

Sample High School Technical Theatre Learning Plan

Big Idea/ Topic KSU Masterclass: Scenic Design

Connecting Theme/Enduring Understanding:

Exploring the connection between the theatre arts including performances with language arts and literature. Creating theatrical representations of real-world observations.

Essential Questions:

- What is the role of the scenic designer?
- What is the process of scenic design?
- What is the design concept?
- Why do scenic designers use a ground-plan?
- What makes some stages more effective than others for certain stories?

Standard Alignment

CREATING

TAHSTT.CR.1 Create technical elements of theatre (e.g. sets, props, costumes, makeup, lighting, sound).

- a. Explore and utilize the elements of design and principles of composition for a theatrical context.
- b. Create basic to advanced technical elements by choosing appropriate materials, tools, and techniques.
- c. Analyze and/or develop choices in technical elements (e.g. sets, lights, costumes, sound) of informal and formal productions and theatrical texts as a part of the design process, considering mood, tone, and symbolism.
- d. Create industry-standard paperwork (e.g. budgets, cut lists, materials, cue sheets, lighting and costume plots, schedules, calendars) as it relates to completing design renderings and/or models.
- e. Conceptualize and/or generate design elements for a dramatic work (e.g. scene, one-act, full-length, musical).

PERFORMING

TAHSTT.PR.1 Produce technical elements in theatre.

- a. Identify and interpret design and construction documentation, materials, techniques, and procedures for production.
- b. Differentiate between stock and non-standard material, scenic, or technical elements related to production.
- c. Conduct initial research about design to inform further development of the production concept.
- d. Explore and/or produce an appropriate series of design documentation for a theatrical production (e.g. thumbnail sketches, swatches, first renderings, mixed media presentation).

Instructional Design

***This lesson has a flexible timeline but can be accomplished in 5-10 days.**

This lesson is intended to reach students in a virtual setting, whether plugged or unplugged. See the bottom of the lesson for a list of unplugged supplies.

FOUNDATIONAL INFORMATION:

Safety and Introduction to Technical Theatre

CONCEPTS:

- The process of scenic design
- Elements of design
- Design execution

VOCABULARY:

safety, studio flats, canvas flats, platforms, leg, travelers and borders, ground plan, thumbnails, rendering, white model, scale drawing, design concept, line, color, texture, mass, composition, realism, non-realism

LINKS:

[Theatre Spaces Sample Video](#)

[Scenic Design and the Elements of Design Video](#)

[Theatre and Film: Technical Theatre I: Unit 2: Lesson Plan 1: Elements and Principles of Design PowerPoint](#)

[Theatre and Film: Technical Theatre I: Unit 2: Lesson Plan 1: Theatre Spaces and Scenic Design PowerPoint](#)



Lesson Steps

Part 1:

The Elements of Design: Part 1: Student Journal Prompt

Have the students draw a bird's eye view of their room in their journal with all of the furniture. This really could be any room in their house or the classroom if the lesson is done at the school, but it needs to be a real place. Tell them they only have 10 minutes to make it as accurate as possible. Let them know not to include people.

10 Minute Ground Plan drawing:

Draw an accurate bird's eye view of your surroundings.

Write a brief statement describing your room. What do you like about it? What don't you like? How does it make you feel to be in the space? Why?

Write in your journal what you think you might need to convert this room to a stage set.

Part 2:

Theatre Spaces Instructions:

In a live or recorded session present the information from the example lesson video, and the PowerPoint, on a synchronous digital platform such as Google Meet ([How it Works: Google Meet](#)), or create an asynchronous video of your own.

Sample Video:

[Theatre Spaces Sample Video](#)

Watch the KSU Masterclass on Scenic Design

[Kennesaw Masterclass Scenic Design Video](#)

After presenting the information about the proscenium, the thrust stage, the area stage, or theatre in the round, and created or found spaces have the students discuss how they could recreate their room into a stage set in each of these types of space.

Unplugged Variation: Have the student read the information about theatre spaces before determining what type of theatre space you might choose to convert your room. Students can write in their journals explaining how they might convert the drawn room into each of the major types of stage.

