

Knowledge Organiser – Theatre Lighting

Different Stage Lights

Spotlight – a focused beam of light. Provides precise focus.

Parcans – Used to provide a wash of colour on a stage. Can be mixed.

Fresnels – softer edges than a spotlight but still provide a relatively focused pool of light.

Lighting controls what an audience sees and how they see it.

Lighting provides a focus and can change the mood and atmosphere.

Lighting can be used to communicate the time of day and location.

The use of shadow, darkness and blackouts can also be used for effect.

Things for a lighting designer to consider:

- Time of day
- Location
- Weather
- Atmosphere
- Focus/significant moments
- Set e.g. lamppost

Key Terms:

House Lights – lighting in the auditorium and makes the audience visible.

Lighting Rig – the metal structures that the lights are attached to.

Gels – coloured pieces of plastic used to change the colour of lights.

Cues – instructions indicating when a lighting change should happen.

Transitions – moving from one light state to another such as a fade, cross-fade or a sudden blackout.

Wash – a covering of light across the stage.

Dramatic Effect

Intensity – this refers to brightness. For example, brighter lights make things appear harsher, more dramatic and intense.

Colour – symbolism is important here. Colour can be used to show time of day and location. Colour influences mood.

Direction – different areas of the stage can be lit in different ways. This can create effect as well as shadow. Most commonly, scenes are lit from the front. Uplighting can create a rather spooky atmosphere.

Manipulating Light

Gobos – thin metal sheets with patterns cut out. These create pattern on the stage, performers or backdrop such as prison bars, leaves, waves and stars.

Barndoors – hinged flaps attached to the front of lights to provide a cut off of light on the stage.

Strobes – flashes of very bright light at a fast pace. Strobes are used to manipulate the image of movement on stage.

On stage sources – use of hand held torches, candles, lanterns

Shadow and silhouette – can be created by manipulating the lighting