

# Unit 4: Staging Realities: Drama and Performance

## Introduction:

Welcome to Unit 4 of IB MYP Grade 10 English Language and Literature, titled "Staging Realities: Drama and Performance." For millennia, across diverse cultures and civilizations, drama has stood as a uniquely potent art form – a living, breathing mirror reflecting the intricacies of human experience, the complexities of societal structures, and the profound, often challenging, universal truths that bind us. Unlike the static words on a page of prose or the carefully constructed lines of poetry, a play is fundamentally incomplete until it is brought to life in performance, transforming written dialogue and stage directions into a dynamic, unfolding reality experienced collectively by an audience. This inherent performative dimension means that a comprehensive understanding of drama demands a multi-faceted analytical approach, requiring us to consider not only the playwright's initial vision and textual intentions but also the myriad layers of interpretation layered upon it by directors, actors, designers, and ultimately, the unique perspective of each individual spectator.

In this intensive unit, we will embark on a captivating journey through the rich tapestry of dramatic texts, spanning different eras, cultural traditions, and stylistic movements – from the enduring power of Shakespearean tragedy, with its exploration of timeless human flaws, to the innovative and often challenging forms of modern drama, including the existential queries of absurd theatre. You will meticulously learn to analyze the specific **conventions** that define the dramatic form, dissecting every nuance of **dialogue**, interpreting the subtle yet crucial implications of **stage directions**, and understanding the profound significance of **soliloquies** and **monologues** in revealing inner worlds. We will delve deeply into the intricate **motivations** that drive characters, charting their evolution and examining the dynamic **relationships** that propel narratives and expose deeper **themes**. Crucially, this unit emphasizes the vital and inseparable interplay between the written **script** and its boundless **potential for performance**, exploring how choices in **staging**, **design**, and **acting** can profoundly alter a play's meaning, emotional resonance, and overall impact. By the conclusion of this unit, you will possess a sophisticated, nuanced, and empathetic understanding of dramatic form, enabling you to appreciate plays not merely as stories, but as compelling, multi-dimensional commentaries that actively "stage" and re-evaluate the human condition, inviting us to reflect on the realities they present.

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## 4.1 Deconstructing the Dramatic Text: Conventions, Character, Conflict, and Theme

This foundational section establishes the essential analytical framework for understanding drama, moving meticulously from the literal words and instructions on the page to the implied actions, psychological depths, and thematic undercurrents that breathe life into characters and their conflicts. A precise and nuanced grasp of these inherent dramatic conventions is the fundamental key to unlocking the playwright's intricate craft and the play's deeper meanings.

## Topics Covered:

- **Analyzing Dramatic Conventions: The Blueprint for Performance:** Plays are built upon a distinct set of structural and linguistic rules that differentiate them from other literary genres. Mastering the interpretation of these conventions is critical to comprehending the playwright's artistic choices and anticipating a play's performative potential:
  - **Dialogue:** The lifeblood of drama, serving as the primary vehicle for character interaction, plot progression, character revelation, and the nuanced development of themes. We will engage in rigorous analysis of:
    - **Subtext:** The unspoken meaning, unstated intention, or underlying emotion that lies beneath a character's literal spoken words. What a character *says* may intentionally differ from what they *mean* or *feel*. We will explore how subtext creates tension, reveals hidden motives, and enriches character complexity. For instance, a polite "How are you?" might, through subtext, convey suspicion or sarcasm.
    - **Pacing and Rhythm of Exchange:** How the length of lines (long monologues versus rapid-fire repartee), the use of pauses (indicated by ellipses or specific stage directions), and interruptions (overlapping dialogue) contribute to the scene's emotional intensity, reveal character traits (e.g., nervousness, dominance), or build dramatic tension.
    - **Direct vs. Indirect Communication:** Examining when characters explicitly state their feelings, demands, or intentions versus when they employ hints, veiled threats, ironic statements, or rhetorical questions to convey their message. This often reveals power dynamics or levels of trust.
    - **Dialect and Idiolect:** How specific linguistic choices (regional accents, slang, formal vs. informal language, unique speech patterns) contribute to characterization, indicate social class, or reflect cultural background.
  - **Stage Directions:** These are the playwright's vital, often parenthetical or italicized, instructions to guide both actors and designers. They are not merely suggestions but crucial components of the script, detailing:
    - **Setting:** The physical environment (e.g., "A dimly lit attic," "A bustling city square"), including time of day or year.
    - **Lighting and Sound:** Cues for atmosphere, mood, or specific effects (e.g., "A single spotlight on him," "Sound of distant thunder").
    - **Character Movements and Blocking:** The precise actions, gestures, and physical positions of characters on stage (e.g., "She crosses to the window," "He turns his back on her").
    - **Vocal Delivery:** Instructions on tone of voice, volume, or emphasis (e.g., "angrily," "whispering," "with desperation").
    - **Interpretation and Significance:** We will discuss how specific stage directions shape the imagined "reality" of the play, influencing the audience's emotional response and understanding of character relationships and thematic focus. For instance, a stage direction like "(She slowly places the letter on the table, her hand trembling)" can

