. Follow these steps:* Lie on your back on the floor. Rest your hands lightly on your diaphragm (just above your stomach).
* Breathe in, trying to fill the lowest part of your lungs. Feel your diaphragm working.
* Breathe in for three counts; hold for three counts; breathe out for three counts.
* With soft knees, bend forward from the hips, keeping a nice, straight back, and breathe in and out.
* Breathe out as much as you can. Holding your nose, scrunch as small as you can then release your nose and slowly stand up, allowing the vacuum to pull air back into your lungs.
* Walk for three counts and on the third count jump and say “Ha!”
* To gauge how your capacity and control have improved, choose a fixed spot some distance away from where you are standing and count how many times you can clearly speak the letters of the alphabet, projecting your voice to that spot.

**Physical**Physical warm-ups help you avoid tension in workshops and performance. Try these:* A gentle body roll. Start in neutral stance. Gradually, and in turn, push your knees forward, then your hips, then stomach, chest, nose. Go back to the knees and establish a gentle pattern and rhythm.
* Repeat above and freeze in one position. Carry this position through to a walk around the room.
* Exaggerate the posture and add a letter of the alphabet to develop a voice for this character walk, e.g. a stomach person may walk with a big, round “O” sound, and a nose person may use “E”.
* Milk carton volleyball. Hit a milk carton up into the air and see how many hits the group can count before the carton drops to the floor.
* Let your little light shine. Start in neutral stance. Pretend you have little lights on different parts of your body and shine those lights in little, slow circles. Use your big toes, knees, fingertips, shoulders, elbows, nose and so on. Change the direction of the circles.
* Fixed point. Choose a fixed point somewhere in the room. Run around the room and, when the leader calls a part of the body, freeze and point that part of the body to the fixed point. It may be right knee, left elbow, forehead, and so on.
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Adapted from “Warm-ups: Student resource 4”, *The Arts — sourcebook modules*, The Office of the Queensland School Curriculum Council 2002.