

SECTION

3

COMMUNICATIONS IN THE PERFORMING ARTS



FOUNDATIONS IN ARTISTIC KNOWLEDGE AND PROCESSES

Communications in the Performing Arts

INTRODUCTION

Welcome to this section that will take you through a journey of recalling the key points, concepts and ideas discussed in the previous section. In this section, you will be reviewing the processes you went through to create your artwork, using the appropriate performing arts terminologies. You will be able to communicate your involvement and achievements, as well as your challenges.

By the end of this section, you should be able to:

- Summarise the various Performing Arts processes undertaken using the appropriate terminologies associated with the processes (concept development, composition and performance).
- Explain ways by which the Performing Arts are connected and related to the other art forms in the Ghanaian society.

Key Ideas

Stages of a performance

- **The Pre-production stage:** The preparatory or planning stage to produce any performing artwork.
- **The Production stage:** A stage of the process where what has been planned to be produced, is put into action.
- **Performance stage:** The actual stage where the performance is presented to the audience.
- **The Post-performance/Production stage:** These are activities to be engaged in after a production is closed. For example, cleaning the auditorium/grounds, repairing props, costume and accessories, appraisal/evaluation, etc.

Processes of the performing arts

- **Communication:** A process or tool by which information is exchanged between individuals through artistic representations, symbols, signs, or behaviour. Or exchanging of information by speaking, writing, or using some other medium.

- **Concept Development:** A process of defining and refining an idea or set of ideas for a performance.
- **Composition:** A process of translating ideas into dance pieces or music.
- **Performance:** The act of presenting a play, or an artwork before the target audiences it is meant for

TERMINOLOGIES IN PERFORMING ARTS PROCESS

From a previous section, you might remember the discussion about *how the Performing Arts encompass a process that culminates in a final product, known as the artwork. This resulting creation could take the form of a musical composition, a choreographed dance routine, or a theatrical performance.* Additionally, it might be a fusion of these elements, such as a combination of dance and drama, music and dance, or even an integration of all three artistic disciplines.

The processes you went through helped you to develop, creative, narrative, design, entrepreneurial, innovation, and knowledge competencies linking your learning to the professional world and further education. Engaging in these processes within the performing arts allows you to comprehend and articulate the significance of making the arts functional and relevant to societal development.

How do you convey your ideas, involvement, achievements, and the challenges encountered in creating the artwork? Communication here involves exchanging information through speaking, writing, or other mediums, specifically through music, dance, and drama. By now, you have experienced which ideas communicated effectively and which did not during the pre-production and production stages. Which stages were enjoyable, and which posed the most challenges? How did you manage to communicate your ideas effectively?

The artwork you created, rehearsed, and performed was for a live audience. Live performances resemble a two-way interaction, with immediate audience responses to the performance. Performers must effectively communicate to elicit favorable audience reactions, emphasizing the importance of communication among performers before an audience.

Ways the Performing Arts Communicate to an Audience

How we as performers communicate can be verbal or non-verbal. Verbal communication involves the exchange of ideas, thoughts and feelings using the spoken word, while non-verbal communication involves sending and receiving messages through a variety of human sense channels without using spoken words or language. Some examples of non-verbal communication are *pats on the shoulder, back slapping, shaking hands, facial expressions* and other gestures such as *rolling the eye, and some body postures.*

Some additional examples of non-verbal communication - especially seen or expressed in the performing arts - include, clothing or costumes, light, staging and use of sound. Remember the performing arts use a lot of these non-verbal forms of communication in expressing ideas and messages. Remember also that the performing arts are very powerful platforms for sharpening communication skills whether verbally or non-verbally.

Now check out some key information about the stages below and show how you can effectively describe or explain your ideas, achievements about the artwork you created and the challenges of producing it. Do not forget the non-verbal tools you have employed in expressing meanings in your artwork. A desired response, reaction, appeal or change you want to achieve through your artwork, starts right from your preparation through to the final production and post-production stages. The explanations for the stages below are therefore, to give you an insight into what exactly happens and should happen when you are at the stages. Read for more insights and try your hands at describing your experiences in the activities that follow.