convey more about inner turmoil than pages of dialogue. We will also distinguish between plays with sparse directions (allowing directorial freedom) and those with highly prescriptive ones (reflecting a precise authorial vision).

- **Soliloquy:** A profound and intimate dramatic convention: a speech delivered by a character when they are alone on stage, revealing their innermost thoughts, feelings, plans, or dilemmas directly to the audience. No other characters are present to hear it.
  - **Purpose:** The soliloquy serves as a direct conduit to the character's psyche, exposing internal conflict, providing crucial exposition (background information), foreshadowing future events, or offering a profound moral commentary on the play's actions without the constraints of dialogue.
  - **Character Revelation:** Soliloquies offer unparalleled insight into a character's true self, often contrasting sharply with their public persona or what they present in dialogue with other characters. They allow the audience to forge a deep, personal connection with the character's private world.
- **Monologue:** A lengthy speech delivered by one character. While a monologue can be delivered to other characters on stage, it can also be directed to the audience (in which case it might sometimes blur with elements of soliloquy if the character is isolated).
  - **Purpose:** Monologues often serve to persuade, inform, confess, express an intense emotion, recount a significant past event, or deliver a passionate argument. They allow a character to dominate the stage and articulate a complex viewpoint uninterrupted.
  - **Distinction from Soliloquy:** The key difference lies in the implied recipient; a monologue usually acknowledges an audience (whether other characters or the play's actual audience) while a soliloquy is purely internal thought.
- **Asides:** Brief remarks made by a character directly to the audience or to another character, which are understood to be unheard by other characters on stage.
  - **Effect:** Asides often create dramatic irony (when the audience knows something the characters don't), establish a direct conspiratorial connection with the audience, provide comedic relief, or reveal a character's true, often mischievous, thoughts or motives.
- **Exposition:** The necessary introduction of background information about the play's setting, past events, character histories, or the socio-historical context. In drama, exposition is typically woven organically into early dialogue or revealed through initial stage directions, avoiding lengthy, unnatural monologues solely for explanation.
- **Understanding Character Motivation, Relationships, and Dynamic Development:** Dramatic action is fundamentally driven by the choices and interactions of characters. A deep dive into these aspects reveals insights into human psychology, social dynamics, and the consequences of individual agency.
  - **Character Development (or Lack Thereof):** How characters undergo significant psychological, emotional, or moral changes throughout the play, or

how they remain stubbornly static despite external pressures. What are the catalysts for their transformations, or the barriers to their growth?