Following the class discussion about the benefits and pitfalls of converting the room to different types of theatre spaces, you can move on to the next instructional portion of the lesson.

Have students watch the video or present the information from the example lesson script, and the Theatre Spaces PowerPoint, on a synchronous digital platform such as Google Meet ([How it Works: Google Meet](#)), or create an asynchronous video of your own. As an unplugged option, send the students a packet including the information from the video and screenshots from the PowerPoint.

Sample Video:

[Scenic Design and the Elements of Design Video](#)

Watch the KSU Masterclass on Scenic Design

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[Kennesaw Masterclass Scenic Design Video](#)

After the presentation of Scenic Design and the Elements of Design have the students draft a design concept for creating a theatrical set for their room.

Student Instructions:

Use the brief description of the room and the drawing from part one of the lesson as inspiration. Remember to include statements on tone and style, central Images or metaphors, and how you might coordinate with other designers such as the lighting design and solve practical problems. Share the design concepts as a class.

Unplugged Variation: Have the student read the information about scenic design and the elements of design. Draft the room design concept in the student journal.

Part 3:

Using the Scene Design Packet and your room design concept, Make a Key for your Ground Plan. Create a detailed ground plan of your room as a theatrical set on a stage. Brainstorm the items you will need to achieve your design concept. Fill out the budget form. Update your Room Key and Ground Plan to include any items that were added after the budget. Create a full-color rendering or 3D Model of your set design. Send pictures or videos of your scene design to the teacher along with all planning documents and a copy of your design concept. Be sure your final design addresses the central image or metaphor, location, and period, the ideas of the design concept, tone and style, effective use of the elements of design, and any safety and practicality issues actors might have using the set. This process may take several days.



Evidence of Student Success

Diagnostic: Draft of Room and journals

Formative: Teacher observation, discussion, and planning stages of the New Room Set Design Project

Summative: Scenic Design Rubric

Distance Learning Supports

Ideas for Differentiation:

Our goal is for all students to be actively engaged using the body, the voice, speaking, reflecting, and writing. Below are changes to the lesson to help achieve that goal for students who need additional support. or increased rigor. Note: Be careful using these lessons for all students.

- Consider allowing students to record their thoughts in a variety of ways: using the talk to text/dictate feature, making an audio recording of their responses, drawing pictures, circling and/or labeling on their diagram or PowerPoint printouts, etc.
- Students needing additional support the relative scale of the model or build a single element of the design rather than the entire scene room.
- For low-tech and unplugged adaptation students can work one-on-one with teachers on the phone during the planning stages of the project.
- Students working at an accelerated pace can complete rendering and a scale model of the room design. For further exploration, students could create scenic design for a play rather than their room.

Unplugged Supplies: Lesson checklist, Journal, printed PowerPoint slides, and/or copy of lecture notes, assignment handout, copy of assignment rubric.

Engaging Families

Materials included to support unplugged learners: Lesson checklist, Journal, printed PowerPoint slides, copy of lecture notes, assignment handout, copy of assignment rubric

Optional materials to support learning:

- [Victoria and Albert Museum: 19th Century Theatre](#)
- [Wikipedia: Theatre in the Round](#)
- [Wikipedia: Colosseum](#)
- [Wikipedia: Proscenium](#)
- [Wikipedia: Thrust stage](#)
- [Wikipedia: Scenic Design](#)
- [Wikipedia: Black Box Theatre](#)

Lesson Checklist

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Part 1:

- 1. Draw a rough ground plan of your room.
- 2. Describe how you feel about the space.
- 2. Record reflections about the activity in your journal.

Part 2:

- 3. Read, watch, or listen to the information about stage spaces.
- 4. Discuss how you could convert your room into a theatrical set in each of the major stages.
- 5. Read, watch, or listen to the information about scenic design.
- Create a design concept for your room.


Part 3:

- 6. Make a Key for your Ground Plan.
- 7. Create a detailed ground plan of your room as a theatrical set on a stage.
- 8. Brainstorm the items you will need to achieve your design concept.
- 9. Fill out the budget form.
- 10. Update your Room Key and Ground Plan to include any items that were added after the budget.
- 11. Create a full-color rendering or 3D Model of your set design.



