

SECTION

7

STAGE PERFORMANCE



DRAMA

FROM SCRIPT TO STAGE

INTRODUCTION

Welcome to the exciting world of performance. In this section, you will discover the fun world of performing and writing plays. You will explore various scenes from plays, perform monologues, create your own sketches and even perfect the art of writing and producing your own plays. By understanding these elements, you will gain confidence in expressing yourself, communicate well, understand human emotions and experiences and develop skills in creative writing.

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

- Perform monologues of chosen scenes from a variety of plays.
- Perform sketches of chosen scenes from a variety of plays.
- Write and perform simple sketches from stories read.
- Write and perform a sketch on relevant themes and values such as honesty, hard work and patriotism.
- Write and produce plays using the skills acquired.

Key Ideas

- A Monologue is an extended speech delivered by a sole character within a play. The two main types of monologues are dramatic and comedic monologues.
- A sketch is a short, mostly, comedic performance that usually lasts a few minutes. It is performed by a small group of actors.
- Play production involves creating and staging a play, including writing, acting, directing and designing sets, costumes, props (stage properties) and lighting.

Performance of Monologue

The Meaning of Monologue

In Literature, a monologue is a speech given by one character on stage. It is usually delivered to other characters or the audience.

Types of Monologues

Dramatic Monologues show strong feelings and deep personal struggles. They usually highlight important details that make the audience think more about the story

Comedic Monologues are meant to make people laugh and to entertain the audience or reader.

Steps on how to perform a monologue.

Follow these steps to guide you in performing monologues:

1. Go through the script ahead of time to understand the writer's intentions, while paying attention to punctuation, diction and style.
2. Memorise the lines.
3. Rehearse with the audience in mind.
4. While performing, choose a point of focus, start by introducing the monologue and make sure there are smooth transitions throughout the performance



Fig.7.1: Picture of someone performing a monologue

Activity 7.1

1. Form a group of five members. Using the questions below, select an interesting monologue.
 - i) What type of monologue should we select. Dramatic or comedic?
 - ii) What type of monologue will be interesting to perform?
 - iii) Will we feel confident saying the words in the monologue?

- iv) Which gestures can we show to bring out the emotions in the monologue for effect?
 - v) Are we selecting a short or long monologue?
 - vi) How do we manage our time to practise it?
2. Skim through *The Marriage of Anansewa* and note parts with monologues and discuss using the following questions:
 - i) What is the character talking about?
 - ii) Why is this monologue important in the play?
 - iii) Does this monologue show strong emotions or interesting thoughts?
 - iv) How can I enact it to bring out the effect intended?
 3. After discussing, as a group select an interesting monologue that all group members understand. The selected monologue will be used in next activity.

Activity 7.2

Reading Monologues

1. In the same group used in activity 7.1, take turns in reading aloud the selected monologue together.
2. Help others with pronunciation, tone and expression. For example, if a line is sad, practise saying it in a sad tone.
3. Take time to rehearse your lines at your own pace. Use a mirror, record yourself or practise in front of a friend. If you understand the concept well, help others by doing the following:
 - i) Show them how to express emotions.
 - ii) Offer tips like pausing for effect or speaking clearly.

Activity 7.3

Performing Monologues



1. Scan either of the QR codes above to watch videos on a monologue performance.

2. Perform the monologue in class and record yourself while performing.
3. Take feedback from your friends or family by asking them the following questions:
 - a. How well did I maintain focus?
 - b. How well did I introduce the monologue and managed transition?
4. Write your feedback in your journal for reflection.

Performing Sketches of Chosen Scenes From a Variety of Plays

What comes to your mind when you see these two Ghanaian actors below performing?



Fig. 7.2: Picture of two Ghanaian comedians

Performance of Sketches

A sketch is a short piece or performance that usually lasts a few minutes. It is mostly comedic and requires a small group of actors with exaggerated characters and situations.

Differences between sketch and drama

Note the following differences between a sketch and drama.

Criteria	Drama	Sketch
Duration of performance	Longer, typically lasting several hours	Shorter, typically lasting only a few minutes
Tone	Serious and often tragic	Comedic and often satirical

Number of actors	Can range from a few to many	Typically performed by a small group of actors or singly
Themes	Explores serious and often complex themes	Often satirises politics, culture, and society

Table 7.1: A table on the differences between sketch and drama.