- **Motivation: The Engine of Action:** The underlying reasons (desires, fears, beliefs, values, external circumstances, internal pressures) that compel characters to act as they do. We will analyze both **explicit statements of motivation** (what characters say drives them) versus **inferred motives** (what we deduce from their actions, dialogue, and consequences). Understanding motivation is key to understanding the plot.
- **Interpersonal Relationships:** The intricate and often shifting dynamics between characters—familial bonds, friendships, romantic connections, rivalries, mentor-mentee relationships. How do these relationships shape the plot, create tension, and reveal multifaceted character traits? We will examine **power dynamics, conflicts of interest, alliances**, and how relationships evolve over time.
- **Protagonist and Antagonist:** Identifying the central character(s) whose journey forms the core of the play (protagonist) and the primary force(s) opposing them (antagonist). The antagonist may be another character, society, fate, or even an internal flaw. Understanding their respective goals and obstacles is crucial to grasping the central conflict.
- **Foils:** Characters who, through their contrasting qualities, serve to highlight or emphasize the distinctive traits, values, or struggles of another character, often the protagonist. A character's foil provides a point of comparison that deepens our understanding of both.
- **Exploring Themes and Conflicts within Dramatic Texts: Universal Truths on Stage:** Plays, irrespective of their origin or historical period, universally grapple with fundamental human experiences, societal dilemmas, and philosophical inquiries.
  - **Types of Conflict: The Driving Force of Drama:** Conflict is the essence of dramatic tension and propels the narrative forward. We will categorize and analyze its various forms:
    - **Internal Conflict (Character vs. Self):** A psychological or emotional struggle occurring within a character's own mind, often involving moral dilemmas, conflicting desires, or a battle with personal flaws (e.g., Hamlet's indecision).
    - **External Conflict:** A struggle between a character and an outside force:
      - **Character vs. Character:** Direct confrontation or opposition between two or more individuals.
      - **Character vs. Society:** A struggle against societal norms, laws, prejudices, or institutions.
      - **Character vs. Nature:** A battle against environmental forces or the natural world.
      - **Character vs. Fate/Supernatural:** A struggle against destiny, divine will, or forces beyond human control.
    - **Central Conflict:** Identifying the primary overarching struggle that drives the entire plot and serves as the nexus for the play's main thematic exploration.
  - **Identifying Major Themes: The Play's Enduring Messages:** Themes are the overarching, universal ideas, insights, or messages about life, humanity,

or society that the play explores. These are not explicitly stated but emerge through the plot, characters, dialogue, and symbolism. Common dramatic themes include:

- Love, passion, and jealousy
  - Betrayal, loyalty, and trust
  - Justice, law, and morality
  - Power, ambition, and corruption
  - Identity, self-discovery, and belonging
  - Social critique, injustice, and revolution
  - Madness, delusion, and sanity
  - Truth vs. illusion, appearance vs. reality
  - Fate vs. free will, destiny, and choice
  - Life, death, and mortality
  - The nature of heroism and villainy
- **Theme Development:** Analyzing how themes are subtly introduced, intricately developed, complicated, and sometimes resolved (or left unresolved) through:
    - **Plot Events:** Key turning points and actions that illuminate a theme.
    - **Character Actions and Decisions:** How characters embody or challenge thematic ideas.
    - **Dialogue and Monologues:** Direct discussions or profound reflections on thematic concepts.
    - **Symbolic Elements:** Recurring objects, actions, or imagery that carry deeper, often abstract, meanings relevant to the theme. For instance, a crown might symbolize power, or a withered plant might symbolize decaying hope. We will explore how these symbols contribute to the play's thematic richness.

### Activities:

- **"Dialogue Dissection and Subtext Creation":** Students will be given a one-page excerpt of dialogue from a play (or a specially written one) *without* any stage directions. They must first analyze the dialogue to infer the characters' unspoken emotions, underlying intentions, and the nature of their relationship. Then, they will creatively *add* specific stage directions (movements, gestures, tone cues) that explicitly convey the subtext they've identified, explaining how their additions enhance the scene's meaning.
- **"Character Psychological Profile":** For a pivotal character from a play currently being studied, students will develop a detailed "psychological profile." This will involve:
  1. Identifying the character's primary external goals and internal desires.
  2. Analyzing their dominant fears or weaknesses.
  3. Tracing their emotional journey and key transformations (or lack thereof).
  4. Explaining how their motivations drive their most significant actions and decisions within the play.
  5. Discussing how their relationships with other key characters shape their development.

