

Shrek Week 4 Worksheet: Costume Design

If you like, you can watch the whole of 'Shrek the Musical' on this link: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UZLWzsrvoBE> AFTER you have completed the tasks below!

Task 1 Knowledge Organiser (5-10 mins)

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

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

The screenshot below is from 'Shrek the Musical' and it shows Lord Farquard (apparently) seated on the ramparts of his castle.

Using the **Costume Design Knowledge Organiser**, identify one example of what costume the designer is using, **how** they are using it and **why** (what it communicates to the audience). There is an example below:

What: The actor playing Lord Farquard is wearing a lycra bodysuit with padded armour, boots and a head-dress.

How: There are three main colours: red, yellow and blue. The fabric is stretchy and shiny and the legs are fake.

Why: these colours are used to suggest that he is childish and vain. The padded armour shows that he is trying to make himself look bigger.



What:

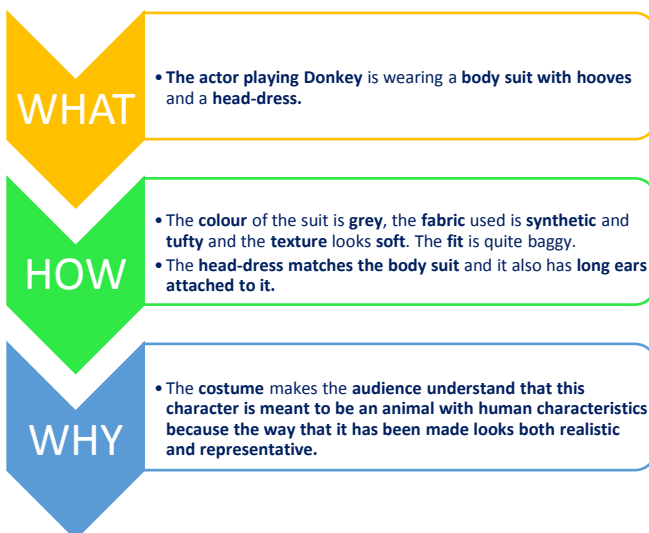
How: by

Why: to communicate to the audience that

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

Read the example of how to write a 'what → how → why' evaluation of costume design for a key moment.

Example 1: In this extract,



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 a costume design that you see being used in the image. Use the Knowledge Organiser to help you.

WHAT

HOW


WHY



Answer: In this extract,

Costume Design

1. Colour
Colour is a very important aspect of a costume. It can convey a symbolic idea or reveal something about the character wearing the costume.



3. Condition
The condition of the costume can convey information about a character's circumstances. For example, a Victorian street beggar leading a hard life may wear dirty rags with holes to show wear and tear, and may also have make-up to appear dirty with missing teeth, cuts and bruises.

5. Cut
The way a costume is cut refers to the shape of fabric pieces used to construct it. For example, a suit can be cut in different ways to help change the performer's physical appearance, making them appear either smaller or larger. Cut can also provide information about the historical setting of the play, e.g. flares are a style of trousers that become wider below the knee and are largely associated with the 1970s.

2. Fabric (material)
Consider most appropriate fabrics to suit the character, setting and style of the production. For example, in the present day, performers can wear costumes that use modern synthetic materials, such as lycra, which gives extra stretch whilst still looking era-specific. Fabric can also provide information about a character's social status; e.g. a wealthy character may wear a silk dress.

4. Fit
The fit of a costume refers to how the clothing fits the performer, e.g. tight, oversized or fitted perfectly. It can reveal a character's personality or the context of the play. A woman in a period drama may wear a very tightly fitted corset to help reflect the historical context of a play, as it was fashionable to accentuate a woman's physical form.

Other considerations when designing a costume:

Texture
The texture of the fabric used on a costume can provide the audience with information about a play's context or insight into a character. For example, a soft cashmere cardigan in pastel tones can suggest that a character is warm and caring, whereas leather and suede in dark colours can appear more threatening. It is important to consider how textured surfaces react differently under stage lighting, e.g. a shiny finish like satin is very reflective under lights.

Shape
Costume can be used to give a performer a different physical shape, e.g. a body suit may be worn to make a performer appear larger. The outline created by a costume on a performer is called a **silhouette**. Different silhouettes are associated with different fashions throughout history, eg shoulder pads are reminiscent of 1980s **power dressing**.

Practicalities
The practicalities of a costume must also be considered when working on a design. Some productions can require quick costume changes between scenes, and a costume designer will have to find ways to help this, eg by using Velcro rather than buttons. Comfort and freedom of movement should be considered as well as weight when using different materials and fits.

Hair and make-up
Hair and make-up are also aspects of costume design. Simple make-up is often used to help pick out the performer's facial features under bright lighting, but make-up serves many other functions. For example, it is used to:

- create special effects such as cuts and bruises
- help a performer appear older, eg to create wrinkles
- change facial features, eg through the use of **prosthetics**

Adornments
Adornments are the accessories that are added to a costume, eg jewellery, handkerchiefs and bags. The scale or size of adornments needs to be considered as, depending on where they are sitting, it can be difficult for the audience to see details. Adornments may be accentuated to make them clearly visible.

Health & Safety
Designers must take into consideration H&S issues such as: skin allergies to fabrics and/or washing/cleaning products; hem length to avoid trip hazards; constrictions on breathing such as corsets.

The Purpose of Costume Design

Costume is an important aspect of a production, as it helps to:

- ★ establish a **character**
- ★ create the **world of the play**
- ★ convey the **context** of the play
- ★ support the **style** of the production

Creating the 'world of the play'

The world of the play is its cultural and historical context as well as the characters' situation and relationships. Old plays can be reinterpreted and their time/setting changed, according to the director's vision. Costume plays an important part in communicating this vision.

Supporting the style

Costumes support the overall style of a production, along with the other design elements. If a production is naturalistic in style, then costumes should be realistic and recreate everyday life. However, a pantomime, which is far more theatrical, would feature grand and colourful costumes to support the overall style of the show.

Conveying the context of the play

Costumes can also convey the context of the play, including the time period and geographical setting, following fashions and styles that evolve from one decade to the next. Performers wearing dinner jackets, bow ties and top hats could suggest the historical setting of the piece before any dialogue is spoken. Through local cultural dress or references to the climate, costume design can also help to convey the geographical setting of a play

Establishing a character

As well as helping the audience to understand information about the character and the performance as a whole, performers can find it easier to 'become' their character once they try their costume on. Costumes can:

- ★ provide the audience with basic information about a character, such as their age, gender, occupation and economic and social background
- ★ reveal lots of information about a character's personality, e.g. a vain character might wear a flamboyant outfit to draw attention to themselves, while a shy character might wear plain clothes in dull colours
- ★ reveal information about a character's circumstances within the play, helping to tell their story, e.g. a character might begin the play wearing smart clothes but by the end of the play their costume might look creased and untidy to help communicate their journey and what they have experienced.