Activity 7.4

1. Form a group of three members, open YouTube on your ICT device and search for interesting comedic scenes or skits. Use keywords like “short comedy skits” or “funny play scenes”.
2. Watch sample skits and choose one scene in your selected skit, with approval from your teacher.
3. Share roles among yourselves and rehearse your chosen scene for the skit in your groups. Ensure that every learner is given a part they are comfortable with to perform.
4. Add creativity by doing the following:
 - a. Think about how to use facial expressions, gestures and tone of voice.
 - b. If any member has difficulty moving or speaking, adapt the role to suit their strengths and help them out (e.g., narrating instead of acting).
5. Prepare props (you could improvise by getting objects around the classroom).
6. Perform your skit before the whole class for critiquing.

Writing and Performing Simple Sketches from Stories Read

Imagine creating worlds where your characters come to life, your stories unfold on screen or stage, and your words captivate audiences. That’s the power of scriptwriting!

Script Writing

Script writing is the art of writing scripts for various forms of media such as films, television shows, plays and video games. It involves the creation of narrative structure, dialogue and visual elements that make up the story.



Fig. 7.3: Picture showing a creative writing idea.

Here is how you can write your own sketch based on a story you have enjoyed:

1. Choose a Story and Find Its Theme

Start with a story you like. It could be one you've read, heard, or even created yourself. Ask yourself: What is the main theme, idea or lesson in this story?

For example, if the story is about two friends who learn to forgive, the theme could be 'friendship' or 'forgiveness'.

1. Plan the Storyline, Characters, and Conflict

- a. Think about creating your own story based on the sample you thought about.
- b. Write down:
 - i. The main events you want to include.
 - ii. Which characters to use (Who are they? What do they look like?).
 - iii. The conflict or problem the characters face. For example, in a story about Ananse, the problem might be how he cleverly solves a tricky situation.

2. Create the Outline: Break your sketch into parts to make it easy to follow. For example:

- a. Acts and Scenes: Divide your story into sections, like chapters in a book. Each section shows a new part of the story.
- b. Stage Directions: Write notes to guide actors on what to do. For example, "Ananse enters from the left, carrying a basket. "Use simple ideas to keep the sketch clear and engaging for your audience.

With these steps, you can create a lively sketch that brings your favourite stories to life! Ready to give it a try? Let's do it.

Activity 7.5

Story Identification

1. Form groups with members of different abilities and genders (where applicable) for a scriptwriting task.
2. In your group, discuss stories you already know (e.g. folk tales or popular short stories) and agree on which one to use for the scriptwriting/sketch.
3. Using the three steps in script writing and based on your knowledge on sketches, create a simple sketch from the story you selected as a group.

You can do so by:

Breaking the Story into Scenes: Identify 3-5 main events in your story. Each event will be a scene.

Write a short script for each scene using dialogue and actions and stage directions.

4. Go through the script for finalisation and copy the script individually onto a sheet of paper.
5. Share roles according to your learning ability and rehearse your lines together with your group members.
6. Prepare your props
7. Perform your sketch before your class for feedback.

Creating and Acting a Thematic Sketch

A literary sketch is a short play that shares something interesting about a culture. It can be funny, exciting or even teach a lesson. What makes it special is that it is written by someone from that culture, so it feels real and relatable.

Why Are Literary Sketches Important?

1. They help us learn about traditions, beliefs, and customs.
2. They show us how people from different cultures live and think.
3. They are fun and entertaining to watch or read!

Activity 7.6

Writing an Original Sketch

1. Four to 6 of you can form a group, as a group select the theme you want your sketch to be about. E.g. family, friendship, honesty.
2. Write a sketch (not more than three minutes) three-minute based on your collective creative abilities.
3. If you are having difficulty, follow these steps

- a. Pick a cultural story, tradition or event that inspires you.
- b. Think about the main message or theme.
- c. Plan the characters, events and actions.
- d. Add some humour or excitement to make it entertaining!

Note: With permission from your teacher, you can brainstorm and independently write your script. Call on your teacher if you need assistance.