- **"Conflict and Theme Weaving Map":** Students will select a major play and create a visual "map" or diagram that illustrates its central conflict. They will then demonstrate how this central conflict branches into several distinct internal and external conflicts. Finally, they will articulate how these various conflicts collectively contribute to the development and exploration of at least two major themes within the play. They must include brief textual examples from the play to support their connections.
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## 4.2 The Play in Performance: Staging, Interpretation, and Socio-Historical Context

A play's true essence is fully realized only when it transitions from the written script to the dynamic realm of performance. This section moves beyond textual analysis to meticulously consider how choices made in staging, design, and acting infuse meaning into the play, and how dramatic works are inextricably intertwined with the specific societal and historical moments in which they are conceived, presented, and ultimately received.

### Topics Covered:

- **Considering the Impact of Performance and Staging: Bringing the Script to Life:** The creative decisions made by the director, actors, and design team are not merely decorative; they are interpretive acts that profoundly shape an audience's experience and understanding of a play.
  - **Set Design and Scenography:** How the physical environment of the stage (realistic, abstract, minimalist, symbolic) and the arrangement of its components (furniture, architecture, landscapes) create atmosphere, establish mood, define time and place, symbolize ideas, or reveal character traits (e.g., a chaotic, cluttered set vs. a sparse, orderly one).
  - **Props (Properties):** The movable objects used on stage. How specific props are chosen, used, or highlighted to convey meaning, advance the plot, symbolize themes, or reveal character (e.g., a specific letter, a weapon, a significant piece of jewelry).
  - **Costume and Makeup:** These visual elements convey crucial information about character: social status, personality, psychological state, historical period, cultural background, and even symbolic meaning (e.g., bright colors for optimism, drab for despair, period-accurate vs. modernized costumes). Makeup can exaggerate or subtly transform a character's appearance.
  - **Lighting Design:** The strategic use of light and shadow to create mood, focus audience attention, indicate shifts in time or location, symbolize themes, or enhance dramatic tension (e.g., a sudden spotlight on a key character, dimming lights for suspense, warm vs. cold hues).
  - **Sound Design and Music:** The use of sound effects (e.g., thunder, city noises, footsteps) and music (underscoring, specific songs) to establish atmosphere, foreshadow events, convey emotions, represent offstage action, or punctuate dramatic moments.
  - **Blocking and Movement:** The precise positioning and physical movement of actors on the stage. How proximity between characters, their body language



(posture, gestures), their use of space, and their stage crosses convey relationships, power dynamics, emotional states, and character intentions. For example, one character standing above another might imply dominance.

- **Actor's Interpretation and Delivery:** How an actor's individual choices in delivering lines (intonation, volume, pace, emphasis), using facial expressions, and executing gestures breathe life into a character and critically influence the audience's perception of their motives, emotions, and overall portrayal. Different actors can bring wildly different, yet valid, interpretations to the same role.
- **Audience-Performer Relationship:** How elements of performance create a specific relationship with the audience (e.g., direct address to the audience, breaking the "fourth wall," immersive theatre) and contribute to eliciting desired responses (laughter, tears, shock, empathy, intellectual reflection).
- **Connecting Dramatic Works to their Socio-Historical Contexts: Plays as Cultural Artifacts:** Plays are never created in a vacuum; they are products of their time, inherently reflecting, responding to, and often challenging the societies in which they originate. Understanding this context is crucial for a deeper, more nuanced interpretation.
  - **The Playwright's Era:** How the prevailing social norms (e.g., gender roles, class structures), political climate (e.g., monarchy, democracy, censorship), dominant philosophical ideas (e.g., existentialism, rationalism), religious beliefs, and scientific/technological advancements of the playwright's time influenced the play's themes, character types, dramatic conflicts, and even its structure. For example, considering Shakespeare's explorations of power and morality in the context of Elizabethan England, or the Theatre of the Absurd's response to the disillusionment following World War II.
  - **The Original Audience and Their Expectations:** What were the values, concerns, prejudices, and entertainment expectations of the play's first audiences? How might their understanding or reaction to specific characters, situations, or themes differ significantly from a modern audience's perspective? For instance, the reception of certain gender roles would have evolved dramatically over centuries.
  - **Cultural and Theatrical Traditions:** Understanding the specific conventions, rituals, and values of the theatrical tradition from which the play emerges (e.g., the use of choruses and masks in Ancient Greek tragedy, the formalized movements of Japanese Noh theatre, the realism of Stanislavski-inspired modern drama).
  - **Historical Performance Practices:** How plays were originally staged and performed (e.g., the open-air, standing-room-only environment of Shakespeare's Globe Theatre; the highly formal, proscenium arch stages of the Restoration era). This can illuminate aspects of the script, such as why certain lines are repeated or why characters frequently address the audience.
  - **Adaptations and Modern Reinterpretations:** Analyzing how contemporary directors and theatre companies choose to reinterpret classic plays to make them relevant and resonant for modern audiences. This often involves placing them in new settings, updating the language, or emphasizing different thematic elements. This process itself highlights the enduring power and

