

# Creating a character – Physical semiotics

In Drama we change our **physicality** to show that we are a different person to our normal selves. These **semiotics** depend on what you want to communicate to your audience. You must **sustain** your role throughout the performance or you will bore your audience.

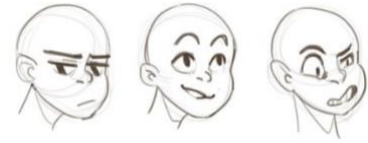
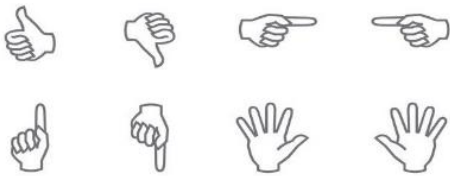
## Body Language and Posture

How does your character feel towards others?



## Gestures

What is your character communicating?



## Facial Expression

How does your character feel?

## Eyeline

Where do you want your audience to look?



## Levels

Who has the most power in the scene?

They should be the highest character.

## Proxemics

How close are your characters?

The closer in distance the closer their relationship.

## Projection - Loud or quiet

'They projected their voice loudly to make sure the audience could hear'



## Pace - Fast or slow

'they used a fast pace to show their character was nervous'

## Pitch - High or low

'They used a high pitch to show their character is a child.'



Whistle  
High pitch sound



Drum  
Low pitch sound

"It's not what you said.  
It's how you said it."

## Tone – How you say something

'They used an angry tone to communicate their emotion'

## Emphasis - Making a key word stand out.

'I didn't steal the cake. But Nanna did.'  
'I didn't **steal** the cake. I was only borrowing it.'

## Inflection - Ups and downs in your voice

'They made their pitch go higher at the end of the sentence e to show it is a question'.

## Diction - Ensuring your voice is clear.

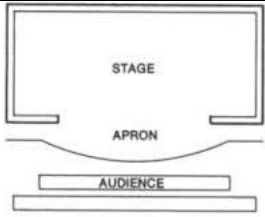
'They pronounced their words clearly to communicate meaning to the audience..'

## Accent

Changing your way of speaking to reflect where you come from.

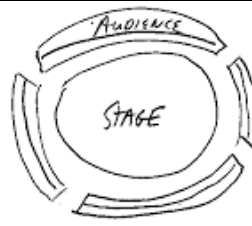
## Proscenium Arch Stage

The audience sit in rows directly in front of the stage. There is an aisle down the middle.



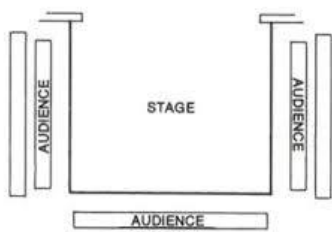
## In the round stage (sometime called arena stage)

The stage is in the centre and the audience sit around the outside (sometimes in a circle).



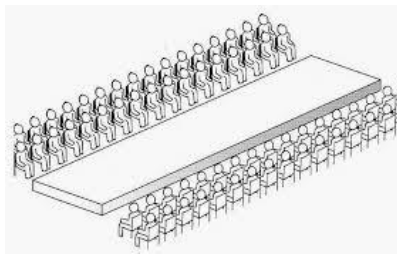
## Thrust staging

The stage juts out into the audience who sit on three sides.



## Traverse staging

The stage runs like a catwalk down the middle with the audience on either side facing each other..



## What are Production and Design elements?

These are the design aspects of theatre that can also create mood and atmosphere in a performance. You can make a career out of these by working in theatre or getting a degree in one.

**Sound design** - Music and sound effects can communicate emotions and meaning in a scene.

**Set design** - The set can communicate location and time period to the audience. It can be really detailed and elaborate or minimalist so the audience are focused on the action.

**Costume and Make-up design** - Costume communicates meaning about a character, their personality and can communicate character development and changes. This will also communicate location and time period.

**Lighting design** - Their role is to ensure that the stage and actors are lit and can be seen. It can also help to communicate emotion and create suspense with darkly lit scenes.

**Properties or 'Props'** - These are the items and objects on stage that the actors interact with. These can help tell us the location and time period as well as key information about the characters.

## What are style and genre?

When you are choosing a book to read or a film to watch you might know you really like an adventure story but would prefer not to experience a science fiction story.

Choosing a style and genre for our performance helps us to decide what we need to communicate to the audience as each one is different. For example, we know in the horror genre we will have creepy music and dark lights. In the style docu-drama we will base our play on a true story.

You can have both a style and genre in your performance

- you might choose a naturalistic comedy or a science fiction docu-drama about the lunar landings.

