



An Roinn Oideachais  
agus Óige  
Department of Education  
and Youth

# Senior Cycle Level 1 Learning Programme: Drama

## Elective Module

For introduction to schools in September 2025.

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

# Contents

Introduction	2
Rationale	2
Continuity and progression	3
Teaching and learning	4
Module: Drama	5

## Introduction

The Senior Cycle Level 1 Learning Programme (SCL1LP) consists of a range of curriculum areas, each designed on a modular basis. There are four curriculum areas at the heart of the SCL1LP: 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. This elective module aims to develop and support students' physical, sensory and emotional development. Drama at Level 1 supports students to engage, explore and express their thoughts, ideas, feelings and experiences in verbal and non-verbal ways. Drama, within the context of this module, focuses on the development of drama skills, play, performance and movement. It supports the development of communication and social skills as students have opportunities to explore and develop alternative ways of communicating through sound, gesture, expression and movement.

Drama can contribute to the development of students' ability to engage in representational thought. It offers an inside-out approach to symbolic understanding. Students are encouraged to observe, make decisions, predict, resolve problems and are guided in their learning of how meaning is shaped and communicated.

Through structured but enjoyable, informal, practical ways, using real life or imaginary situations, drama supports students' negotiation and turn taking skills, their preparation for everyday activities as well as their ability to respond to new or unknown situations. Drama supports the development of a sense of empathy. This helps students make sense of their world which, in turn, helps develop their sense of self which will promote their overall emotional wellbeing.

Support for students' understanding of and engagement with Drama contributes to the development of key competencies in senior cycle. By creating opportunities to build key competencies, all learning across senior cycle is supported and the development of important life skills 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 at junior cycle.

Drama supports the development and progression of the key skills such as communicating and being creative. Drama also promotes and supports development of learning in areas such as literacy, numeracy, language, motor coordination, mobility and leisure skills through a sensory learning experience.

Students are given opportunities to demonstrate how learning acquired here can be linked to prior learning, to other modules and curriculum areas, wider school activities and life outside of school, applying their learning in areas such as Communication and Literacy, Numeracy, PE, Visual Art, Music and Personal Care. This helps to progress and reinforce learning across senior cycle.

This supports students beyond school and provides students with a sense of achievement and confidence 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 movement exercise, play, group games, communication games, facial expression, gesture, mime, joke or storytelling, conveying an idea, improvisation<sup>1</sup>, role play, rehearsing, preparing for an everyday activity, social narratives, narrative creation, sensory rich activities, acting sequences, engaging with films, musicals, puppetry or theatre. Students may engage in Drama in the form of short sessions where the students can play games, tell a joke, share a story, incrementally developing skills in communicating (verbally and non-verbally), movement and imagination, or through longer sessions, such as engaging with a dramatic performance. Drama is a personal experience for them, where they are enabled to engage and communicate in a way that is meaningful for them. Engaging with props or role-play can allow students to express emotions and challenges they may not be able to articulate. This form of non-verbal expression is an important aspect of drama, where body language, facial expressions, choice of props, all convey meaning.

By specifically teaching students various performance techniques such as sound, gesture, body language and facial expressions, students will develop their ability to convey emotions, ideas or preferences. Structured drama provides opportunities for physical and creative movement and may enable students to develop motor and movement skills. Activities may be teacher modelled, led or supported to the

extent that the student needs. Students learn by moving, observing, rehearsing, organising, recording, interpreting and predicting. They may emulate specific skills learned such as initiating contact, making eye contact, using facial expressions, space and body movement to convey meaning. Sensory equipment or activities can offer tactile stimulation to enable students to interact with and engage with drama and their environment further.

Because drama can contribute to students' representational thought, students can be provided with opportunities such as witnessing a member of staff or peer become a make believe character or seeing their familiar environment and everyday items acquire new flexible meanings; a table becoming an ironing board, a cave or a bed. Students can in turn develop and organise their thoughts through being involved in the creation of drama.

Students will need to be supported in their individual, preferred way of communicating. While students should experience many modes of communication, they should be enabled to communicate in ways that are most appropriate to them, to build upon their communicative ability. Supports may include augmentative and alternative communication aids such as embossed symbols, writing devices, electronic devices, visual and object cues.

<sup>1</sup> Improvisation is the spontaneous making of drama.

# Module: Drama

## Module descriptor

Students will experience, engage with and participate in various forms of drama as an individual and/or within a group. This module will provide for the aesthetic and sensory experience of drama and help students become more aware of drama in their lives. They will be supported in identifying their thoughts and feelings. They will be guided in developing many forms of movement, communication and self-expression through drama.

### Students learn about

### Students should be able to

#### Drama skills and conventions

Identifying and engaging with drama in all its forms to enable self-expression. Students experience drama conventions as they use sound, word, gesture, body movement, space and facial expressions with more control and confidence.

- a. participate in free, structured or imaginative play activities
- b. demonstrate movement within a space
- c. engage in movement activities
- d. move their body by shape, size or speed to convey meaning
- e. choose facial expressions, body language, or voice to express emotions
- f. demonstrate the role of sound, gesture, voice, movement or space in drama
- g. choose sound, facial expression, gesture or movement to convey meaning
- h. choose sounds, voice or facial expression to convey their role and situation in drama
- i. demonstrate simple turn-taking and social exchanges

#### Drama performance

How to develop and convey ideas and feelings, building upon their communication skills. Students create drama with others and express preferences and choice within drama.

- j. explore examples of drama in their everyday lives
- k. experience drama as an audience member
- l. contribute to the preparation of drama by handling props, choosing setting or arranging stage
- m. explore how the use of space and props can help to enhance a piece of drama
- n. create social narratives for everyday activities
- o. create a simple story or scenario using props, verbal cues or prompts.
- p. participate in role-play activities and/or assuming a basic character
- q. act out simple scenarios
- r. participate in creating and performing a piece of drama individually or in a group
- s. rehearse and perform sequences or excerpts
- t. explore costumes and props for effect in drama
- u. explore music or movement for effect in a piece of drama
- v. express choice for drama
- w. communicate preferences for costumes, music, movement and props
- x. use personal experience and imagination to express ideas for drama



An Roinn Oideachais  
agus Óige  
Department of Education  
and Youth

Published August 2025.