



Course Start

Course Start is independent learning you need to complete as a fundamental part of your introduction to the course. It should take you approximately **5 hours** to complete.

Course Name	Drama and Theatre A Level
How this Course Start fits into the first term of the course	<i>Reading and analysing plays is a key feature of the Drama A Level course.</i>
How will my Course Start learning be used in lessons?	<i>We will be using your selections to apply techniques and exercises to bring the text to life in our first week. You will be working in small groups to perform sections informally.</i>
Course Start learning objectives	• <i>Consider and cast yourself in a role that you would be suitable to play</i> • <i>Analysing plays</i> • <i>Develop characterisation through use of voice and physicality</i> • <i>Write up notes / annotate a script</i>
Study Skills	• <i>Research (social, cultural and historical context)</i> • <i>Analysis of text and of roles for performance</i> • <i>Self-directed work</i> • <i>Time-management and planning</i> • <i>Application of acting skills (Voice and Physical)</i>

Expectations for: [A Level Drama Specification](#)

What this course involves
Studying a diverse range of plays - through reading, watching and practical exploration.
Attending practical lessons on time, dressed appropriately for physical activity, ready to work.
Completing Planned Study (independent learning) of 5 hours per week. This could involve character mapping, essay practice, research tasks, character preparation, learning lines and rehearsal tasks.
Watching live theatre is crucial to understanding the process of performance. There will be at least two opportunities for theatre visits each year.
Developing independent learning skills (e.g. time management, preparing for each week's lessons, completing learning tasks outside lessons)

Course outline:

Year 1

Acting induction (with monologue)

Study plays (**Unit 3: Set texts 1 & 2**) - Design, direct, perform extracts
Theatre visits

Unit 1: Performance Workshop (20%)

Devising skills

Practitioner workshops

Adapt / create / perform original piece of theatre

Creative log

Year 2

Unit 2: Text in Action Project (40%)

Working with stimulus

Practitioner workshops

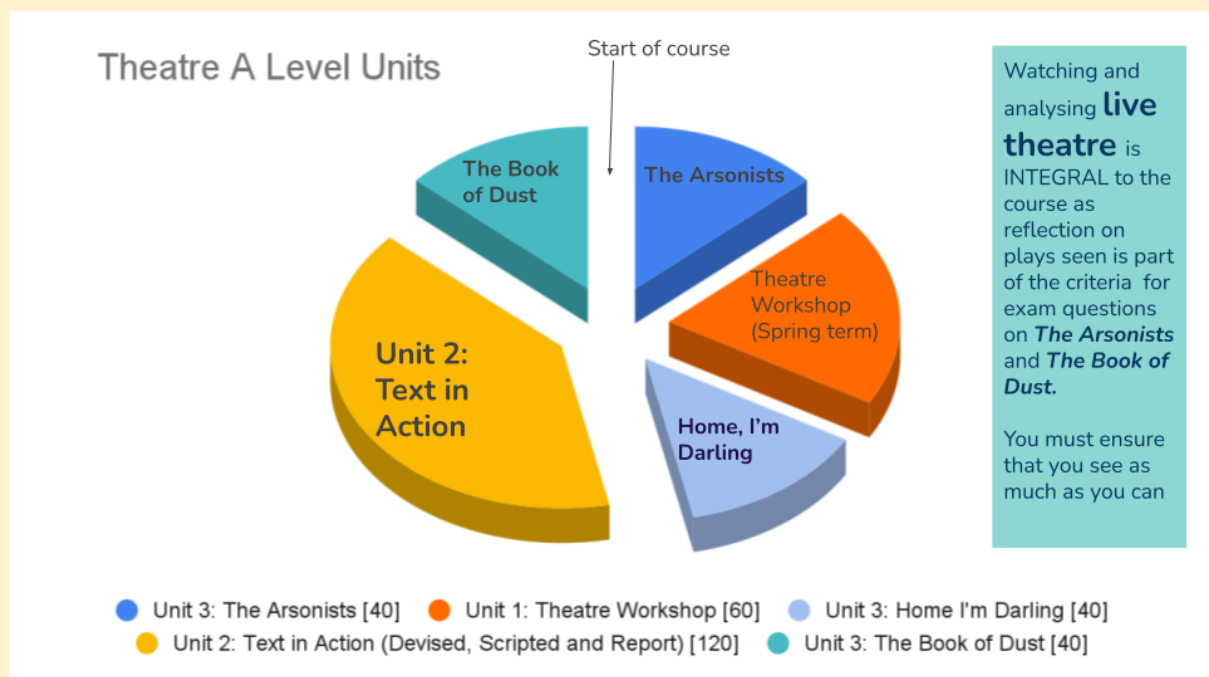
Rehearse and perform scripted group piece

Devise, refine and perform original theatre piece

Creative log

Study play (**Unit 3: Set text 3**) - Design, direct, perform extracts

Unit 3: Written exam - 3 x Set Texts (40%)



Varndean College
Theatre and Performance

Course Start



Welcome to Varndean College!