STAGES OF A PERFORMANCE

Pre-production stage

This is the stage when you begin planning for your artwork. It involves making decisions on the ideas to be developed, which would be termed the ‘what’ of the performance - that is what you want to be created and performed. This stage also involves a selection of deserving performers, drawing of timelines and establishing a budget. You will want to also market the performance, e.g. design posters, send out information on the radio and the school’s notice board.

The factors taken into consideration at this stage include drawing a production timeline, play/idea selection, composing the artwork, budgeting, auditioning, mobilising other resources and undertaking marketing activities to invite audiences.

The Production stage

This stage is the preparation stage towards performing the artwork before an audience. At this stage, it is expected that the artwork is being prepared and refined to be performed before an audience. The production conference is a key part of this stage, as well as rehearsals to prepare the performers for opening night. The director will ‘block’ the performance – work out the stage directions/performers’ movements – during rehearsals and the cast will work towards a dress rehearsal over the production stage. This is a run through of the artwork, as if in front of an audience, where the performers are in costume and lighting, sound and staging are all established.

This stage also involves other processes such as repair of the auditorium or the performance space/stage, preparation for sound and lighting.

Production conferences are a key part of putting on performance. They serve as a space for both cast and crew colleagues to make creative and production/technical decisions. Below are some reasons to call a production conference:

<p>Coordination and Scheduling</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discuss the production timeline, including rehearsal schedules, tech rehearsals, dress rehearsals, and performance dates. • Ensure all departments are aligned on deadlines for set construction, costume fittings, lighting setup, and more.
<p>Creative Decisions</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review and finalise decisions related to set design, costumes, lighting, sound, props, and other creative elements. • Ensure that the creative vision of the director or production team is consistently applied across all departments.
<p>Technical Details</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Address technical aspects such as lighting cues, sound design, special effects, and any potential challenges related to the venue or equipment. • Discuss the logistics of set changes, costume quick changes, and other operational details.
<p>Budget and Resources</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review the production budget and discuss resource allocation, ensuring that the production stays within financial limits. • Address any financial constraints or additional funding needs for specific elements of the production.
<p>Problem-Solving</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify potential issues or conflicts that might arise during production, such as scheduling conflicts, technical difficulties, or creative disagreements. • Collaboratively develop solutions to ensure the production progresses without major disruptions.
<p>Health and Safety</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discuss any safety concerns, especially if the production involves stunts, special effects, or complex set designs. • Ensure that all cast and crew members are aware of safety protocols and procedures.
<p>Communication and Updates</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide updates on the progress of various departments and any changes to the original plans. • Ensure that all team members are informed about important decisions and changes to avoid miscommunication.

Performance stage

At this stage, the artwork is ready to be presented to an audience. The actual performance, time management, cast and crew, seating arrangement etc. are the key elements to be prioritised.

The Post-performance/Production stage

These are activities to be engaged in after a production is closed. For example, cleaning the auditorium/performance space, and repairing props, costume and accessories. The stage also involves doing a general appraisal/evaluation of activities undertaken among other things.

Activity 3.1

- Without checking the content above, can you list the key activities of each stage of putting on a performance? Use as much technical vocabulary as possible – e.g. production conference, blocking, dress rehearsal, auditions etc.

Stage	Activities included in the stage
Pre-production	
Production	
Performance	
Post-production	

- Case study: “*Shadows of the past*”

Using the text below as a starting point, or using a case study provided by your teacher, you will work collaboratively to think about all the activities needed to put on a performance at each stage.

“*Shadows of the Past*” began as a seed of an idea in the mind of director, Sena Agyapong. She envisioned a psychological drama that delved into the complex relationships between family members. Over several weeks, Sena collaborated with playwright Rashida Ali, to develop a script that captured the tension and emotional depth she wanted to convey. The production aimed to use minimalistic staging and powerful performances to draw the audience into the characters’ internal struggles. The director and script writer didn’t know where to stage the play and had a tight budget to cover all aspects of the performance.

