

# Introduction

All GCSE Drama specifications require students to make historical, cultural and stylistic comparisons between texts. Finding any scripts for GCSE Drama groups can be difficult, finding suitable and accessible material from other cultures can be even more difficult. The scripts in this pack are written to provide material that comes from other cultures. They are written to be performed rather than read in class; each play lasts between 15 and 20 minutes in length; the exception is 'The Ramayana' which will run for about 40 minutes. The plays can be put together to make an evening of performance. Generally they are written for casts of six actors but casting is flexible and most of the plays can be performed by more or fewer students. This means that teachers can adapt the scripts to suit their particular needs.

Each play is an exercise in style, none are naturalistic and teachers should encourage students to experiment with style and form. The plays are deliberately written with a minimum of stage directions. This is to encourage students to be creative and inventive with the text. As well as being performed in their entirety, teachers could also use the plays as stimulus material and as the basis for devised work, ie with students using a mixture of the script and their own work.

The scripts provide opportunities for students who are taking technical GCSE options and the pack includes lighting and sound cue sheets. The pack also includes a section on using the scripts as comparison material.

Other titles also available from Pearson Publishing include:

*Ten GCSE Plays*

*Ten More GCSE Plays*

*Mini-Plays*

*Pick and Mix*

*Playing with Text*

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# The Ramayana

## Notes for students

The Ramayana is an Indian epic poem that dates back to at least the fourth century BC. It was composed in Sanskrit, an ancient Indian language, by the poet Valmiki. There are many variations of the story in all the different Indian languages. Almost everyone who lives in India will know all or part of the story. This play does not attempt to tell the whole story and many important events are missed out, but it does give an overview of the main events of the story of Rama and Sita.

## Producing the play

This play could be performed in two parts. The place to split the play is after the wedding of Rama and Sita (page 22). This play is longer than the others in the pack but could still be played by six actors; there are lots of opportunities for doubling up. It could also be performed by a larger cast.

## Style of production

The play could be produced as a conventional play with characters coming and going offstage or it could be produced with the actors onstage all the time in the manner of a group of travelling players, presenting a play in an Indian village or market place. In this style everything, including the putting on of masks, should happen in full view of the audience.

## Masks

Often, the actors are asked to wear masks, and these are provided at the end of the script (see pages 35 to 44). The masks should be photocopied to size, painted bright colours and either stuck on card or laminated. They could be held in position using elastic. Actors wearing masks should remember to keep the masks facing the audience as much as possible. Note that the 'skull' on page 37 is designed to be worn on a string around the character of Thataka's neck.

## Props and costume

A simple basic costume is needed; this could simply mean putting all the actors in black. The use of simple props, eg crowns, shawls, jewellery, etc to indicate character and status will help the audience to follow the story and enhance the visual impact of the production. At certain points in the play, some actors are required to use a bow and arrow; this can be mimed or an object such as a broom handle could be used to represent a bow.

## Sound

The play will work best if music and sound are used. There are lots of opportunities for using Indian music. The making and playing of sound cues could be a task for a student taking sound as a technical option on a GCSE course. Music and sound could also be provided by musicians playing live. You can use the technical sheet on sound to help you with this (see page 12).

4: Fisherman: I really can't believe it, that bottle couldn't contain one of your toes, never mind your whole body. You were never in there.

2: Genie: Oh yes I was.

4: Fisherman: I just don't believe you. The only way I'd ever believe you is if I saw you get back inside.

2: Genie: Then you shall see for yourself. I shall turn myself into smoke and go back inside the bottle and you shall see how great I am. Then I shall kill you. See and behold. (*Music as Actor 2 shrinks down under the sheet.*)

2: Genie: (*From under the sheet.*) Well, unbelieving fisherman, here I am in the bottle; do you believe me now?

4: Fisherman: Oh yes I believe you now. But don't think you're going to hurt me because you're not! Look, I've put the plug back in the bottle and now you can't escape. I think I'll throw you back into the sea.