We are really looking forward to you joining the Theatre and Performance Department at Varndean College in September.

Now more than ever we are excited about the study of plays and developing our theatre skills to help us to make sense of the world, allow us to explore ideas and expand our horizons.

We have prepared an activity for you which will help introduce you to some of the ways that we work here at Varndean.

The next few slides will help to guide you through and give you all the resources and help that you need.

The work will take 5 hours work over the Summer holidays.

Project Outline and Task List

EXPECTED	EXTENDED	EXCEPTIONAL
Read the synopsis of the four plays on the next slide. Select which one you are interested in and read the whole play. On a word doc which you can email or handwritten on paper for you to bring in with you / hand in - 1. Why you chose this play to read? Consider Themes / Storyline / Setting? 2. Choose a character that you are interested in playing and select a monologue of at least five lines. [Copy this out on your work] 3. Write a short description of the role. What is the character like? What is interesting to you about their journey and relationships?	Choose a longer monologue <i>eight lines or longer.</i> [Copy this out on your work] Cut it up into manageable chunks. Learn the monologue.	Write in your own words what your character is saying. ☐ Who are they speaking to and what would they like to achieve by saying the monologue. ☐ Why is it important to them? ☐ What might the outcome be after they speak their speech?

TASK 1: The plays (links) and a bit about them

[The Gut Girls](#) by Sarah Daniels (1988)

Premiering at London's Albany Empire in 1988, this bold and sweeping epic play is set in turn-of-the-century Deptford, where a group of young women toil in the brutal gutting sheds of the Cattle Market. When the sheds abruptly close, their lives are thrown into turmoil. Drawn - some unwillingly - into a reformist club led by the well-meaning but misguided Lady Helena, the girls' struggle for survival, identity, and independence takes a powerful and tragic turn. Gritty, moving, and unflinchingly honest, the play lays bare the cost of change in a world stacked against them.

[Boys](#) by Ella Hickson (2012)

Finals day 2011. Four boys in a five bedroom flat gear up for one huge party to end all parties. As they enter adulthood, all of them face an uncertain future in an uncaring world and even the good times look problematic. Still, there's going to be girls and booze. It's going to be a riot. **Boys** is a startling glimpse into the world of a lost generation. Funny and bleak in equal measure, the play is a thrilling exploration of the grey area between childhood and adulthood, where characters grow up in a world without much hope. Boys looks set to follow the best selling *Eight*, *Precious Little Talent* and *Hot Stuff* in cementing Ella Hickson's reputation as a considerable theatrical talent.

[Memory of Water](#) by Shelagh Stephenson (1996)

Three sisters arrive at their remote childhood home on the eve of their mother's funeral. Having grown apart, Theresa, Mary and Catherine argue and joke as they sort through their mother Vi's belongings and gradually confide about the realities of their own adult lives. Joining the sisters are Mike (Mary's married lover) and Frank (Theresa's "under the thumb" husband). A hilarious and heart-breaking drama about what we fear most – losing someone both in life and death. A play about family, grief and the unreliability of memory.

"Stephenson's play balances riotous humour and pathos, with its melancholia lingering in your memory." *The Guardian*

[The Flick](#) by Annie Baker (2013)

In this sharp, funny, and quietly powerful play, three underpaid cinema employees, Sam, Rose, and Avery, spend their days tearing tickets, sweeping popcorn, and dealing with bored customers. Life feels stuck, the economy sucks, and dreams seem far away. But as they joke, argue, and open up in the empty aisles between shows, we see just how much more is going on beneath the surface. Winner of the Pulitzer Prize, this drama captures the struggles, hopes, and hidden depths of people trying to find meaning in the everyday. It's raw, real, and totally relatable. *Set in America (but please don't do the accent!)*.

[Gut Girls \[FULL script\]](#)

[Boys \[full script\]](#)

[Memory of Water](#)

[The Flick \[full script\]](#)

SOME HELPFUL ADVICE FOR YOU

1. Read the play

Reading a play only takes as long as it does to watch one, and the truth is the more you read, the more you will get to grips with the kind of writing you're interested in. You will not understand the context without reading the play.

2. Look for active speeches

These 'remembering' monologues often lack a charge. Select a piece where you are trying to change another character and there is a clear **objective** to fulfil. When the cost of failure for a character is great, the speech is immediately more exciting, both to watch and to do.

3. Know the situation

When you speak for 2 minutes without interruption in your everyday life, it's usually because you have something important to say. Prepare your monologue by working out whom you are talking to, where you are and what you want. Know these limitations and your speech will start to take a clear shape. Clarity and specificity makes for a better story.