**REVISION PACK – DESIGN QUESTION – ‘DNA’**

Practise your ‘birds-eye view’ stage drawings. They are in your folder.

YOU WILL BE ASKED TO SAY HOW THE PLAY WAS ORIGINALLY STAGED. IT WAS AT THE NATIONAL THEATRE IN LONDON BEFORE GOING ON TOUR AND WAS ON A THRUST STAGE. THE SET MUST BE **MINIMAL** IN ORDER TO MOVE QUICKLY BETWEEN THE THREE SETTINGS OF THE WOOD, THE FIELD AND THE STREET.

**IMPORTANT – YOU ARE LIKELY TO BE ASKED TO DESIGN A SET FOR TWO KEY SCENES. HAVE THREE SCENES IN MIND THAT YOU COULD CHOOSE FROM. HAVE CONTRASTING SCENES, E.G.ONE SET IN A WOOD, ONE IN THE FIELD AND ONE ON THE STREET.**

You will be told to design for ONE of these stages:

A **Proscenium Arch** stage – You can use the main stage and the apron of the stage (section in front of the curtains)

A **Thrust stage** – Audience seated on three sides. Be aware of audience sightlines. Scenery cannot be too high on the thrust part of the stage.

A **Traverse stage** – Audience seated on two sides. Be aware of audience sightlines. Scenery cannot be too high. The ends of the stage tend to be focal points.

An **‘In The Round’** stage – Audience seated on four sides. Think about positioning of set (always in the middle with this type of stage). Scenery MUST be low level. Think about audience positioning.

Where are the entrances and exits going to be? Where will the cast be positioned?

**LIGHTING**

* Use **Fresnel** lighting to provide a wash of colour. Blue and white **gels** help to create sterile, clinical environments or that a serious scene is happening. Bright light suggests that you are outside. Warm **gels** such as yellows, pinks and oranges suggest you are warm and indoors. They suggest happiness. A red spotlight suggests death or murder. Other coloured spotlights might add an eerie effect, such as blue or green.
* Don’t forget that you can change the lighting colour and intensity during the scene if the mood changes.
* **Profile lights** highlight at particular area of stage or a character, to focus just on them. You can choose to spotlight a character with a profile spot.
* Smoke, helps to create an eerie effect on stage and brings out the colours in the lights.
* You can DIM the lights but you CANNOT have black light.
* You CAN have a full blackout.
* You can change the intensity to make lights brighter over time or suddenly to create an effect.
* You can use a **gobo** in front of a light to create a pattern of light. E.g. If in a dark street, you could create eerie shadowy images, if in a forest, you can project the pattern of leaves on the floor.

**SOUND**

* Music can be used before, after and during a scene to create atmosphere. Think about the sort of track that would be suitable and say why.
* Sound effects – You can have specific sound effects like a crow screeching or a creative montage of sounds, for example in the street, cars going by, a siren, a bus passing (but this must me low enough in volume for the actors to be able to be heard.)

**COSTUME**

* You could suggest costume choices as part of the design – e.g. they will all be dressed in school uniform but with something unique about their own individual character.

**STAGE FLOOR**

* What colour would you have the stage floor? It could be black so that it is neutral or perhaps it could again have an image, such as a DNA strand.

**SYMBOLISM / STAGING**

* Be creative – could there be characters on different levels, a split scene, projected images. Do make sure that you read the scene however and make it suitable. You can’t add characters that are not there or change what happens in the scene.

**Suggest overall design ideas for the whole of the scene that you are looking at but also point out specific moments where there might be a change in lighting, a piece of set brought on, or a particular sound effect. Quote lines from the text.**

**Style of Theatre – Theatre in Education (TIE)**

* Make this choice because the scene is ‘issue based’. The issues within the scene suit a young audience (teenagers) and so Theatre in Education is a good choice of style to educate them and to make them reflect on these issues e.g. the bullying of Adam and belonging to gangs.

**Choice of stage – (YOU MUST LINK THIS TO YOUR CHOSEN STYLE OF THEATRE IN EDUCATION)**

**THRUST STAGE**

* Possible reasons for choosing:
* This stage is suitable for the style of Theatre in Education as the audience sit around three sides of the stage and the convention of the fourth wall is broken. This allows them to feel as though they are part of the performance and they can reflect on the issues within the scene.
* It is also a creative way of staging the performance. This play requires an imaginative design to move between a wood, a field and a street.

**IN THE ROUND**

* Possible reasons for choosing:
* This is a creative way of staging the scene and calls for simple set, placed in the centre of the stage so that all members of the audience can see the action easily.
* The audience sit around the stage on all four sides and so become part of the performance, like they are part of the gang. They are more immersed in the performance themselves and so are better placed to take on board the issues and ideas being presented to them on stage.

**PROSCENIUM ARCH STAGE**

* Possible reasons for choosing:
* A traditional way of staging, with the audience getting a full view of the stage from a direct perspective. They are watching the events, like peering through a fourth wall.
* The audience get a full view of the events on stage.
* You can use larger pieces of set / scenery without blocking the sight-lines of the audience.

**TRAVERSE STAGE**

* Possible reasons for choosing:
* A creative way of a staging the work.
* It’s more unusual and will capture the imagination of the young audience.
* You can divide into three sections for the wood, street and field.
* Audience on two sides of the stage and are more involved in the performance, like they are part of the gang.

**BACKDROP / DESIGN IDEAS**

* A backdrop on the back wall of a thrust stage or proscenium, perhaps trees.
* Projected images that change as the scene progresses – say what the images are and when you would change them. What do they symbolise?
* In the Round stage - Projected images on all four walls of the auditorium so that the audience are surrounded by the wood or images of DNA.

**SET**

* The set for Theatre in Education has to be simple but effective as a touring company would need to be able to pack it up and take it to various schools and performance spaces.
* Props / Set tend to be multi-fuctional. Give an example of how you would do this.
* You could have a set of six rostra blocks (which are lightweight and easily moveable) which make up the set or simple items like a bench in the street.
* Say WHERE you would place the set on stage, e.g. I would place the bench, downstage centre so that the audience fully focus on the characters and their conversation.
* For ‘In the Round’ staging, set has to be in the centre of the stage, so make sure you mention this if they ask you to stage in this way.
* Think about what could use on the set to make it seem like the environment that you are in.

**PROPS – remember props are things that you use**

* Don’t forget any functional props that you need such as the Tupperware box or Phil’s bag of sweets.
* You can also be creative - ordinary, everyday items could be turned into set e.g. a camouflage net to represent the forest. Mention this is performed as a TIE piece and so the actors would need to be creative and versatile in what they use on stage.