



An Roinn Oideachais
agus Óige
Department of Education
and Youth

Senior Cycle Level 2 Learning Programme: Drama

Elective Module

For introduction to schools in September 2025.

Prepared by the National Council for Curriculum and Assessment (NCCA)

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Introduction

The Senior Cycle Level 2 Learning Programme (SCL2LP) consists of a range of curriculum areas, each designed on a modular basis. There are four curriculum areas at the heart of the SCL2LP: Numeracy; Communication and Literacy; Personal Care; and Electives. Drama is an Elective Module.

Drama consists of one module. It is designed for a minimum of 60 hours of teaching time/class contact time over two years.

Module title	Recommended time in hours
Drama	60

Rationale

Learning through the arts significantly contributes to the development of the whole person. Drama at Level 2 enables students to explore and express their thoughts, ideas, feelings and experiences in verbal and non-verbal ways. It enables the development of communication and social skills. Drama provides students with opportunities to explore and develop alternative ways of communicating with others, helping them to develop life skills and make sense of their world. As drama is an arts discipline it promotes an understanding of, and an appreciation of, the arts and cultures, as students are exposed to the cultural world around them.

Through informal, practical ways, using real life or imaginary situations, drama supports students' creativity, negotiation skills, turn taking skills, their ability to respond to new or unknown situations and develop empathy. Students are enabled to engage with their emotions as well as their intellect, expressing their thoughts, ideas, feelings and experiences through sound, gestures, expressions and movement in a supported setting. They can observe, make decisions, predict and solve problems. Students learn how meaning is shaped and communicated. Students develop empathy as they study character and identify ways in which elements of drama combine with ideas to create meaning.

The development of students' understanding of themselves and others, particularly their emotional intelligence, contributes to the development of key competencies in senior cycle. When this happens, all learning across senior cycle is supported and the development of important life skills that are essential to student independence are promoted. Students stand to benefit in many ways as they progress in learning pathways and as they transition to life beyond school.

Continuity and progression

The module progresses and builds upon students' learning and experiences of the Primary Drama curriculum and their junior cycle experience. Drama supports the development and progression of the junior cycle key skills of managing self, staying well, communicating, being creative, working with others, and managing information and thinking. Drama also promotes development and learning in areas such as literacy, numeracy, language, motor coordination, mobility and leisure skills.

Drama at senior cycle aims to build on students' self-expression, communicative, interpersonal and intrapersonal skills and promote greater independence, as well as providing students with a sense of achievement and confidence in their learning. Students are given opportunities to demonstrate how learning acquired here can be linked to prior learning, to other modules and curriculum areas at senior cycle, wider school activities and life outside of school, applying their learning in areas such as Literature, their area of special interest, Communication and Literacy, Numeracy, PE, Visual Art, Music and Personal Care. This helps to reinforce learning and progress students' ability to communicate, interact, be creative, to express themselves, to explore their feelings and ideas, the perspectives and worldview of others in a variety of ways. This supports students beyond school as they transition to the world of occupations, study or further services beyond school.

Teaching and learning

Drama is an umbrella term for a range of experiences and learning activities which include mime, improvisation, role play, acting sequences from plays (scripted or unscripted), films or musicals and engaging in drama games, movement exercises, joke telling, storytelling or conveying an idea.

Skills associated with drama can take time to develop. Drama may take the form of short sessions where the students can tell a joke, share a story or play games such as charades. Students can undertake longer sequences or plays which will require a longer amount of time. They will incrementally develop skills in communicating, movement and imagination. Students can also explore basic conventions of drama such as props, sound, music and stage directions, setting, character and plot, and how they contribute to a piece of drama.

Students should be encouraged to explore their favourite forms of drama and different roles. Roles can include, but are not limited to; set designer, wardrobe, hair, make up, props, director, actor and audience member. Students should be encouraged to engage in improvisational activities, where they can create spontaneous scenes based on props, prompts or scenarios. Students can practice and perform written scenes, dialogues or engage in performing in whole class exercises such as storytelling. They can also undertake these activities in smaller group settings with the aim of performing in a group or individually.

By specifically teaching students various performance techniques such as sound, gesture modulation, body language and facial expressions to convey emotions and narratives effectively, students can demonstrate and develop their verbal and non-verbal communication and movement skills. Students learn by observing, organising, recording, interpreting and predicting. They will emulate specific skills learned, such as asking a question, making a speech, initiating or making eye contact and using facial expressions, space and body movement to convey meaning. This can further be achieved in developing characters and character profiles to enhance their role.

This module provides opportunities to engage with drama creatively and imaginatively, within their school and wider community. It gives students the confidence to express themselves and their opinions, and use their own ideas within this module and across all learning. They can develop their imagination through creating, engaging with and presenting drama. This helps to reinforce all learning and progress students' ability to communicate, interact, create, express themselves, explore feelings and ideas as well as the perspectives and views of others in a variety of ways.

Module: Drama

Module descriptor

Students will experience and participate with various forms of drama as an individual and within a group. They will be supported in reflecting upon their performance, identifying different roles in drama, responding to a drama or critiquing a drama. This module supports students in linking their imagination to thoughts and feelings and supports them in expressing themselves through drama. Students learn how meaning is shaped and communicated. Students develop empathy as they study character and identify ways in which elements of drama combine with ideas to create meaning.

Students learn about

Self-expression through drama. Drama techniques and skills such as changing and moving their body through shape, size and speed.

Drama conventions and concepts as they use their sounds, words, gestures, body movement, space and facial expressions with more control and confidence which in turn helps support their self-expression.

How to structure their drama skills, using basic conventions (e.g plot, props and techniques of drama to create a piece of work.

How to develop or initiate ideas themselves or with others to plan and develop a piece of drama and how to reflect upon, evaluate and critique their role, the role of others and a drama performance.

Students should be able to

- a. communicate where they might see and hear drama in their lives and examples of drama
- b. manipulate and handle props
- c. discuss why props are necessary for drama
- d. choose appropriate props for a piece of drama
- e. practice movement within a space
- f. move their body by shape, size and speed to convey meaning
- g. identify drama conventions to be used in a piece of drama
- h. demonstrate how sound, gesture, voice, movement and space are used in drama for effect
- i. in scripted contexts, use drama techniques (voice, body, movement, space) to communicate a character or a mood
- j. distinguish between different tones and actions and how they convey emotions in drama
- k. use sounds, voice or facial expression to show their role and situation in drama
- l. participate in creating and performing a piece of drama individually and/or in a group
- m. rehearse and perform sequences or excerpts
- n. contribute and develop ideas in drama, using personal experience and imagination
- o. create and perform a short dramatic piece based on their own ideas (experienced or imagined) or other stimuli
- p. evaluate a performance they have viewed or participated in
- q. consider the role of other players or characters in the piece of drama
- r. create an improvisation based on their imagination, an event, personal experience or a prescribed scene
- s. describe how music or dance is used for effect in a piece of drama
- t. choose music or dance to enhance a piece of drama and explain choice of music or dance for drama.



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