

Get Into Theatre Teacher Resource 3

What kind of things does a Costume Designer do?

Workshop Brief

This Get Into Theatre costume design workshop is specifically designed to give a taster of the ways in which Costume Designers work. It has been devised for young people who are interested in working in theatre and want to better understand the role of a Costume Designer. A more introductory and general theatre careers workshop is available [here](#).

The workshop is part discussion-based and part practical-based. It can be facilitated within the classroom or studio, or even adapted for remote learning. The tasks are structured for the teacher/practitioner to facilitate the workshop within their needs and style and it can be adapted.

Workshop Aims

- To explore a Costume Designer's thinking and planning process.
- To apply costume design skills to a known piece of theatre.
- To communicate costume design ideas in a presentation.

Student Outcomes

All will...

- Explore the thinking and planning stage of the costume design process.
- Produce design ideas to apply some costume design skills and realise their ideas.
- Be able to talk through some of their costume design ideas.

Most will...

- Understand the thinking and planning stage of the costume design process.
- Use a piece of theatre to apply basic costume design skills to realise their ideas.
- Be able to present their costume design ideas and link them to the play.

Some will...

- Understand how to use the thinking and planning stage of the costume design process.
- Use a piece of theatre to inform their ideas and apply costume design skills to realise their work.
- Be able to present their costume design ideas, link them to the play and justify their intentions behind their design choices.

Please note, you will need a projector, computer or digital device and access to the internet to access website links for this workshop. You will also need making tools like scissors, card, glue etc. and images that can be cut out from magazines or newspapers.

1) Hook

In a pair or as a whole group

a) Read the [Costume Designer Job Spec](#) and the [Costume Design Portfolio Blog](#) (click on links to access).

Discuss the question,

What skills do you think you need to perform the role of a costume designer?

b) Using the list of Costume Designer skills below, in a pair or group ask them to try and list the skills from 1 to 8 in order of what they think is important (use the [Costume Design Skills List](#) resource).

Organisation skills

An eye for detail

Ability to work in a fast-paced environment

Competent in sewing

Ability to work alone as well as with others

Create new ways of doing things

Ability to work well under pressure

Ability to communicate your ideas

Basic computer skills

2) Connect

In a pair, group or alone

a) Ask the questions:

- 1. In theatre, how can a costume help communicate a character to an audience?**
- 2. Why is it important for a Costume Designer to understand the context, time and location of a character before they begin designing costumes?**

b) Task – Think of 5 different characters from different pieces of theatre. They can be from any play or musical you know or have seen. Using the Character Costume Grid resource below, try to map out the different elements of each character's costume.

Example:

Character Name: Queen Elizabeth I Personality type: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • strong • Powerful • Bold 	Context, time, location: Medieval Queen of England, 1533-1603. Iconic red hair. Loved decadence and would use clothes to show power.	Colour, shade: All bold hot colours like red and purples. Gold also for power.
	Shape, size: Huge, round shape to show global domination and riches.	Texture: Layers. More is more – pearls, over silk, over lace.
Character Name: Puck - Fairy Personality type: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cheeky/Comical • Extravert • Agile/physical 	Context, time, location: Forest fairy, Puck is mischievous and clever. It is Shakespeare but set in no specific time. It is more about the forest or magic.	Colour, shade: Every character will wear green, but each individual fairy accompanies green with another colour. Neon orange will highlight Puck as cheeky.
	Shape, size: Floaty but angular and sharp. To show the cheekiness but airy quality.	Texture: Layers. More is more – pearls, over silk, over lace.

a) After you have completed the grid. Ask the questions:

1. What are the challenges with designing a costume within each different piece of theatre?
2. How can a Director's vision impact your costume designs?

3) Demonstrate

a) Mood board task — thinking and brainstorming task alone:

1. Choose one character you would like to focus on from the last task.
2. You need to create a mood board to capture the costumes for this character. This will help you start thinking in detail about the complete look of the character. This can be done by sketching or cutting out images and sticking them to a sheet of paper or on a computer using digital images. You can even use materials, textures and colour samples to create a feel for what the costume will look like. Remember to be

detailed and include shoes, jewellery, accessories and maybe even hair. Take a look at some examples in the Mood Board resource.

