



CHAPTER 17

LET'S DESIGN

STAGE TECHNICALS 1

*In the realm of design,
makeup weaves a tale,
Brush strokes on faces,
emotions set to unveil.
Costumes, a canvas for
characters to shine,
On the stage, design harmonises,
a visual symphony divine.*



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Concepts introduced

- Make-up and costume design
- Stage
- Script writing

SCENE 3: THEATRE PRODUCTION

In any successful performance, we see the actors perform and get the appreciation. But for the actors' performance to have a full impact on the audience, the effort and work of all these departments are very crucial. We are now going to explore the basics of the following departments —

- Make-up
- Costume design
- Stage layout

Your face is the first thing that people notice about you. So, for an actor, to look convincing on stage, the first thing that has to be considered is make-up.

Make-up

Have you noticed that actors have colours on their faces? Some look good, some look scary and some look funny. This is what make-up can do! It is all planned as per the roles they play in the drama performance that they are a part of. Everyone performing on stage needs to put on make-up, irrespective of gender, age, community, etc.

If you ask, but why? Why is make-up necessary? We don't wear



Make-up room, also called green room, should be bright, well-lit and airy

make-up in our everyday life. Why is it necessary for the stage?

Here is your answer —

1. **Visibility and Projection:**

Make-up enhances facial features, ensuring that expressions and emotions are projected to the audience, even from a distance.

2. **Character Transformation:**

Make-up is a powerful tool for transforming actors into characters. It allows performers to look old, younger or adopt specific features necessary for the role, enhancing the overall authenticity of the performance.

3. **Highlighting Facial Expressions:**

Make-up helps emphasise key features such as eyes and mouth, so that subtle nuances are visible to the audience.

4. **Harmony with Stage Lighting:**

Stage lights can be intense and may distort natural skin tones. Make-up is applied to create a balance, preventing actors from appearing washed out or overly dark under the stage lights.

5. **Historical and Theatrical Styles:**

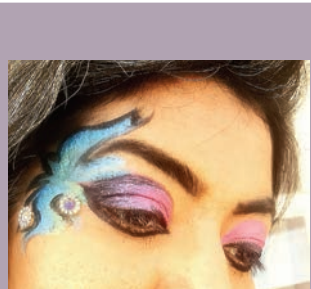
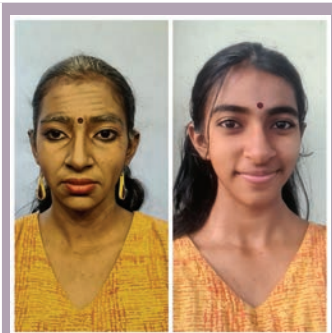
Depending on the play's setting or genre, make-up can be essential for capturing the styles. It allows actors to fit into specific time periods, cultures or fantasy worlds envisioned by the director.

In essence, make-up for stage actors is not just about 'looking good' or aesthetics. It is a practical and artistic necessity, as it contributes significantly to the success of a theatrical performance. It enables actors to communicate effectively with the audience, enhances their portrayal of characters and contributes to the overall visual impact of the production.

Depending on the play and role, there are different types of make-up.

- **Straight make-up:** Simple, basic highlight of features.
- **Character make-up:** Elements of age, profession, personality and situation are shown.
- **Special effects:** Adding wounds, scars or additional features like horns.

Identify and write the type of make-up based on the description above



- **Fantasy or abstract make-up:** Creating unique, unfamiliar characters with unusual colours.

- **Mime or pattern make-up:** A bold, striking face cover that is usually neutral.

Face is the first thing that people notice. The next most important thing, is the clothes and accessories. A person's character is defined by the kind of clothes they wear. So, invariably for characters on stage, what is very crucial is—

The Costume Design

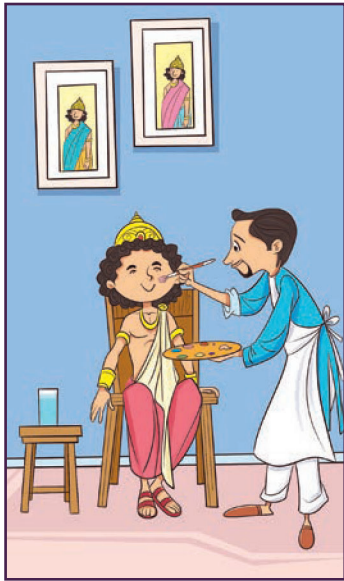
We wear different types of clothes on different occasions. The clothes you wear at home are different from the school uniform. Likewise, the clothes you wear to the temple

during a village festival are different from your night clothes. Right?

Similarly, an actor wears different clothes to portray different characters. It helps the audience to recognise and relate to the character.

While there are so many kinds of clothes and options to choose from, how does one even start to decide what works for the character? Here are some points to start off—costumes are designed according to the following categories:

- **Gender:** Clothes are different for men and women.
- **Age of the character:** People dress differently at different ages.
- **Timeline of the play:** The fashion of a culture evolves and changes as time progresses. (Jeans and pants did not exist during Maharaja Shivaji's time.)
- **Geographical location of the story:** Differences in cultures and countries. (Traditional clothing of Karnataka is different from Bengal).



- **Occupation of the character:** A police officer, a lawyer and a doctor.
- **Features of the character:** A person wearing shabby clothes and neatly dressed.

How are all these elements brought about in design with the use of:

Fabric or Material: Match the time period and the geographical location—using synthetic chiffon for a story in the Himalayas of ancient India—is not possible because chiffon did not exist in ancient India and this would not suit the cold weather in the Himalayas.