adaptability of great dramatic texts, demonstrating their capacity to speak across generations.

- **Exploring Different Interpretations of a Play: The Multifaceted Nature of Dramatic Meaning:** Due to the inherent interplay between the fixed script and the variable elements of performance, coupled with evolving socio-historical perspectives, plays inherently lend themselves to multiple valid and compelling interpretations.
  - **The Director's Vision:** A director's unique artistic vision for a play (e.g., emphasizing a particular political message, focusing on a deep psychological study, highlighting comedic elements, or exploring a specific aesthetic) will shape every aspect of a production, leading to vastly different audience experiences of the same script.
  - **Critical Lenses:** Understanding how different academic or critical approaches (e.g., a feminist reading might highlight gender roles and power imbalances; a Marxist reading might focus on class struggle and economic power; a psychoanalytical reading might explore characters' subconscious motivations) can illuminate distinct, sometimes overlooked, aspects of a play.
  - **Audience Perspective:** Recognizing that each individual audience member brings their unique life experiences, cultural background, beliefs, and emotions to a performance. This inherent subjectivity means that different audience members will perceive, interpret, and react to the same play in subtly or profoundly different ways. The play's meaning is, in part, co-created by its audience.

#### Activities:

- **"Director's Interpretive Concept":** Students are given a single significant scene from a play studied in the unit (or a carefully selected short scene from another play). They must develop a "Director's Interpretive Concept" for this scene. This involves:
  1. Stating their central interpretation or the key message/emotion they want to convey.
  2. Detailing specific choices for **set design** (e.g., minimalist, realistic, symbolic), **props** (key items and their use), **costumes** (style, color, historical accuracy), **lighting** (color, intensity, direction), **sound** (music, effects), and **blocking/movement** (key stage positions, significant gestures, character interactions).
  3. Crucially, explaining *how* each of these specific choices directly contributes to and enhances their chosen interpretive concept for the scene.
- **"Contextualization Spotlight":** For a chosen play, students will select a significant thematic moment, character's struggle, or key conflict. They will then research and explain how a specific aspect of its original socio-historical context (e.g., a major historical event, a prevailing philosophical idea, a significant social reform movement, a specific cultural tradition) sheds light on and deepens the understanding of that chosen moment, character, or conflict in the play. They will present their findings.
- **"Comparing Interpretations Reflection":** Students will be provided with links to two different filmed performances (or detailed descriptions/reviews of performances) of the *same* pivotal scene from a play. They will write a critical reflection that:



1. Compares and contrasts the **directorial choices** (e.g., emphasis, pacing, overall mood) in each version.
2. Analyzes the **actors' choices** (e.g., vocal delivery, body language, emotional portrayal) and how they differ.
3. Discusses how these varying choices in performance lead to different **interpretations** of characters, themes, or the scene's overall meaning and impact on the audience.

### 4.3 Creative Response: Scriptwriting and Analytical Commentary

This final, dynamic section synthesizes your accumulated analytical and interpretive skills, challenging you to not only critically dissect the mechanics of dramatic texts but also to engage actively and creatively with the form. You will explore drama's profound potential as a medium for your own artistic expression and insightful commentary on the world.