- With a partner, or in groups organised by your teacher, draw a timeline which explains each stage of putting this performance on for an audience, and the activities Sena and Rashida will have to undertake.

Hint: make sure to discuss creative decisions! They don't have a large budget and don't know where to stage it so what would you advise?

- b.** Once you have your timeline and all the activities mapped as part of the pre-production, production, performance and post-performance stages, try to answer the following questions with your partner or group:
 - i.** Can you explain the process at each stage?
 - ii.** What roles were involved in the production? Which roles are important at which stage? Are some needed throughout?
 - iii.** What challenges might professionals involved in the production face?
 - iv.** Can you reflect on the process you undertook in your last performance – did it follow the same steps?
 - v.** Now you are more familiar with the production process, how might you better plan for your next performance?

Take Home

Pretend you have been approached by the District Chief Executive of your community and he/she has asked you to organise a performance that will address the issue of Child Marriage.

Meet with two or three of your classmates in your neighbourhood and develop a complete plan for this performance discussing what you would do during the stages listed below:

1. Pre-production
2. Production
3. Performance
4. Post-Production

Create a timeline of the various stages of performance for your own artwork, including roles and resources needed. Include artistic decisions such as location, staging, lighting, sound and costume in your timeline.

CONNECTEDNESS OF PERFORMING ARTS TO OTHER FORMS OF ART

By dint of hard work and dedication to your work, you have dealt extensively with the creative processes, you have created your artwork and prepared to perform it to an audience. In this lesson, you are going to continue the communication aspects of the performing arts. You will be expected to effectively express how the performing arts are connected to other art forms and their influence on life experiences.

I believe you still remember that the Performing Arts are creative acts/artworks that are performed before a paid or live audience, this is to say that artistes use their voices, and bodies to convey a message or an artistic expression. The performance could be traditional or indigenous music, dance and drama.

Note the difference between these two groups of people in the performing arts: artists and artistes. The two terms are used to describe creators of artworks or persons in the arts. **Artist** is used to describe someone who creates an art piece, whereas **artiste** is used to refer to someone who is a skilled public performer such as a dancer, musician, singer, actor or actress. By the end of the session, you will be introduced to how the Performing Arts are connected and related to other art forms in Ghanaian society.

Performing Arts

As already discussed, performing arts refer to forms of creative expression that are performed live to an audience. These types of performing arts, their examples and their possible places of performance are included in the table below:

Type	Examples	Possible Venues
Dance	Traditional dances, contemporary dances, choreography/dance-drama.	Dance Studios, Theatres, at festivals, found performance spaces, etc.
Music	Traditional/indigenous music, instrumentals, vocal, opera, choral, etc. (Many genres of music exist).	Concert Halls, Theatres, festivals, Opera Houses, funerals etc.
Drama	Traditional plays, contemporary plays.	Theatres, Playhouses, Community durbar grounds, found spaces, etc.

Performing Arts and Other Arts

Performing Arts, as well as the other arts, involve a wide range of creative expressions. In the previous lessons, you have dealt with the three disciplines of performing arts which include Dance, Music and Drama. You have become aware of all the elements of the disciplines, and you have created your artwork, rehearsed and performed a five to ten-minute artwork on stage to a live audience. One major objective of your artwork is to communicate your message on a topical Ghanaian issue to the people that you

have collaborated with. You may be aware that your artwork would have remained as only a choreographic script, a musical manuscript or a drama script just to be read. But when you decided to perform your artwork on stage to a live audience, you added other artistic elements to realise your desired goals and objectives. You looked for talented performers (dancers, singers, actors and actresses, drummers, etc.), a suitable stage to accommodate a suitable set, good sound and lighting equipment, suitable costumes and properties, and above all, you advertised to persuade audiences to come and watch your artwork. The costumes, lighting, sound and advertisement - and many other things - are all effective communicative tools to help disseminate your message properly to your audience. Do you remember how you were able to communicate your ideas at the various stages of creating the artwork in the previous session? Well, the following discussion will help you to connect the performing arts with the other arts, explain what they have in common and their relevance to Ghanaian society.

