

Peter Pan Week 6 Worksheet: Set Design

If you like, you can watch the whole of 'Peter Pan' on this link: <https://www.dramaonlinelibrary.com/plays/peter-pan-bristol-old-vic-nt-iiid-190789> AFTER you have completed the tasks below!

Task 1 Knowledge Organiser (5-10 mins)

Read through the information on the Set Design Knowledge Organiser (included at the bottom of the last page of this document).

Task 2: Identifying Set Design (10 - 15 mins)

The screenshot below is from 'Peter Pan' and it shows when Peter Pan is teaching Wendy, John and Michael (the siblings) how to fly.

Using the Set Design Knowledge Organiser, identify 3 Set Design skills the designer is using.



Task 3: Analysing a Key Moment (5 - 10 mins)

Read the example of how to write a 'what → how → why' evaluation of set design for a key moment. Example 1: In this extract,

WHAT

• This is a **rising revolve** and it is a **turntable built into the stage floor on which scenery can be set and then turned.**

HOW

• The **rising revolve** moves **slowly** and in a **circular motion** until it is **level with the stage floor**. The **actors are already on the ship** and this creates **health and safety considerations.**

WHY

This **scenic device** is impressive and it **makes it look like the pirate ship is appearing from a whirlpool as it is going round in a spiral as it rises from beneath the stage floor**, giving the **audience** that 'wow' factor. The actors must stay perfectly still until the ship has come to a halt. This adds a sense of danger which creates tension for the **audience.**



What makes a successful answer?

Use WHAT → HOW → WHY

Task 4: Analysing a Key Moment (5 - 10 mins)

Look carefully at the image below and write a 'What → how → why' evaluation of set design that you see being used in the image. Use the Knowledge Organiser to help you.

Answer: In this extract,

WHAT

●

HOW

●

WHY

●



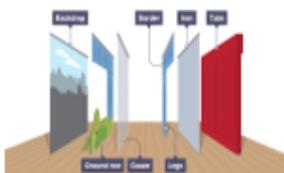
Scenic devices:

Set designers use a range of scenic devices to convey their design ideas.

1. Drapery

There are different types of curtains that are used for different purposes:

- **Backdrops** (also called a **backcloth**) - a piece of cloth hung behind the stage in a theatre as part of the scenery that can be painted or have coloured light or projections shone onto it
- **Borders** - wide and short drapes that mask the top of the stage where lights are hung
- **Gauze** (also called a **scrim**) - a thin curtain that can be lit either from the front to make it opaque, or from behind to make it transparent
- **Legs** - long and narrow drapes used to mask the wing space
- **Tabs** - the name for stage curtains that can open horizontally or fly vertically
- **Ground row** - a long, low piece of stage scenery, built to simulate part of a landscape. It is sometimes used to conceal lanterns from the audience
- **Iron** - a safety curtain designed to prevent stage fires spreading into the auditorium.



2. Levels

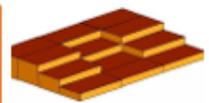
A set designer can vary levels through the use of **rostra**, ramps and steps. Ordinary blocks, staging units, scaffolding and planks can be used to create levels and can be **joined together** to create steps or other shapes. Levels are often used in productions to portray a character's status, **power** or situation.

3. Projections

Projections are becoming more common within set design and can be used to add detail and texture on stage. In some **venues** scenery can be projected, which can be very effective but can have limitations. For example, unless it can be projected from behind the set, actors will cast shadows onto it.

4. Flats

A **flat** is a piece of scenery used to represent a wall or to conceal a backstage area. A series of flats can be **joined together** to make a **run**.



There are several other scenic devices that can be incorporated into a set design:

- **Set dressing** - smaller items that add details to a set, such as **stage furniture**, to help establish setting and era
- **Entrances and exits** - a set designer might include **naturalistic doors** or performers may enter from the wing space or even enter or exit from **trap doors**
- **Floors** - sets usually incorporate a floor that is fixed to the stage
- **Pyrotechnics (pyro)** - the use of fireworks within theatre to create effects, **eg** explosions
- **Hydraulics** - machinery used in large-scale productions to move set, usually up and down
- **Smoke** - used to create dramatic effects and created with a **fogger** or a **hazer**
- **Truck** - a moving platform on which a piece of scenery is built to facilitate scene changing
- **Revolue** - a turntable built into the stage floor on which scenery can be set and then turned
- **Flying** - involves a manual or electric system that lifts performers off the stage, allowing for stunts and aerial sequences

Conveying setting:

The most essential aspect of set design is to show the audience where the action takes place, which might be as general as a country or as specific as a room within a house.

Communicating themes or symbols:

- The set design can also communicate abstract concepts, such as themes and symbols. As an example, a design could include a large, dead tree to suggest the themes of death and decay.



Considerations when designing a set:

When designing a set, there are several aspects to consider, including:

- colour
- condition
- practicalities
- scale

Colour

Colour can be used within set design to symbolise various ideas on stage. For example, a set designer might make a Victorian schoolhouse look stricter by using dull greys and a monochromatic palette.

Condition

The condition of a design can reveal important information about the setting or a character's circumstances. For example, a living room with tatty, ripped curtains and stained carpets might suggest that the house is old or that the character who lives there is poor.

Practicalities

A set designer will need to consider the practical aspects of set design. If the play has lots of fast-paced scenes in various locations, set design may need to be kept minimal to help with the quick changes.

Scale

A set designer can experiment with scale to create different effects on stage. Forced perspective is a design technique used to make an object appear either further away or closer than it is in reality. For example, a scene set on a street could feature a row of houses on both sides of the stage, and those further from the audience can be smaller to create an optical illusion, making the road appear longer.