#### Topics Covered:

- **Developing a Deeper Understanding of Dramatic Form through Original Creation (Scriptwriting):** The act of writing drama deepens your appreciation for the playwright's challenges and triumphs.
  - **Fundamentals of Scene Construction:** Planning a short, self-contained dramatic scene with a clear objective for each character, a defined conflict that drives the action, and a sense of progression leading to a mini-climax or turning point within the scene.
  - **Crafting Effective and Realistic Dialogue:** Writing dialogue that sounds authentic and natural for the characters, while simultaneously serving multiple purposes: revealing character personality and motivation, advancing the plot, subtly hinting at subtext, and contributing to the scene's tone.
  - **Utilizing Meaningful Stage Directions:** Learning to use stage directions economically yet effectively to convey essential information about setting, character movement, gestures, facial expressions, and emotional delivery, without overly explaining or dictating. They should guide, not control.
  - **Developing Distinct Character Voice:** Ensuring that each character's dialogue and actions are unique and consistent with their individual personality, background, and motivations. The audience should be able to distinguish characters purely by their speech patterns and reactions.
  - **Building and Sustaining Dramatic Tension:** Understanding how to manipulate pacing, control the revelation of information, introduce complications, and orchestrate character interactions to create suspense, anticipation, and a sense of escalating conflict within a scene.
  - **Exploring Thematic Ideas through Dialogue and Action:** Consciously embedding a specific theme or idea within the scene, allowing it to emerge organically through the characters' words, actions, and the unfolding situation, rather than being overtly stated.
- **Refining Analytical Commentary Skills: Precise Deconstruction of Dramatic Extracts:** The analytical commentary requires a precise and focused examination of how a dramatic text functions at a micro-level, connecting specific textual details to broader meaning.

- **Focused Analysis of a Specific Extract:** Learning to break down a given dramatic excerpt to analyze its conventions, the nuances of character interaction, the development of specific themes or conflicts, and its inherent potential for performance in intricate detail.
- **Integrating Textual Evidence with Purpose:** Skillfully selecting the most relevant and impactful quotations from both dialogue and stage directions to serve as concrete evidence for your analytical points. Each piece of evidence must be carefully integrated into your own prose and thoroughly explained.
- **Structuring a Coherent Commentary:** Organizing your analysis logically, typically moving from a brief introduction that contextualizes the extract, through body paragraphs that each focus on a specific analytical point (e.g., characterization, a specific rhetorical device, thematic development), to a concise conclusion that synthesizes your findings and connects back to the play's larger concerns.
- **Using Precise Academic Language:** Employing appropriate and sophisticated terminology specific to dramatic analysis (e.g., dramatic irony, exposition, resolution, blocking, tableau, tragic flaw, catharsis, deus ex machina – where applicable and relevant to MYP level).
- **Connecting Micro-Analysis to Macro-Meaning:** Demonstrating how your detailed analysis of specific elements within the extract contributes to a deeper understanding of the play's overall themes, character arcs, and significance as a dramatic work. This involves stepping back from the details to see the larger picture.

#### Activities:

- **"Original Short Dramatic Scene Development":** Students will be given a choice of two or three intriguing prompts (e.g., "Two estranged siblings meet unexpectedly after many years at a family funeral," "A character receives a mysterious package that challenges their deepest beliefs," "A conversation unfolds in a waiting room that reveals unspoken societal tensions"). They will then write a short original dramatic scene (approximately 3-5 pages of script) that focuses on:
  - **Character Development:** Establishing two distinct characters with clear, contrasting personalities and objectives.
  - **Conflict:** Creating a central conflict that emerges and develops within the scene.
  - **Dialogue:** Writing authentic, engaging dialogue that conveys subtext and moves the action forward.
  - **Stage Directions:** Including concise, meaningful stage directions for blocking, gestures, and tone.
  - **Thematic Hint:** Subtly introducing or exploring a specific theme (e.g., forgiveness, prejudice, the burden of truth, societal pressure) through the characters' interactions and the scene's resolution (or lack thereof).
- **"Guided Analytical Commentary Practice":** Students will be provided with a previously unseen dramatic extract (approximately 20-30 lines). They will be guided through a step-by-step process to write an analytical commentary, focusing on:
  - Identifying the context of the extract within a hypothetical play.

