

Act 3 Example response

As a designer I would like to enhance this extract for the audience using set. In particular I would like to highlight the difference in status between the characters using space and levels with the set. The centre of the stage space would be the lowest area in terms of height. This is where Proctor and Mary Warren will be standing close to each other, depicting their low status. Hale will also use this space but will move around the area more during as the extract progresses as he gets more and more frantic. This level will be in contrast to a wooden platform upstage centre where Danforth will be stood at the highest point of 1.5 metres. The platform will be made of solid wood and have a bannister for health and safety. Behind the platform will be a projection of a cross. The cross will be white to symbolise Elizabeth's innocence but as she leaves it starts to fade. On the stage direction 'Abigail, with a weird, wild, chilling cry, screams up to the ceiling' the projection will increase in size and change colour to a deep red casting Danforth into an eerie silhouette. This unnatural atmosphere will create tension for the audience deepening the feeling of disquiet.

On stage left there will be an additional platform 1 metre high. Here Hathorne, Parris and the other court officials will stand. The platform will also be made of solid wood with a bannister for health and safety. On the final platform on stage right Abigail and the rest of the girls will stand. Their solid wood platform will stand at 500 centimetres high. Each of the platforms will have steps leading up to them. On the line 'By my oath to Heaven, I believe him now, and I pray you call his wife before we...' Hale will approach the steps to Danforth's platform up stage centre and climb the first two in his attempt to persuade Danforth. However when Danforth says 'this man has lied' Hale steps back down in defeat. I would discuss with the director him then making his way towards the platform on stage left to plead with the other court officials on the line 'I believe him! (Pointing at Abigail) This girl has always struck me false! She has—'

Later in the extract on the 'You're the Devil's man! Mary Warren would move away from the centre stage space and climb up the steps on the platform stage right, joining the girls and cutting her ties with Proctor.

This stage design would give the audience a clear vision of the status relationship between the character in an integral moment within the play. In addition to this it would highlight the pressure placed on Proctor, Hale and Mary Warren as the rest of the characters look down on them from the higher levels. This abstract use of height would remind the audience of animals trapped in a pit with no voice, no escape and no justice.

Naturalistic set design

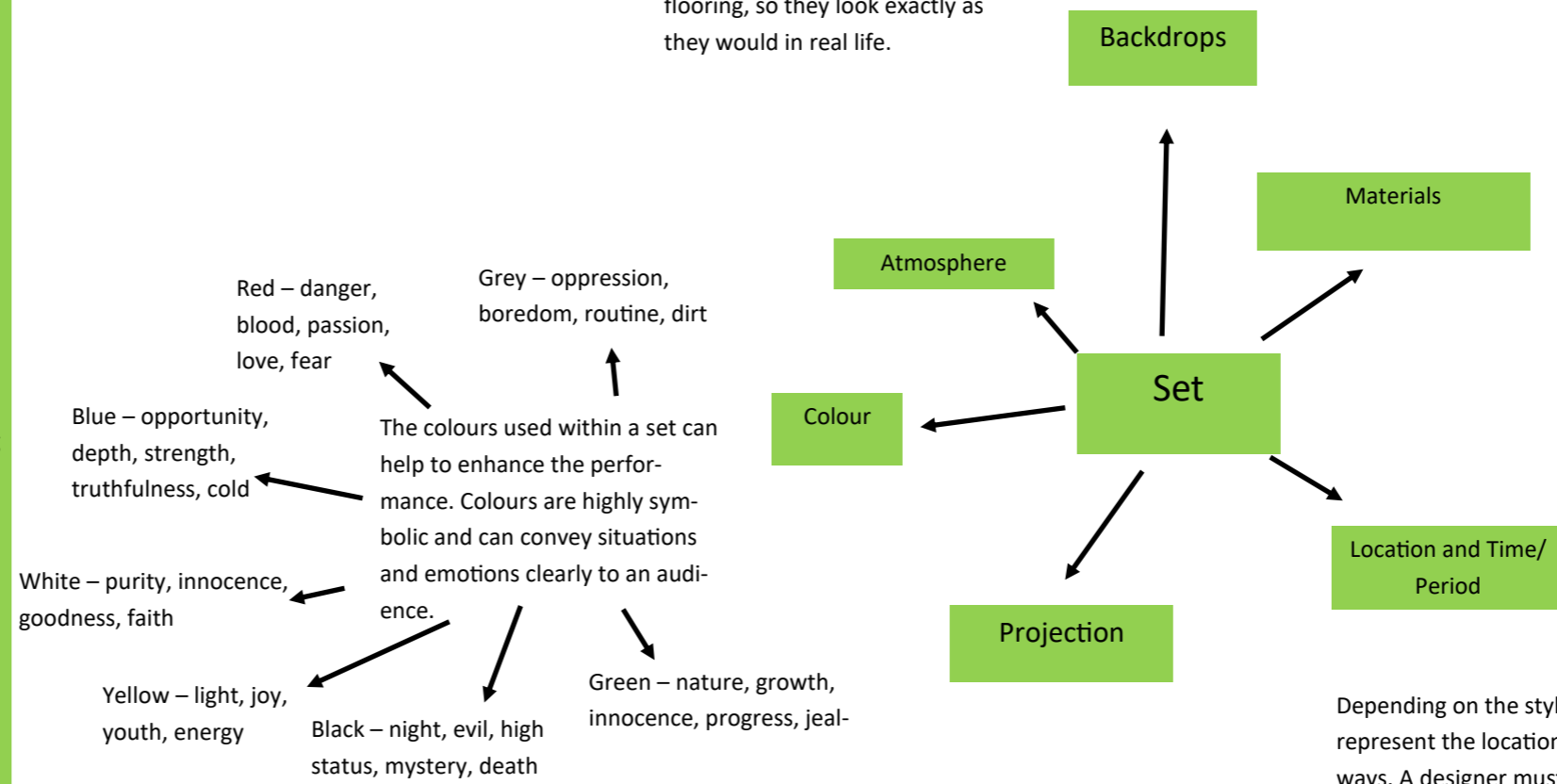
A naturalistic set strives to look as realistic as possible. A set designer will spend a great deal of time researching, designing, creating and sourcing elements such as furniture, wall coverings and flooring, so they look exactly as they would in real life.

Health and safety

It is vital that the set design, including props, do not put the health and safety of the cast, crew or audience at risk during a performance.

Time period

As directors reinterpret plays for specific target audiences, the role of the set designer is vital in helping the audience to understand the context of a performance. The use of furniture or construction styles from specific eras can provide helpful clues about when – as well as where – the performance is set.



Abstract set design

An abstract set tends to be much more symbolic and representative than a naturalistic set. A set designer will consider the play's themes and issues and seek to use the set design to convey these to the audience.

Depending on the style of the production, the set can represent the location (or locations) in various different ways. A designer must consider the following.

- How much space is available?
- What is the style/genre of the production?
- Are multiple locations required in a short space of time?
- Are locations repeated?
- In what era is the play set?
- What mood/atmosphere should the location communicate to an audience?