The Performing Arts and Visual Arts

1. Communicate ideas
2. Manipulate artistic elements to evoke responses
3. Help to arouse critical thinking
4. Make use of imagination and creativity
5. Promote tourism
6. Improve socialisation
7. Provide a source of revenue for people and the government
8. Serve as cultural preservation and promotion

The performing arts and visual arts are two different categories of art forms. Yet, they often meet and complement each other. Their meeting can lead to lasting experiences that challenge our observations and inspire new creative possibilities. The boundaries between performing arts and visual arts can be blurred, leading to exciting interdisciplinary collaboration and innovative art forms in society. They both:

During a stage production, the scenery or set designer makes use of visual elements in designing the set. Every production, either dance, music or drama has its specific design or scenery that can be made possible through the visual arts. Also, during some cultural events such as festivals, naming ceremonies, puberty rites, marriage and funerals, the use of costumes, make-up, symbols, accessories and other visual elements form part of visual arts.

Some basic differences between Performing Arts and Visual Arts

	Performing Arts	Visual Arts
Medium	Performing art conveys the idea through means of performance using body movements and voice.	When it comes to visual art, artists use a set of tools and art supplies (e.g., paints, canvases, painting accessories, etc.) to create art with their own hands.

Social nature	Dance, music, and drama – as examples of performing arts – often require several pairs of hands and legs.	Visual arts, such as painting, sculpture, ceramics, and fine art photography , usually refer to the job done by one artist.
Underlying idea	Performance art is more about the fluid experience based on ever-changing forms.	The fact is that a drawing or painting provides you with a static experience, meaning that you learn the story through the fixed image.
Accessibility	Activities like music concerts or dancing contests and drama performances are seen as entertainment and thus, more popular.	Many people are uncertain about fine art due to its value and price.
Live Performance	Time-based (duration, sequence, timing).	Physical objects displayed in space; digital objects displayed in virtual space; painting, drawing, sculpture, photography, graphic design.

Performing Arts and Communication

At the basic level, performing arts is about communication. Every line delivered, every costume worn, and every movement made all come together to form something that speaks directly to an audience. With each performance comes a new lesson in how we communicate with one another. It turns out that there are many things you can learn from performing arts when it comes to effective communication. Indeed, performing arts and communication are deeply connected, and they involve conveying messages, information, emotions, and stories through various art forms/disciplines, such as dance-choreography, musical performance and drama performance. Effective communication is very important in performing arts because it enables artists/artistes to:

1. express meaning through choreographed movements which are interpreted by an audience.
2. deliver musical messages through music to an audience.
3. convey characters' intentions and emotions to an audience through drama.

Below are some key communication skills you gained from actively involving yourself in the performing arts processes:

1. Confidence and self-expression
2. Creativity and problem-solving
3. Emotional Intelligence
4. Critical Thinking
5. Teamwork and collaboration

Performing Arts and Life Experience

The choreographer, the musician or the director does thorough research in the communities on topical issues. The issues found are used to create artworks in dance, music or drama. The artworks produced may be traditional/indigenous, modern and, or contemporary in nature. These performing artworks may significantly influence life experiences in various ways. Here are some examples:

1.	Emotional Expression	Helping individuals to process and manage feelings.
2.	Storytelling	By taking complex ideas and breaking them down into more understandable pieces – such as dance-drama, musical theatre or drama – stories can be used effectively by anyone looking for ways to get his/her own message across in a meaningful way.
3.	Empathy	Having a fellow-feeling for one another.
4.	Listening	To be successful on stage when performing, you must listen and respond accordingly to what other performers are saying or doing at any given moment.
5.	Confidence and self-expression	Believing in, and having confidence to speak for, oneself.
6.	Social connection	Meeting of individuals and groups in society.
7.	Cultural Enrichment	Enhancing traditions, histories, understanding and appreciating cultures.
8.	Personal growth	Provides self-discovery and skill development.
9.	Stress relief	Calming down mental and physical pressures among people.
10.	Inspiration and Motivation	Helping individuals and groups to pursue their passions and dreams.
11.	Relaxation	Offers a healthy escape from boring daily life, promoting enjoyment.
12.	Human Centeredness	The performances are about people, their beliefs and their relationship with nature.