- Analyzing the characterization and relationship dynamics revealed in the dialogue.
- Discussing the significance of any stage directions.
- Identifying and explaining a key thematic idea emerging from the extract.
- Suggesting how a director might choose to stage a particular moment to enhance its impact. This activity will emphasize outlining, evidence selection, and clear explanation.
- **"Performance Re-imagining and Rationale":** Students will select a very short (1-2 minute) scene from a play they have studied or been introduced to. They will then "re-imagine" this scene for a specific contemporary context or with a particular directorial twist (e.g., setting it in a different time period, focusing on a specific emotion, or making a character deliberately ironic). They will then write a brief rationale (approx. 200-300 words) explaining:
  - Their chosen re-imagining.
  - The specific changes they would make to dialogue, costume, props, or blocking.
  - How these changes would alter the audience's interpretation of character, theme, or the scene's overall message. This activity allows for creative expression combined with analytical justification.

### Assessment:

- **Option A: Analytical Commentary on a Dramatic Extract:** Students will be presented with a substantial and complex extract (approximately 30-50 lines) from a play (either one studied in the unit or a carefully selected unseen play of similar complexity). They will write a detailed, formal analytical commentary that:
  - Provides a concise **introduction** that situates the extract within its broader dramatic context and states a clear **interpretive thesis** regarding its significance.
  - Demonstrates sophisticated **analysis of dramatic conventions**, dissecting how dialogue, stage directions, and any monologues/soliloquies function to create meaning, reveal character, and advance the plot.
  - Offers insightful **interpretation of characterization**, exploring motivations, emotional states, and the dynamics of relationships evident within the extract.
  - Thoroughly examines how **key themes and conflicts** are presented, developed, or underscored in this specific section of the play.
  - Considers the crucial **impact of performance and staging** choices, discussing how elements like blocking, lighting, sound, or actor's delivery might shape the audience's understanding of the extract's meaning and emotional resonance.
  - Integrates **precise and relevant textual evidence** (direct quotations from both dialogue and stage directions) seamlessly and effectively to support every analytical point, followed by thorough explanation of *how* the evidence supports the claim.
  - Maintains a **clear, logical organization** throughout the commentary, using effective paragraphing and transitions.
  - Employs **precise, academic vocabulary** specific to dramatic analysis and demonstrates a **high level of accuracy in language use** (grammar, syntax,

spelling, punctuation), consistently aligning with IB MYP Language and Literature assessment criteria (Criterion A: Analyzing, Criterion B: Organizing, Criterion D: Using Language).

- **Option B: Creative Writing Piece in Dramatic Form with Reflective Rationale:**

Students will choose one of two distinct creative prompts:

- **"The Unspoken Truths":** Write a short, original dramatic scene (approximately 3-6 pages of script) between two or three characters that explores a significant human conflict or dilemma where the *true* issues are largely conveyed through **subtext, stage directions, and non-verbal communication**, rather than direct confrontation. The scene should aim to reveal deep character motivations or a profound thematic idea without explicit articulation.
- **"A Timeless Conflict Reimagined":** Select a central conflict or key character dynamic from a major play studied in this unit. Rewrite a short original dramatic scene (approximately 3-6 pages of script) that takes this conflict/dynamic and places it in a **completely different contemporary setting** (e.g., a modern office, a digital chatroom, a dystopian future). The scene should clearly retain the essence of the original conflict/dynamic while adapting it to the new context.
- **Accompanying Reflective Rationale:** Students will write a detailed, analytical rationale (approximately 400-500 words) that justifies their creative choices, explaining:
  - Their specific **purpose** in creating the scene and the **intended audience** for its message.
  - How they intentionally used various **dramatic conventions** (dialogue, subtext, stage directions, characterization, conflict development) to achieve their artistic and thematic goals.
  - For Prompt 1, specifically discuss how they crafted meaning *without* explicit dialogue. For Prompt 2, specifically discuss how the original play's conflict/dynamic was adapted and how the new setting enhances or recontextualizes its meaning.
  - How their scene explores a specific **theme** or **global context**, and how it contributes to a broader understanding of "staging realities" or the human condition.
  - This assessment will evaluate the creative writing for its effectiveness in using dramatic conventions (aligned with MYP Criterion C: Producing Text) and the accompanying rationale for its demonstration of sophisticated analytical understanding, reflective thinking, and clear articulation (connecting to Criteria A, B, and D).