Example PowerPoint Slides: Theatre Spaces


Theatre Spaces And Scenic Design



Set design model by Marcel Jambon 1895


Theatre Spaces

- Proscenium or picture-frame stage
- Thrust stage
- Arena stage (theatre in-the-round)
- Created or found spaces




1. Proscenium stage

- House is frontal to stage, often raked
- Introduced in the Italian Renaissance
- Box set with "fourth wall removed"
- Used for spectacle
- Can be remote and formal




The Thrust Stage




2. Thrust stage

- Audience on three sides
- Greek and Roman theatres were thrust
- Platform stages
- Shakespeare's Globe
- Japanese Noh stage



The Playing Area

- Locations in the stage area include:
 - Upstage
 - Downstage
 - Stage Right
 - Stage Left
 - Center Stage
- Hence a direction: "X to USR"



Stage directions for Proscenium and Thrust stages.



- Stage right and left for these stages are from the perspective of the actor facing the audience.
- The Upstage Downstage terms come from the raked stages that initially were elevated in the back away from the audience for the purpose of sightlines
- This allows the stage to be broken up into sections, US, DS, and CS, Center Stage.

UR	UC	UL
R	C	L
DR	DC	DL

APRON
Audience Area

3. Arena stages

- Audience on all sides, similar to boxing rings
- Allows for most intimacy and economy
- Drawback: difficult to work in

Stage directions for an Arena Stage

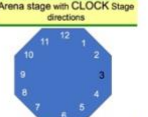

The arena stage is often set up as a clock face.

Upstage is closer to the center of the circle

Downstage is closer to the audience



Stage right and stage left are replaced with the number on the clock in relation to a collectively established 12 o'clock point.

Another way to denote the arena stage is with cardinal directions like a compass.



4. Created or found spaces

- Medieval theatre in churches
- Renaissance: innyards, tennis courts
- Today: avant-garde theatre, street theatre

Other types of spaces

- Multi-focus spaces
- sometimes with multimedia
- Experimental spaces (aka black boxes)

Example PowerPoint Slides: Scenic Design and the Elements of Design

Scene Design



Adolphe Appia 1862-1928

First rule of Design












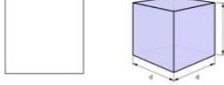

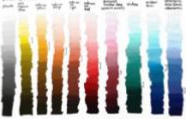










- The designers do not always build the technical aspects but they are **responsible for the safety of the performers**. This is true for all elements of design.
- **Safety and practicality** are the first elements of design. Artistic qualities, while the most noticed aspect, are secondary.




















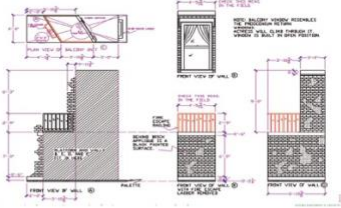


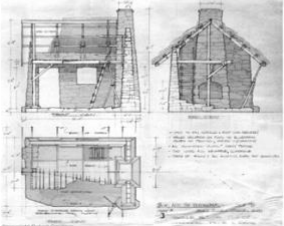


Objectives of Scene Design

- Set tone and style
- Establish locale and period
- Develop design concept
- Provide a central image or metaphor
- Coordinate with other production elements
- Solve practical problems

