

Costume Production Process Guide

Reminder: As you complete the steps listed in this guide, record all of your work in a google document (you can make a copy of this document to write in if that is helpful for you). On the final dress rehearsal, you will turn in your notebook for your final grade.

Step 1: Script Analysis

- Read the script and answer the following prompts in your notebook/google doc using the following terms:

Stasis and Intrusion/Inciting Incident- Stasis is the status quo that has existed in the play's world up through its beginning. Intrusion is something that upsets the status quo, causing or releasing forces that compose the play's conflict and progress. When the forces no longer conflict, a new stasis is achieved and the play ends. **Example:** the stasis of Macbeth as the Thane of Glames and a brave warrior at the beginning of the play. The intrusion would be the prophecy from the Witches. If Macbeth had not heard the prophecy, would the action of the play have occurred?

- What is the stasis and intrusion/inciting incident of the play?

Beginning Exposition- In order to understand the story, what information do we need to know about the world of the play? This is the beginning exposition. **Example:** the beginning exposition of *Macbeth* could include: We are in Scotland and Duncan is the king. Duncan has two sons, Malcolm and Donalbain. Scotland is at war and Macbeth is a brave soldier. Banquo is Macbeth's friend and also a brave soldier. Etc.

- What is the beginning exposition of the play?

Conflict- A character's want is opposed by some hindrance, by some obstacle. To understand a line of dialogue, you must understand what the speaker wants and how the speaker intends the words spoken to overcome the obstacle. Dramatic conflict– want versus obstacle– can be four types. Some or all appear in every play. **Example:** From the protagonist's point of view, the types of dramatic conflict are:

1. *Me against myself:* Macbeth's inner conflict about betraying Duncan's trust and murdering him.
2. *Me against other individuals:* Macbeth vs. Macduff (a literal fight to the death).
3. *Me against society:* Macbeth becomes a cruel king and his former allies align against him.
4. *Me against fate, or the universe, or natural forces, or God or the gods:* Macbeth vs. the prophecy. Is he destined to be what the Witches promise, or is that his own doing?

- What types of conflict are found in this play? Cite specific examples from the text.

Crisis- The crisis is the event that leads the characters into the climax of the play. **Example:** in *Macbeth*, this could be the murder of Macduff's family, because it is the final straw that motivates Macduff to personally murder Macbeth. It could also be the visual of Birnam wood

coming to Dunsinane, because it is Macbeth's first indication that the conditions of his downfall are beginning to be met.

- What is the crisis in this play? Why?

Climax- The emotional height of the play. **Example:** The climax in *Macbeth* is Macbeth and Macduff's fight, and the realization that Macduff was born from a caesarian section so he is technically "not of woman born".

- What is the climax of this play? Why?

Resolution- What is the new stasis at the end of the play? **Example:** At the end of *Macbeth*, Malcolm becomes king, and it is indicated that he will be a good ruler.

- What is the new stasis/resolution of the play?

Forwards- Dramatic tension requires that the audience desires to find out what is coming up. The greater the desire, the greater the audience's involvement. Playwrights include forwards, also known as foreshadowing, to increase that anticipation. This is very heavy-handed in *Macbeth* with the prophecy. Think of it as hints of what is yet to come.

- Give three examples of forwards the playwright uses to keep the audience engaged in what is yet to come.

Theme- A theme is an abstract concept made concrete by a play's action. Theme is not meaning; it is a topic of the play. Theme is a result and emerges from the script, so examine a play for theme after you are already familiar with the play's foundation elements. **Example:** Some themes in *Macbeth* are ambition, fate, guilt, and power.

- What are some themes in this play? Why?

Step 2: Research

Watch this video: [Working in the Theatre: Costumes](#), and answer the following questions in your notebook/google document (if you have trouble, ask your teacher for assistance).

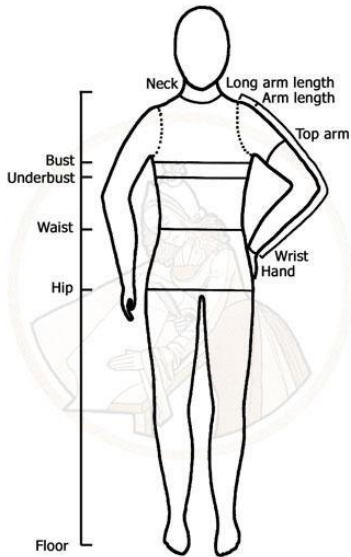
1. Why is effective costuming important to a good production?
2. What is costume color coding?
3. What is a costume Parade?
4. What is the most important consideration in a period costume?
5. What is the key to believable period costuming?
6. How do you determine whether to borrow, rent, or make costumes?
7. How do you measure for costumes?

Step 3: Measuring

- Get a measuring tape. Pull aside each cast member one at a time and record their measurements according to the guide below.
- Pull the actors into a quiet space. Actors may have to take off some bulkier layers. Remember that actors may be dealing with body dysmorphia or other anxieties regarding their measurements or appearance. Be respectful and do not react or make comments

about actors' bodies while measuring them. Ask for consent and explain where you will be touching them to measure before you do so to avoid catching them off-guard or making them uncomfortable.

- Formatting tip- Make a google slide presentation and give each actor their own slide with their name, character, and measurements listed. If the actor is playing more than one character, list all characters on one slide to make it easier to keep track of.



Name of person you are measuring _____	
Neck _____	Long Arm Length _____
Arm Length _____	Top Arm _____
Bust _____	Under Bust _____
Waist _____	Hip _____
Wrist _____	Hand _____
Shoulder to Floor _____	

Step 4: Review the Script

- With your team of designers, re-read through the script and make a costume plot.

