

Unit 3 Drama

Outcome 1

Ensemble Performance

The Black Death

Setting

England, 1348-50.

Performance Style

Non-naturalism, with aspects of epic theatre.

Prescribed Theatrical Conventions (VCAA)

- transformation of character
- transformation of place
- transformation of object
- disjointed time sequences

Additional Prescribed Theatrical Conventions

- fragmentary costume/s
- direct audience address
- use of placard/s
- fragmentary scenery
- use of song/s
- character/s reflecting social roles
- message/s for the audience

Prescribed Dramatic Elements

- language
- contrast
- symbol
- sound

Background

In the summer of 1348, The Black Death made its way into southern England without notice. A form of the bubonic plague spread by small rodents and their fleas, it spread like wildfire, killing those infected within a week.

One of the most devastating pandemics in history, The Black Death caused loss of life on a massive scale, culling an estimated one-half of England's population in just over two years. It tore at the very fabric of English society, devastating large cities and obliterating almost the entire population of regional towns and smaller communities.

While those living in Medieval England quickly became familiar with The Black Death's symptoms, few knew its causes. Christians died without burial rites, large areas of overcrowded cities were wiped out and the nation's economy suffered due to labour shortages. Such was The Black Death's impact; it would be hundreds of years before England would return to her former self.

Plot

Your performance must focus on The Black Death in England, 1348-50 and include scenes documenting the following:

- life in Medieval England
- causes of the disease
- symptoms of the disease
- The Black Death's effect on society
- economic impact of The Black Death
- diseases affecting the modern world and lessons for the future