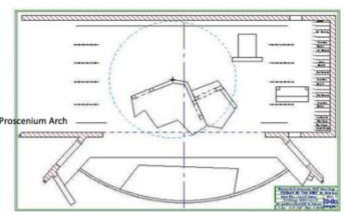



<p>Establishing tone or mood</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Scenic design often sets the tone of a piece by establishing the style of the play. • Style is the manner in which things are done. • Style can also mean a set of rules which distinguishes a distinct period or type of play  	<p>Realism VS Non realism</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Realism indicates an attempt to represent life in a in the same manner we interact with in in the real world. • Everything in the production conforms to our observations of the world around us. • In the visual art world this aesthetic is known as Imitationalism. 	<p>Non Realism</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Non realism uses symbols and conventions to get at the truth of human experience that isn't necessarily captured imitating the world we can readily observe. <p>Includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Exaggerated set pieces. • Colors that represent the mood of the play rather than the actual environment. 
<p>Design Concept</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Much like the directorial concept the designer has a central idea of how to go about the set design. • Design concept must be an amplification of the directors central concept. The design concept must be related to the central image that the director has chosen. • The Scenic designer, within that context, is the sole artist for the set. • All elements of the set must be done on purpose. Each element contributes to the whole image. 	<p>Local or period</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The location and period must not only convey the setting of the time period and geographic location of the play but also the relationship of Designers have with the location and period. • The Design Concept should be evident in conveying this information.  	<p>Elements and Principles of Design</p> <p>The building blocks of design</p> 
<p>Elements...design tools for you to use</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Line • Shape and Form • Value • Color • Space • Texture 	<p>Line...the simplest tool</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Straight • Angled • Curved • Free form • Broken • Thin to thick  	<p>Shape and Form</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Shape is a closed two dimensional area (length and height) and can be geometric or organic • Form is a shape in three dimensions adding depth  
<p>Value</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The lightness moving to white to the darkness moving to black of a hue  	<p>Color</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Made up of hue (name of the color), value (lightness and darkness), and intensity (brightness)  	<p>Space</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Refers both to the three-dimensional depth as well as the negative/ positive shapes and their relationship on the piece  
<p>Texture</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Describes the feel of a surface • Can be real or implied  	<p>Principles...how to use your tools</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pattern • Rhythm • Emphasis • Proportion • Unity • Balance 	<p>Pattern</p> <p>Repetition of the elements of design</p>  



<p>Rhythm / Movement</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How the eye travels through the piece • Repetition of elements to create a sense of rhythm or movement  	<p>Emphasis</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Creation of a focal point  	<p>Proportion</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Size relations  
<p>Unity</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How the elements fit together to create a cohesive piece  	<p>Balance</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How the elements are arranged to create visual equilibrium • Symmetrical: both sides are exactly the same • Asymmetrical: balance achieved with use of the elements but not even • Radial: balance emerges from a center point  	<p>Steps in the Design Process</p>  
<p>In the beginning</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The set designer needs to read the play..... But not just read it, but really READ it, know it inside and out, almost as well as the director knows it. • While reading the script, the designer needs to take notes of ideas, themes, symbols, anything that comes to mind. 	<p>Next--</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The initial meeting with the director is incredibly important. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The director needs to outline her vision for the play, any concepts or metaphors she finds appropriate, any pieces of art or poems that express the "mood" of the play—ANYTHING that will help the designers feel the tone of the play from the director. • The designers don't bring anything but ideas to this first meeting. 	<p>And then.....</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Designers go back and create thumbnails, sketches, roughs, etc. • These are just to get across the basic idea. I've done roughs on napkins, church programs, Mapquest directions.... You never know when inspiration will strike! • Thumbnails are shown to the director and other designers at another meeting. If everything looks ok, the director will want to see renderings and real sketches. 
<p>Renderings</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Renderings are drawings or paintings of what the finished set will look like. They are usually in color. • The most important thing renderings convey is the mood or atmosphere of the set. • Renderings are shown to the director, and if the design is approved, the designer heads off to create the rest of the design. If it is not approved, the designer heads back to the drawing board! 	<p>Drafting with notation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This drafting is just the basic set pieces. It is intended for shops only, and has very little detail for the decorative aspects of the piece. 	<p>Example of Drafting with notation</p>  
<p>Drafting with rendering aspects</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • These are primarily for shops, but the director will sometimes want to see them. • While they have notation (scale and measurements), they also have texture and paint treatments of the pieces on them. 	<p>Example of Drafting with Rendering</p>  	<p>CAD Drafting</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CAD: stands for Computer Aided Drafting. Uses a program like AutoCAD to create the drafting. • CAD enables a designer to work quickly and accurately, as well as share the drafting with others through email. 