Act/Scene #	Character, Actor	Costume Pieces Needed	Plan to Acquire
Act I, Scene v	Macbeth	Battle outfit/armor. White long-sleeved shirt, brown pants.	Armor- in stock. White shirt- make. Brown pants- thrift.
	Lady Macbeth	Maroon dress, gold necklace.	Dress- in stock. Necklace- chain in stock, we will make the statement piece to attach.
Act I, Scene vi

- Decide who will be responsible for sourcing each characters' costume pieces. Remember that you are all responsible for creating a cohesive aesthetic and vision. Communicate with one another and the throughout the process.

- Talk to the director/s and actors about the characters. Think of what they would wear based on their position, attitude, and who they are surrounded by.
- Insert your completed costume plot into your notebook/google document.

Step 5: Explore the costume stock.

- Get familiar with the costumes we already have in stock and keep an eye out for pieces you might need based on your costume plot. Pull any costumes you think may fit and organize them for each character and make sure to label the rack/bin for your class period and show so no one else takes them. Keep in mind the measurements you took of the actors while pulling items.
- If multiple things catch your eye for one character, pull them all. Costumes might have holes or stains, and if you grab multiple things, it reduces the amount of times you have to go back to find something else.

Step 6: Research and design!

- Return to your google slideshow with character names, actor names, and measurements.
- Add slides at the beginning of the presentation to answer the following questions with pictures/drawing examples:
 - What were fashion trends during the time period of this play?
 - What color palette and general aesthetic inspires your designs?
 - What accessories were common during the time period?
 - What are some fashion faux pas from the time period?
 - How can you include easter eggs about the character (maybe a character is mourning for someone who died and has a keepsake or clothing item of the deceased person. Small elements like that can add dimension to the story and give the actor a deeper connection to the character.)
- Using your research and cross-referencing with your Costume Plot and time exploring the stock, collaborate with one another to draw designs and source inspiration photos from the internet to insert onto the slideshow. You should have a photo or drawing for each costume piece in the show.
 - This video explains how historically accurate costuming can impact a piece of media (in a fun way!) and also shows how easy it can be to make period pieces from items you can find around the theater or at home: [Analysis of Little Women Costuming](#).
- Once your slideshow is completed with the following information, send the presentation to the director. They may give you feedback & ask for a revision.
 - Time Period Research Questions.
 - General Aesthetic Questions.
 - Character Costume Design Slides-
 - Character
 - Actor
 - Measurements (make a copy of the presentation without measurements for your design presentation).
 - Costume requirements (written description).
 - Costume design (drawings/photos).

Step 6: Execution

- After receiving approval from the director, you can start making and sourcing costumes from stock & pulling actors from rehearsal for fittings.
- During fittings, make notes of changes you may need to make to costumes & mark alterations with safety pins (ex. If you have to hem a skirt, mark the desired length with a safety pin).
- Remember that there will be some pieces you will need to collaborate with the Props team on (weapons holders, accessories, jewelry, hats, canes, etc.). Keep them in the loop.

Sewing Tips:

- Both Ms. Patt and Ms. Carter know how to use a sewing machine and make alterations, so feel free to check if you need support. Here are some helpful instructional resources:
 - How a sewing machine works: [Sewing Machine Science](#).
 - Basics of using a sewing machine: [How to use a sewing machine](#).
 - Tips for beginner sewers: [10 Sewing Mistakes Beginners Make](#).

Step 7: Costume Parade

- Pull the costumes you have selected and made for the actors. Create a system of what order people will try costumes on. Help the actors get into costume. The actors will create a parade across the stage. Work with the director/s to determine if anything needs to be changed or adjusted. Simple adjustments may be made immediately. Otherwise, take notes and fix or change the costume before the next class period. At the end of class, help the actors out of their costumes and be sure to clean up and organize the costumes.

Step 8: Tech Rehearsals

- At the beginning of class, get the costumes out and ready for the actors. Help them get dressed. Make sure that they do not leave anything in the restrooms or the dressing room. When they are ready, either have a seat in the audience or in the wing if you are assigned to a quick change. At the end of the performance, assist the actors in getting undressed. Make sure all of the costumes are put back and labeled for your class.

Etiquette Notes-

- Respect your fellow technicians and actors. Tech is a stressful time. If something isn't working, approach the conversation with respect. Remember that everyone's job is to help the production be its best.
 - You may give notes to actors, but only regarding costuming. Examples of potential notes you may give:
 - "Actors, please remember to take hair ties and apple watches off of your wrists before going onstage".
 - "Folks in dresses, reminder that in this time period, it would have been scandalous to see your knees, so try to only slightly lift your dress when you run offstage."
 - "_____, it looks like your zipper may be broken. Come and find me or another costumer after notes so we can fix it for you."

- “Everyone left the dressing rooms a mess today. We all need to do a better job of keeping it organized so everyone can find their costumes.”
- You may be needed backstage to help with quick-changes. Make sure that any costumes used in quick changes are pre-set where they need to be and stay calm while helping an actor change.

Step 9: Show time!

Your responsibilities are the same as tech, just now with an audience! Stay alert during the show for potential costume malfunctions. If someone’s pants rip, a zipper breaks, or a costume is lost, be ready to problem solve!

Turn in your notebook/google document with your work from the semester. It should include your script analysis work, your responses to questions, a link to your slideshow, and your self-reflection.

Step 10: Strike/Clean-Up

Everyone is responsible for helping technicians clean up or “strike” the show when it is complete.