4. Exchange your sketch with another group/individual and make changes to their sketch to improve it. Use the following guiding questions to provide constructive comments:
 - a. Does the story make sense?
 - b. Are the characters' actions and words clear?
 - c. How could the story or dialogue be improved?
5. Choose roles for acting your sketch, directing or managing props.

Note: Group members who prefer non-speaking roles can be narrators or stage assistants.
6. Rehearse the sketch as a group, focusing on:
 - a. Speaking loudly and clearly.
 - b. Using facial expressions and gestures to show emotions.
 - c. Timing your lines correctly.
7. Arrange the classroom to create a stage. Use simple props such as chairs and tables for the setup.
8. Present your sketch to the class.
9. After each group's performance, classmates should share:
 - a. What they liked most.
 - b. One suggestion for improvement.

Writing and Producing Plays



Fig. 7.4: Picture showing a production company

A play production is the process of turning a written script into a live performance on stage. It involves many steps and a team of people working together to create an exciting show. This is how stories like *The Marriage of Anansewa* or *The Crucible* come to life for an audience.

Who Makes a Play Happen? Here are some of the important people and parts of a play production:

1. Director

- a. The director is the leader of the production team.
- b. They bring everyone together and make sure the play flows well.
- c. The director also chooses the script and decides how it will be performed.

2. Producer

- a. The producer manages the money and resources for the play.
- b. They hire actors, schedule rehearsals and make sure everything runs on time.

3. Costumes

Costumes are the clothes and accessories that actors wear to match their characters. For example, in *The Marriage of Anansewa*, characters might wear traditional Ghanaian clothing.

4. Staging

Staging is how the play looks on stage, including the setting, props, and lighting. For example, in *The Crucible*, the stage might show a simple 17th-century village to match the story's time and place.

How Does It All Work Together?

1. Actors perform the roles of the characters.
2. Stage Props are items like furniture, tools or decorations that make the scene look real.
3. Lighting sets the mood and helps the audience focus on important actions.

Every person and element play a part in making the play exciting and enjoyable for the audience. A production is like a puzzle where all the pieces fit together to create a wonderful story on stage.

Are you ready to discover how to create your own play or understand one? Let us dive in!

Activity 7.7

1. In your group, use the process writing method listed below to produce a play:
 - a. Decide on the story.
 - b. Brainstorm ideas and storyline (plot).
 - c. Write the story outline.
 - d. Determine the main character.
 - e. Write your acts by dividing your story into three parts: Beginning, Middle, End.
 - f. Develop dialogues.
 - g. Input stage directions.
 - h. Reread and revise.
 - i. Proofread and edit again.
2. With your teacher's help, make a list of resources needed to produce the play you have scripted.
3. Mark out locations and perform the play and take a video as you perform it.
Remember to record and save the play in a safe document.
4. Reflect on teamwork by writing down how working in a group improved your communication and teamwork skills. Using these discussion prompts:
 - a. How did you solve disagreements?
 - b. What did you learn about decision-making?
5. Connect to Real-Life Skills by doing the following:

- a. Discuss three skills you employed used in the project (e.g., planning, creativity, leadership).
- b. Write down how these skills can help in future jobs.

Review Questions

1. What is a monologue?
2. State the two types of monologues.
3. Your group was tasked to perform a monologue. List the steps you followed to bring that wonderful performance to life.
4. In your own words, define sketch.
5. In your own words, define drama.
6. Mention two steps in creating sketches.
7. What is meant by play production?
8. Mention any five elements of play production.
9. Mention at least one area of improvement from your performed monologue and state how you can improve upon it.
10. How different is a sketch from a drama?
11. Why are sketches important?
12. How do the elements of production affect the quality of the play?
13. Discuss how you will create a simple sketch on a national value for performance
14. Create a concept map on the steps in creating sketches.
15. Based on your knowledge of monologues, create a simple monologue.
16. Create a sketch following the steps you outlined for a sketch on a national value.
17. Team up with about three of your classmates, compare your created sketches and perform the best of them all in class. Politely ask another classmate to take a video of your performance.
18. You have been asked to produce a play to be aired on a national television. As the producer, outline the steps you will take to ensure that your play/script is the best.

Extended Reading

1. An Inspector Calls by J. B. Priestley.
2. The Marriage of Anansewa by Ama Ata Aidoo

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