GLOSSARY for
National Core Arts: Theatre STANDARDS

Acting techniques
Specific skills, pedagogies, theories, or methods of investigation used by an actor to prepare for a theatre performance

Believability
Theatrical choices thought to be “true” based upon an understanding of any given fictional moment, interpretation of text, and/or human interaction

Character traits
Observable embodied actions that illustrate a character’s personality, values, beliefs, and history

Conflict
The problem, confrontation, or struggle in a scene or play; conflict may include a character against him or herself, a character in opposition to another character, a character against nature, a character against society, or a character against the supernatural

Creative drama
A process-centered, non-exhibitional approach to drama intended to benefit the performers themselves; story drama and process drama are two types of creative drama
**Creative processes**
The application of production and technical elements (see the definitions) to a theatrical production

**Devised drama**
Creation of an original performance piece by an ensemble

**Dialogue**
A conversation between two or more characters

**Dramatic play**
Make-believe where children naturally assign and accept roles, then act them out

**Focus**
Commitment by a participant (an actor, technician, director) to remain in the scope of the project or to stay within the world of the play

**Genre**
Relating to a specific kind or type of drama and theatre such as a tragedy, drama, melodrama, comedy, or farce

**Gesture**
An expressive and planned movement of the body or limbs

**Given circumstances**
The underlying actions and events that have happened before the play, story, or devised piece begins

**Guided drama experience**
A leader guides participants during a process drama, story drama, or creative drama experience (see the definitions) through side-coaching, narration, and prompting; the action of the drama does not stop in order for the leader to support the students; facilitator may guide participants in or out of role
**Improvise**
The spontaneous, intuitive, and immediate response of movement and speech; a distinction can be made between spontaneous improvisation, which is immediate and unrehearsed, and prepared improvisation, which is shaped and rehearsed.

**Imaginary elsewhere**
An imagined location which can be historical, fictional, or realistic.

**Imagined worlds**
An imaginary world created collectively by participants in a drama experience.

**Inner thoughts**
The underlying and implied meaning or intentions in the character’s dialogue or actions (also known as subtext).

**Motivation**
Reasons why a character behaves or reacts in a particular way in a scene or play.

**Non-representational materials**
Objects which can be transformed into specific props through the imagination.

**Objective**
A goal or particular need or want that a character has within a scene or play.

**Plot**
A narrative as revealed through the action and/or dialogue; traditionally, a plot has the elements of exposition, inciting incident, conflict, rising action, climax, and resolution or falling action.

**Process drama**
A non-linear, episodic, process-centered, improvised form of drama in which teacher and students are in-role exploring and reflecting on an issue, story, theme, problem, or idea in a non-exhibitional format that is intended to benefit the performers themselves.
**Production elements**
Technical elements selected for use in a specific production, including sets, sound, costumes, lights, music, props, and make-up, as well as elements specific to the production such as puppets, masks, special effects, or other story telling devices/concepts

**Scripted drama**
A piece of writing for the theatre that includes a description of the setting, a list of the characters, the dialogue, and the action of the characters

**Script analysis**
The study of a script to understand the underlying structure and themes of the play’s story, and the motives and objectives of its characters

**Staging**
Patterns of movement in a scene or play including, for example, stage crosses, entrances, and exits which help to convey meaning

**Story drama**
Episodic, process-centered, improvised form of drama that uses existing literature as a starting point for drama exploration, the drama explores moments (before, after, or within) that may not exist in the story and is presented in a non-exhibitional format that is intended to benefit the performers themselves

**Story elements**
Characters, setting, dialogue, and plot that create a story

**Style**
The use of a specific set of characteristic or distinctive techniques such as realism, expressionism, epic theatre, documentary theatre, or classical drama; style may also refer to the unique artistic choices of a particular playwright, director, or actor

**Tactic**
The means by which a character seeks to achieve their objective, the selection of tactics are based on the obstacle presented; in acting and directing a tactic refers to a specific action verb
**Technical elements**
The elements of spectacle such as sets, sound, costume, lights, music, props, and makeup used to create a unified and meaningful design for a theatrical production

**Theatrical conventions**
Practices and/or devices that the audience and actors accept in the world of the play even when it is not realistic, such as a narrator, flashback, or an aside

**Theme**
The aspect of the human condition under investigation in the drama; it can be drawn from unifying topics or questions across content areas

**Visual composition**
The arrangement of actors and scenery on a stage for a theatrical production, sometimes known as mise en scène