There are many lessons and experiences one can learn from the performing arts about how we communicate with one another - especially when it comes to improving our own communication skills in both professional and personal settings. There are also lessons to learn about how the performing arts connect us to our culture and teach us about our history. Through these experiences, we can get inspired socially and culturally as well.

Watch the video in the link below on how the performing arts and society are connected.
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HPz1va21l_M

Connections between Performing Arts and Visual Arts

As mentioned earlier, both the performing arts and the visual arts can be powerful tools for communicating ideas. They can capture attention, simplify information, evoke emotions, and create connections. The images below are evidence of how these two art forms are connected.

Note however that using them effectively requires planning, creativity, and clarity.

Starter: Look at the pictures below of Ghanaian visual artworks. Discuss with your partner what you can see, what you think they convey, what emotion they communicate to you, and which is your favourite and why.





The Art of Collaboration: When Visual Arts and Performing Arts Converge

Collaboration holds particular significance in the performing arts, where it fosters synergy among musicians, actors, dancers, and other performers. Through shared vision and collective effort, performers unite their talents to bring stories to life on stage, captivating audiences with evocative performances. This collaborative spirit infuses each production with depth and vitality, elevating the overall artistic experience.

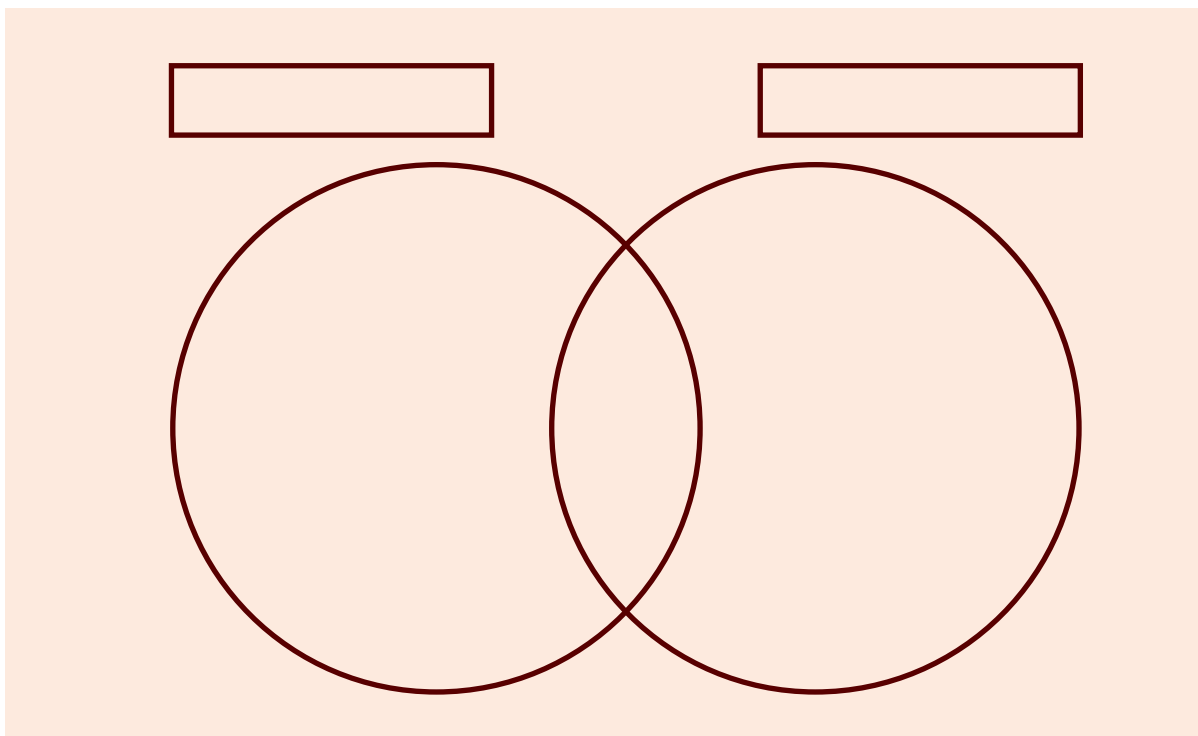
Similarly, in the visual arts, collaboration takes on various forms, from joint exhibitions to interdisciplinary projects that merge different mediums and techniques. Artists come together to exchange ideas, inspire one another, and push the boundaries of their respective practices. Through collaborative endeavours, visual artists explore new avenues of expression, exploring themes and concepts that transcend individual perspectives.