3. Use the questions (also in the Mood Board resource) to help develop your mood board. Top tip – no need for it to be neat and use labels to point out your ideas.
 - **What colour scheme captures the characters in their play? Are the colours warm, cool, dark or light? Do they change during the play?**
 - **What textures and shapes suit the characters? Decide if you will use hard, soft, round or angular shapes and styles. What lines and shapes does this mean for the design?**
 - **What materials best suit the character? Decide on using silk, cotton, denim, wool, leather etc.**
 - **What are the characters circumstances? Factor in the time, place and social situation the character is in and what this means for your designs. Does this change throughout the performance?**

Extended task – costume design portfolio task, alone:

Looking at the entire play, can you repeat task 3 for each character. Once you have made a mood board for each character, the next step could be to create a [costume design portfolio](#) (click on the link for more detail on what this is). This will give a realistic view of what all the costumes could look like and what your design intentions are. This portfolio process is used to communicate the costume design ideas to the rest of the team and ensure the costumes work with the direction of the play. The easiest way to do this is to attach your mood board designs into a sketch book or make a digital PowerPoint presentation. Remember to label and notate your ideas so they are clear and visible.

4) Consolidate

Reflection task in pairs or groups:

a) In a pair, present your mood board (or whole portfolio if you did the extended task) to each other. In each scene use the below structure to help you present your designs:

- Overview of the style, time and context of the designs
- Describe each design
- Explain the reasons behind your choices
- Links to the themes in the play
- How could you improve on your design ideas?

b) Site browsing time, ask:

Log on now to getintothetheatre.org and take the quiz. You can search 'costume design' to find experience in this area and get lots of information on costume design careers. Find out where a theatre career could take you.

Costume Design Skills List

Skill	Order No.
Organisation skills	
An eye for detail	
Ability to work in a fast-paced environment	
Competent in sewing	
Ability to work alone as well as with others	
Ability to work well under pressure	
Ability to communicate your ideas	
Basic computer skills	

You can print and cut these or use the table if you wish.

Character Costume Grid

Character Name: Personality type: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • • • 	Context, time, location:	Colour, shade:
	Shape, size:	Texture:
Character Name: Personality type: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • • • 	Context, time, location:	Colour, shade:
	Shape, size:	Texture:
Character Name: Personality type: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • • • 	Context, time, location:	Colour, shade:
	Shape, size:	Texture:

You can copy, paste and cut these the table as you wish.

Mood Board Resource

1. What colour scheme captures the characters in the play? Are the colours warm, cool, dark or light? Do they change during the play?
2. What textures and shapes suit the characters? Decide if you will use hard, soft, round or angular shapes and styles. What lines and shapes does this mean for the design?
3. What materials best suit the character? Decide on using silk, cotton, denim, wool, leather etc.
4. What are the characters circumstances? Factor in the time, place and social situation the character is in and what this means for your designs. Does this change throughout the performance?

Mood Board Examples

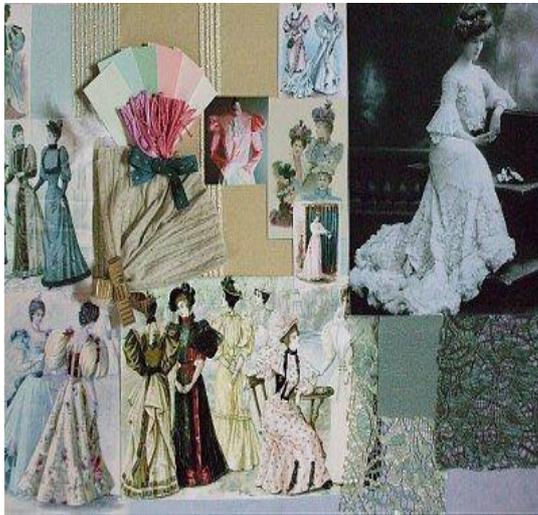


Image sources:

- <http://www.timaslamm.com/black-sails/mood-board-season-4/>
- <https://www.pinterest.co.uk/pin/40391727896056125/>
- <https://www.fashionistasketch.com/create-fashion-design-mood-board/>