2: Genie: Let me out at once!

4: Fisherman: You're staying there forever.

2: Genie: Let me out, and I will make you rich.

4: Fisherman: And how am I supposed to believe you?

2: Genie: I swear by all that is holy, I will not harm you and I will make you rich.

4: Fisherman: In that case I will let you out.

(*Music as Actor 2 comes from under the sheet and stands back on the stool.*)

2: Genie: I shall keep my word. I will not harm you and I will make you rich. Come with me.

(*Actor 4 stands in front of Actor 2; they raise their arms to represent flying.*)

Actor 6: The genie picked up the fisherman and they flew high into the air. They passed over the town, over a great mountain and down onto a flat plain. Down below them, the fisherman could see a large lake lying between four hills. And there they landed.

(*Actors 1 and 5 pick up the sheet and stretch it taut so that it is like a simple puppet screen.*)

2: Genie: Fisherman, look into the lake.

4: Fisherman: (*Actor 4 looks at the top of the puppet screen.*) Wow! It's a lake, how is that going to make me rich?

2: Genie: Look again.

(*Actors 3 and 6 take white, red, blue and yellow fish on sticks and bring them up over the top of the puppet screen. The actors are hidden; we see the four fish 'swimming' about.*)

4: Fisherman: Hang on. That's a red fish, a bright red fish. And there a blue fish. And a yellow and a white. That's amazing.

2: Genie: Now reach in and take them.

4: Fisherman: You mean, take them with my hand?

2: Genie: Trust me, I'm a genie.

- 6: Olaudah: How much do you want for that glass tumbler?
- 5: Trader: It's a very good glass tumbler.
- 6: Olaudah: I know, how much do you want for it.
- 5: Trader: Four pence.
- 6: Olaudah: I'll give you three pence.
- 5: Trader: Okay, it's a deal.
- Actor 4: From St Eustatia, Olaudah sailed to Montserrat and there he sold the tumbler at a profit.
- 6: Olaudah: Hey, this nice French tumbler, it's yours for nine pence.
- 5: Trader: I'll tell you what, I'll give you six pence for it.
- 6: Olaudah: It's a deal.
- Actor 4: The next time he went to St Eustatia he bought two more tumblers and sold them; then four tumblers then eight; all the time doubling his money. And, over the next four years, as he travelled around the West Indies, he continued to trade until one day...
- 6: Olaudah: Captain Farmer.
- 3: Farmer: Yes Gustavus?
- 6: Olaudah: I have saved the sum of 47 pounds.
- 3: Farmer: Well done, and what do you intend to buy with 47 pounds?
- 6: Olaudah: I intend to buy my freedom. How should I offer my master the money for my freedom?
- 3: Farmer: We need to make sure he is in the right mood. I'll tell you what, I am to breakfast with him tomorrow, come then and I shall be there to support you.
- Actor 4: Olaudah went in with the money in his hand, and fear in his heart. What would happen if his master would not give him his freedom?
- 2: King: Yes, Gustavus, what is it?
- 6: Olaudah: Master I wish to buy my freedom; I have 47 pounds here in my hand. If you remember, you promised me my freedom as soon as I could raise the money.
- 2: King: 47 pounds, how did you get such a sum?
- 6: Olaudah: Sir, I got it from trading as I travelled.
- 3: Farmer: It's true, I can vouch for every word.
- 2: King: Well it seems you make money faster than I do. If I really thought you would have made the money so quickly I would not have promised you your freedom.
- 3: Farmer: Come Robert, I think you must let him have his freedom. He has worked well for you all these years, why he must have made a hundred pounds a year for you. He will still work for you and will still save you money. Well, Robert, what say you?
- 2: King: I say ... that if I promised Gustavus his freedom then he shall have it.
- 3: Farmer: Well done Robert.
- 6: Olaudah: Mr King, I thank you from the bottom of my heart.