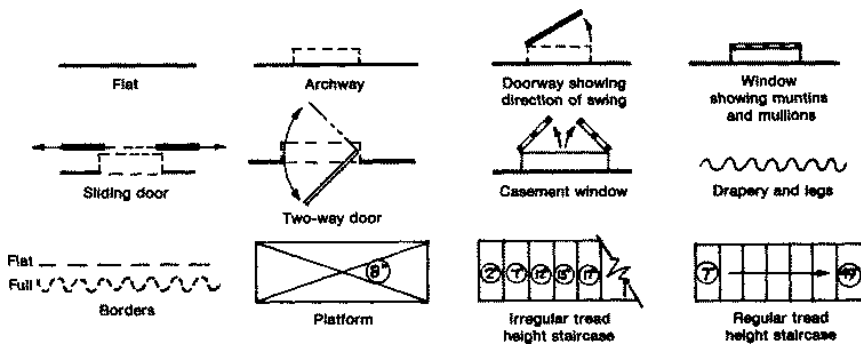
<p>Example of CAD</p>  <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Note the contrast of white lines on black background • Makes it a little easier to read 	<p>Ground Plan</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A rendering and a ground plan come at about the same time in the design process. • The ground plan shows a director the spatial relationships between the set pieces. 	 <p>Proscenium Arch</p> <p>Label Box</p> <p>Example of a Ground Plan</p>
<p>Plans and blueprints go to Technical Director</p> 	<p>The White Model!</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • After the renderings and ground plans, some designers also build models. • A white model is one that has no color or treatment on it— it is just the basic forms in the space. Models ALSO show spatial relationships of a set. 	<p>Example of a White model</p> 
<p>White Model</p> 	<p>Finished Model</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A finished model is a great tool for conveying the mood of the set design. It is incredibly detailed and takes a LONG time to create. • Finished models are often displayed in the lobby to give theatre-goers a preview of the set. 	<p>Example of Finished Model</p> 
<p>Further collaboration</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Scenic designers have help in the creation of the set. Often the Scenic Designers never touch a hammer or nail. • The technical director is in charge of using the Set crew to build and paint the set. • Other Crews exist to do detail work such as building props and other needed elements that contribute to but are not actually part of the set. • The stage manager is left in charge of the finished set. 	<p>Sources and References</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • http://www.vam.ac.uk/content/articles/0-9/19th-century-theatre/ • https://www.graphicline.com/adolphe-appia-in-depth/ • https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Theatre_in_the_round • https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Colosseum • https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Proscenium • https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Thrust_stage • https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Scenic_design#/media/File:Marcel_Jambon_-_Giuseppe_Verdi_-_Otello_Act_I_set_design_model.jpg • https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Black_box_theater 	