One way of collaborative arts is where artists work together to create a single artwork or series/varieties of artworks. This collaborative approach encourages artists to pool their talents and resources, resulting in pieces that reflect the collective vision of the group. By combining their unique styles and skills, collaborators produce works that are greater than the sum of their parts, resonating with viewers on a deeper level.

The relationship between performing arts and visual arts is characterised by a shared commitment to creativity and expression. The two disciplines may differ in their modes of presentation, for example, the performing arts unfold in real-time before a live audience, and visual arts is often displayed in static form. However, the two seek to engage and provoke emotional responses in the audience or viewers.

Activity 3.2

1. Reflect on two of the images above and describe to the whole class the messages being communicated.
2. List three essential features that performing artworks share with the visual arts.
3. In pairs or groups research an example of a performance artwork and a visual artwork from Ghana. Complete the Venn diagram below to compare and contrast the features of each artwork and how each might function in Ghanaian society.

**Take Home**

1. Summarise how performing arts and visual arts are interconnected, both in their artistic features but also their function in society.
2. Take your favourite piece of music, dance or dramatic performance. Can you transform it into a piece of visual art? How will you capture the message and emotion of the original piece and translate it into a visual piece?

REVIEW QUESTIONS 3.1

REVIEW QUESTIONS 3.1

1. List the features of pre-production, production and performance stages in producing an artwork.
2. Answer the following self-reflection questions, based upon the activities of each stage of the performance process.

Pre-production stage

- a. What roles were you assigned at this stage of the production of the artwork?
- b. Reflect on the role assigned above and describe the steps you followed to achieve the result.
- c. Did you face any challenges? How did you overcome it?

Production stage

- a. Reflect on the rehearsal process and how you went from blocking the piece to the dress rehearsal.
- b. What might you do differently next time to ensure progress as the production stage?

Performance stage

- a. Do you recall the reaction from the audience whilst you performed your artwork?
- b. Why do you think they reacted that way and were you expecting that response? Think about specific moments in the performance.

Post-performance stage

- a. How would you rate the overall processes you have undertaken as an individual in the class? What would you do differently next time?
- b. Seek feedback from a friend on your performance. Ask them what you did well and what they think can be improved next time – and provide the same feedback to them on their performance.

REVIEW QUESTIONS 3.2

1. Complete the sentence: The creation of performing arts cannot influence life experience because the creator of the artwork failed to:
2. Name three basic elements of Visual Arts that are like Performing Arts.
3. Performing arts are subject to constant change, whereas Visual arts are more traditional. To what extent do you agree with this statement?
4. The combination of many arts disciplines in a single performance is referred to as

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GLOSSARY

Performing Arts	The creative activities that are performed before a (paid or live) audience.
Collaboration	The process of working together with others to achieve a common goal or objective.
Visual Arts	Artistic creations that are visual in nature and interpreted by an audience visually.
Storytelling	An effective tool for narrating stories, often by written or oral methods, to entertain.
Interdisciplinary Arts	Combining many arts disciplines in a performance.
Art forms	Any recognised medium of artistic expression concerned with creating objects, works, or performances that are beautiful and have meaning.
Artist	This describes someone who creates a piece of art.
Artiste	Refers to someone specifically skilled as a performer such as a dancer, musician, singer or actor.

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Service (GES)



List of Contributors

Name	Institution
Prof. Yirenkyi Samuel Manaseh	UEW, Winneba
Yaw Owusu Asiamah	Wesley College, Kumasi
Patience Nukpezah	UEW, Winneba
Dr. Daniel Appiah-Adjei	University of Ghana, Legon