

# DRAMA CONVENTIONS

## **Flashback**

Flashback can be used during an improvisation to give the audience more information about the characters in the past. For example, if the character has committed a crime this can be flashed back to show how this was done.

## **Flashforward**

Flashforward can be used during an improvisation to give the audience more information about the characters in the future, for example, the consequences of their actions.

## **Freeze Frame**

Freeze Frame can be used at the beginning or end of an improvisation to indicate to the audience the action is just about to start or finish. A freeze frame can also be used to stop the drama at a specific moment to enable the audience to understand the action. It might be used in conjunction with a narrator who might explain part of the story while the action is frozen.

*(See also Still Image and Thought Tracking)*

## **Mime**

Mime can be used during part of an improvisation to replace a non-existent prop or can be used to tell a story using stylised movement.

## **Monologue**

Monologue can be used in conjunction with a freeze frame during a performance. One character speaks to the audience about their thoughts and feelings while the rest of the characters are frozen. This can be repeated for the other characters in the drama. It is a tool to enhance the audience's understanding of the storyline and characters.

A monologue can also be a character alone on the stage describing their thoughts and feelings.

## **Narration**

Narration can be used when a child or a teacher tells the story of a drama, either as someone looking on who is not involved in the drama or as a character within the drama.

## **Slow Motion**

Slow Motion can be used in an improvisation to highlight an important moment in the drama. This slows the action down to help the audience understand the action and to create tension.

## **Still Image**

Still Image is created from a stimulus or an idea to represent or express an emotion or theme. For example, a still image representing the seasons, war, or an emotion such as fear, hate and love. Thought tracking can then be used from this still image.  
*(See also Freeze Frame and Thought Tracking)*

# **CHARACTERISATION TECHNIQUES**

## **Hot Seating**

Hot Seating can be used as a tool for characterisation to give depth to the character through questioning. It can also be used within characterisation and teacher in role or at the end of an improvisation to clarify the thoughts and feelings of the characters.

## **Improvisation**

Improvisation is an unscripted piece of drama, which can be rehearsed or acted out on the spot.

## **Mantle of the Expert**

Mantle of the Expert can be used within an improvisation where the children take on the role of an expert, for example professionals such as, doctors, historians, and archaeologists. It enables them to demonstrate their knowledge of a particular topic or theme that they have researched earlier.

## **Role on the Wall**

Role on the Wall can be used as a tool in characterisation to help children think about the thoughts and feelings of the character and also how other characters in the drama feel and think about that character.

## **Teacher in Role**

Teacher in Role can be used with the majority of tools and conventions already mentioned, for example within voices in the head, thought tunnel, still image and improvisation where the teacher actively takes on the role to enhance understanding for the children.

This might include vox pop.

## **Thought Tracking**

Thought Tracking can be used as a tool for characterisation. The action during an improvisation is frozen by the teacher then one by one each character explains how they feel and think about the situation they are in. Usually the teacher would identify a pupil who is in character to ask them to explain their feelings.

(See also Freeze Frame and Still Image)

## **Thought Tunnel**

Thought Tunnel can be used as a tool for characterisation or exploration of a theme. For example when a character has an important decision to make during a drama such as 'the runaway' deciding to walk out the door for the last time, they would walk through the tunnel as the rest of the class give their opinions as to whether they should stay or go.

(It can also be used as an improvisation tool to build up a moment of tension in the drama.)

## **Voices in the Head**

Voices in the Head can be used in a drama when a character faces a decision or dilemma. It can also be used as a tool for developing a character. For example a character has to decide whether to run away from home. Voices take on the two opposing sides of the dilemma /decision to help the character make up their mind. The voices in the head can be off stage or on stage at the time. This also can be used during an improvisation when the action is frozen and the other characters become the voices in the head for the character with the dilemma/decision.

**Vox Pop** (not used in SQA Body of Knowledge)

Vox Pop can be used when the children are in role and the teacher wants to ask them a series of quick questions about the position their character finds themselves in.