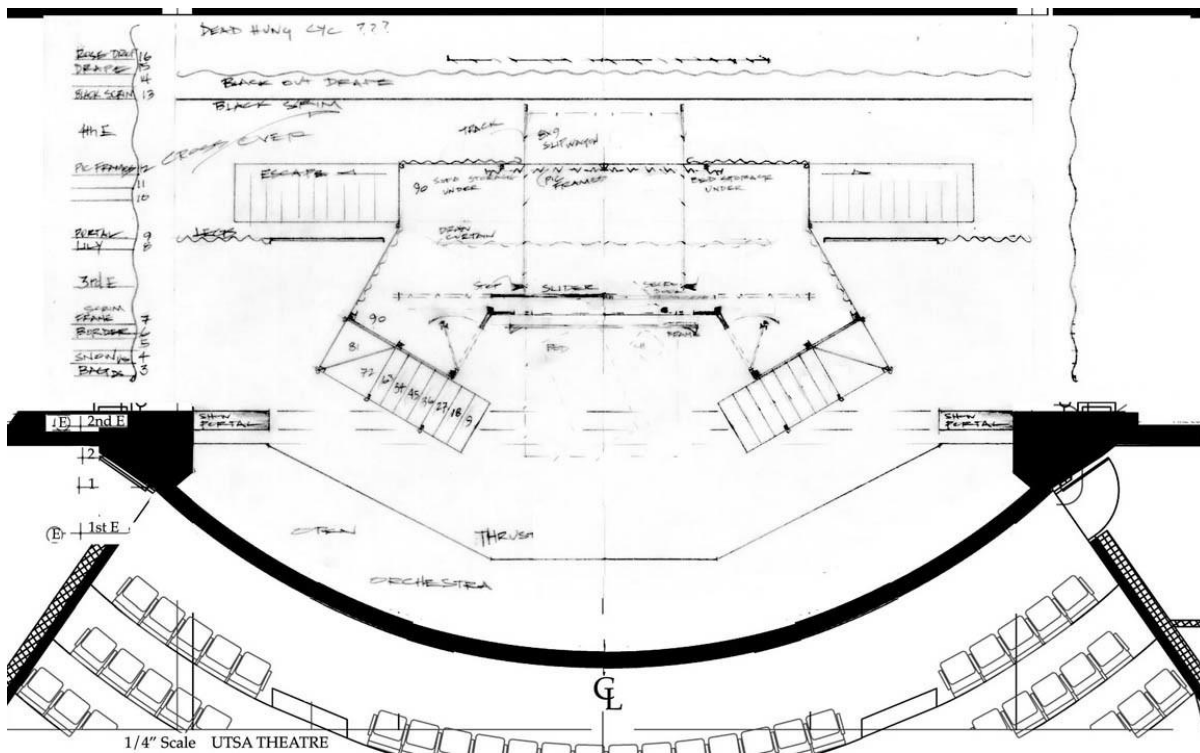
Personal Room Set Design Planning Packet

This Packet Includes:

- Set Plot/Ground Plan Examples
- Set Rendering Example
- Planning Page
- Budget Request Page
- Drafting Page
- Key Page
- Rubric



Set Plot/Ground Plan Sketch Example



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Using the example on the first page as an example, create a key for the items in the Room. Make sure to label what each symbol means.

Using the key you just created and the example on the top page, complete the following steps on the next page:

1. Sketch the perimeter of the room on your page.
2. Fill in any doors, windows, or other items that are built into the walls.
3. Begin placing the furniture you identified in the key in the Room sketch. Try to place these as accurately as possible.
4. If you realize you need to add something, put it in the key above, and then add it to your image.
5. When you are finished, you will have a set plot/ground plan for your Room!

Room Set Plot/Ground Plan

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Set Rendering Examples:

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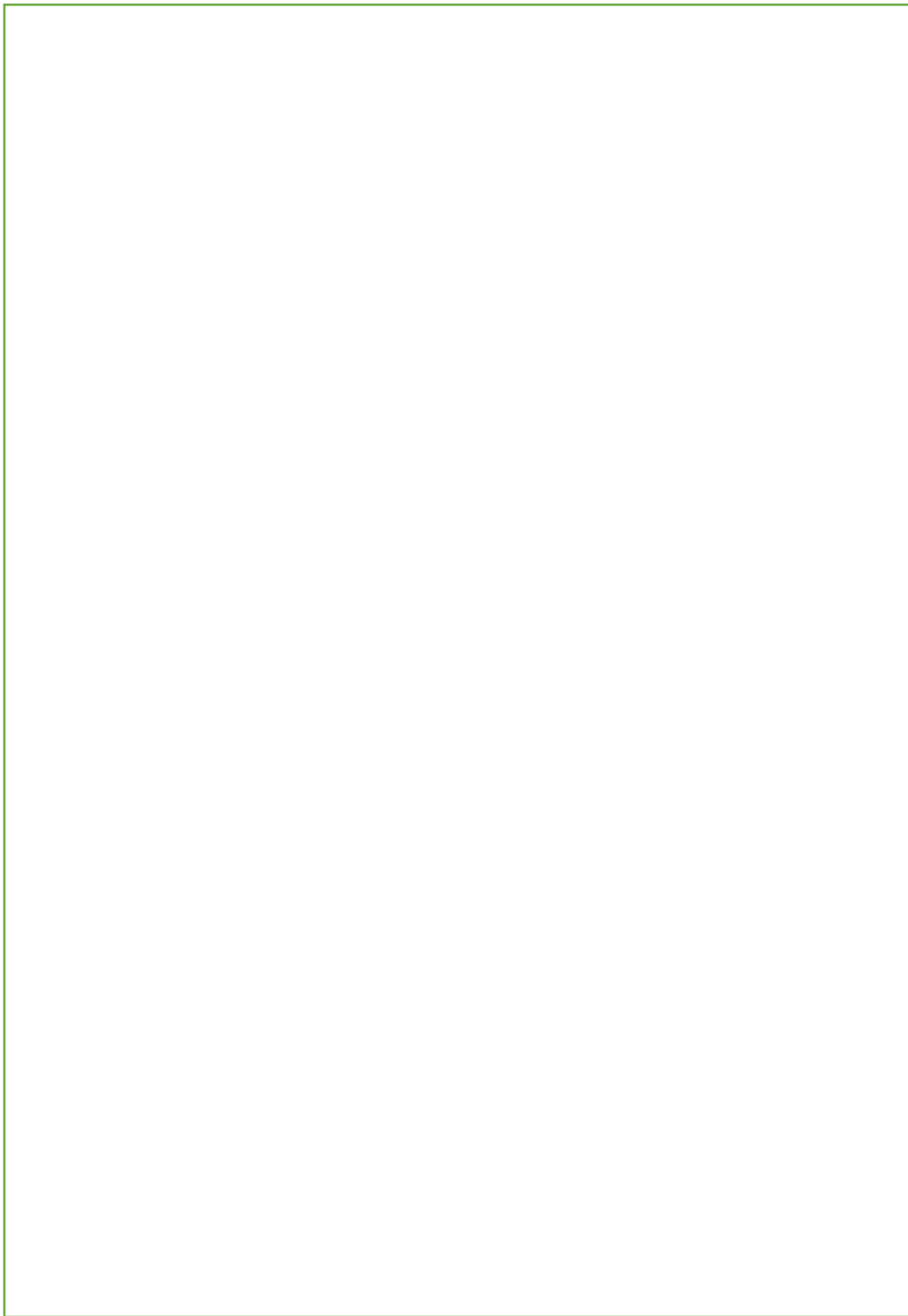
Room Set Rendering

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Brainstorm

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Consider what you would change in the Room if you had an unlimited budget. Think of how you would change furniture, items in the room, or other ideas to improve the theatre Room

Brainstorm those ideas below!

When a designer begins to plan for a new set design, they must go through a budget request process. To do this, begin researching the items you would like to change in the room and record the prices for those items below. Remember to pretend that budget is not an issue and you have all the money you want.

Item	Cost per Item	Quantity of Items	Final Cost
EXAMPLE: Blackout Curtains for Windows	\$20.00	5	\$100.00

What is the total cost of the changes you want to make?

Create an updated Room Key

Using the key you just created and the example on the top page, complete the following steps on the next page:

1. Sketch the perimeter of the Room on your page.
2. Fill in any doors, windows, or other items that are built into the walls.
3. Begin placing the furniture you identified in the key in the Room sketch. Try to place these as accurately as possible.
4. If you realize you need to add something, put it in the key above, and then add it to your image.
5. When you are finished, you will have a set plot/ground plan for your NEW theatre Room!

Create a NEW Room Set Plot/Ground Plan

Create a New Room Set Rendering

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Room Set Design Project Formative Rubric

Concept	1 point	2 Points	3 Points	4 Points
Planning	The student did not complete the planning documents before illustrating a design.	The student completed some of the planning documents but did not finish the work.	Students completed most of the planning documents but did not finish the work.	The student completed all planning documents.
Key	Students did not complete a key.	The student drew some images but did not label the images well or included other images in the final product that cannot be found in the key.	Students drew some images but some images that were not used in the key.	Student's images are complete and labeled correctly. They are easily identifiable in the final product.
Set Plot/Ground Plan	The final result was not completed or could not be deciphered.	The final result was difficult to understand but had some elements that could be identified.	The final result was mostly identifiable, but some elements were not clear.	The final result was clear, and the elements were easy to identify.
Set Rendering	The set rendering was not done with care and the image was not easy to identify.	The set rendering was complete, but the student did not incorporate color or textures to help identify the setting.	The set rendering was complete, but the student implemented only color OR texture to help identify the setting.	The set rendering was complete and contained plentiful color and texture to help identify the setting.

Resource Page:

Ground Plan Key:

<https://www.dolphin.upenn.edu/pacshop/graphics.html>

Ground Plan and Rendering for *Secret Garden*:

<http://faculty.trinity.edu/sjilliam/SLG/SECRETGARDEN/homepage.html>

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Scenic Design Rubric

COURSE: Technical Theatre UNIT: 2 LESSON: Scenic Design				
SUMMATIVE SCENIC DESIGN ASSESSMENT RUBRIC				
Criteria	Advanced/Level 4	Proficient/Level 3	Emerging/Level 2	Developing/Level 1
Central Image or Metaphor TAHSTT.CR.1 (a,c,d,e) TAHSTT.PR.1 (d,e) TAHSTT.RE.1 (a) TAHSTT.CN.1 (e)	The design provides a clear image or metaphor for the audience to understand the world of the play. The metaphor or image continues to enhance the audience's experience throughout the performance.	The design provides a clear image or metaphor for the audience to understand the world of the play.	The design provides an image or metaphor for the play, but it is unclear how it enhances the audience's experience of the performance.	The design does not provide an image or metaphor.
Locale and Period. Location and period TAHSTT.CR.1 (a,c,d,e) TAHSTT.PR.1 (d,e) TAHSTT.RE.1 (a) TAHSTT.CN.1 (e)	The location and period are clearly defined and enhance the audience's ability to contextualize the performance.	The location and period identifiable and clearly make sense with the theatrical text.	The location and period are clearly defined but are not recognizable or not clearly tied to the text of the play or the design concept.	The location and period not evident.
Design Concept A clear understandable vision of the scenic design closely tied to and amplifying the initial	The design concept is exceedingly clear in the execution of the design. The concept clearly enhances the theatrical text.	The concept is generally identifiable and often enhances the audience's experience of the performance of the text.	The design concept is clear but does not clearly enhance the audience's experience of the theatrical text or works in opposition to the text.	The design concept is not evident.



<p>description of how the room feels. TAHSTT.CR.1 (a,c,d,e) TAHSTT.PR.1 (d,e) TAHSTT.RE.1 (a) TAHSTT.CN.1 (e)</p>				
<p>Tone and Style Use of line, color, texture, mass, and composition to convey the tone and style TAHSTT.CR.1 (a,c,d,e) TAHSTT.PR.1 (d,e) TAHSTT.RE.1 (a) TAHSTT.CN.1 (e)</p>	<p>All elements of scenic design work together to create a specific and clearly defined mood, tone, and style which enhances the theatrical text and aids performance.</p>	<p>The elements of scenic design work together to create general moods, tones, and styles appropriate for the theatrical text.</p>	<p>The elements of scenic design occasionally work together to create general moods, tones, and styles that are generally appropriate for the theatrical text.</p>	<p>The elements of scenic design do not work together to create general moods, tones, and styles that are appropriate for the theatrical text. The tone and style are either not evident or contrast the text in a manner not indicated by the design concept.</p>
<p>Practicality Safety, functional use for actors, directors, and other designers TAHSTT.CR.1 (a,c,d,e) TAHSTT.PR.1 (d,e) TAHSTT.RE.1 (a) TAHSTT.CN.1 (e)</p>	<p>The design is safe for actor use. The design is exceedingly helpful to the director in staging the play providing multiple levels and planes for staging. The scenic design specifically addresses considering other areas of the technical design.</p>	<p>The design is safe for actor use. The design is helpful to the director in staging the play for the audience. The scenic design takes some of the other areas of the technical design into consideration.</p>	<p>The design is safe for actor use. The design is somewhat helpful to the director in providing some levels and planes. The scenic design mostly considers other areas of the technical design.</p>	<p>The design is not safe for actor use. The design does not provide the director with many options for staging. The scenic design hinders other areas of technical design.</p>



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