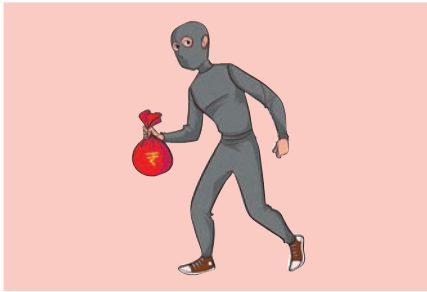
Colours: They represent numerous things like:

- Time period (neon blue is preferably not used for a scene in the *Vedic* period).
- Each colour of character represents a meaning. (Negative character has dark shades.)
- Cultural aspects (red is not used in mourning or funeral scenes).

Patterns and Designs: There are some patterns on the clothes that are exclusive to the royalty, some represent tribal culture while there are some exclusive to a rural setting.

Styling: Jewellery, accessories like crown, *dupatta*, belts, bags, eyewear.

Write below what you understand about the character based on costume





Example

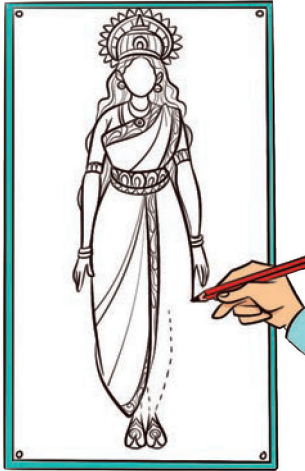
ACTIVITY — YOU DESIGN!

The first step of design is planning and that is done through drawing.

1. **Make-up plan:** Draw hair and head gear colour it with the make-up required to bring about the character below. You can do it in your notebook and try multiple times.

Feel free to make it as creative and interesting as possible. Use crown, head gears, *topi*, hairstyle, etc. Make sure you make it look like the character of a person who actually existed (like Gandhiji, Subhash Chandra Bose, etc.). Keep it as simple but as accurate as possible.

Chandragupta Maurya	Folk dancer	Subhash Chandra Bose	Moon God



Example

2. **Costume Design:** We will now try designing costumes, in the same way!

The same characters that you designed make-up for, now design the costumes!

Keep in mind the time period, nature of work, colours and other details. You can either draw or paste pieces of fabric as shown in the picture.



Chandragupta Maurya	Folk Dancer	Subhash Chandra Bose	Moon God

Stage Trivia

The word 'Theatre' originated from the name of the Greek performance space 'Theatron'.

So, costumes are on, makeup is done, but, where do you stage it?

The answer is right there in the question!

ON A STAGE!

A stage is any place where you perform a play. There are various types of stages that we can observe throughout the history of theatre.

Plays have been staged in so many venues, starting from the Indian *Natyagruha*, Greek 'Theatron' (carved out of mountains) to the Globe Theatre (in a palace like setting), to the streets and finally to the modern indoor auditorium named proscenium. The proscenium is the most popular and commonly used structure in today's shows.

The Proscenium

The origins of the proscenium stage are directly linked to the scientific discoveries of electricity and the light bulbs.

Previously, most of the plays happened either during the day

when the sunlight lit the stage or at night, when they relied on heavy oil lamps to light the stage, as these were practised in ancient times. Later, with the help of electricity and light bulbs, many aspects of light and intensity could be controlled.

This allowed theatrical performances to be done indoors, where neither the burning hot sunlight, the cold winds nor heavy rains would prevent shows from being staged.

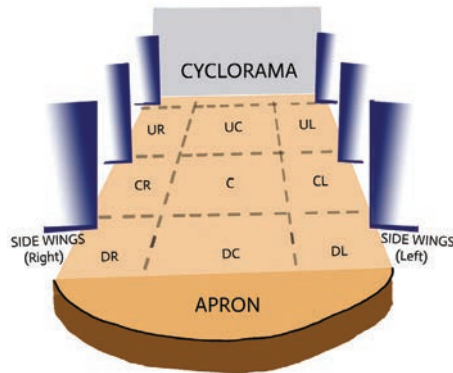
Parts of the Stage

Side Wings: The sides of the stage are divided by wings, which help actors to take entries and exits from the stage.

Apron: It is a curved space that extends from the stage area onto the audience area. This space is generally used to place foot mikes and foot lights.

Proscenium: The proscenium is the frame or arch that surrounds the stage in a proscenium theatre.

Cyclorama: A large light blue or white fabric stretched across the



PARTS OF THE STAGE

C — Centre
CR — Centre Right
CL — Centre Left
UR — Up Right
UC — Up Centre
UL — Up Left
DR — Down Right
DC — Down Centre
DL — Down Left

back wall of the stage used to reflect lighting equipment and create effects such as sky, clouds, etc.

Activity

In order to put together all that has been learnt, do the following —

1. Pick your favourite story.
2. Identify two of your favourite characters. Design costumes and make-up for them. Create your own. Don't copy from the storybook you have read.

3. Make a cardboard model of a stage with side wings as given in the picture. This can be done in groups.
4. Plan how one scene can be enacted on stage, by placing the set and properties (chairs, table or tree, hut, etc.).

Alternatively, make a drawing of this in your book.



*A script is the storyteller's brush,
painting worlds with words,
inviting characters to dance
and crafting the magic that
captivates the audience.*

Let us first start with understanding the words and terms that are commonly used—story, drama, script, and dialogue. Are they all the same? No!

What is the difference between a story and a drama script?

Story Building Instructions:

Don't be in a hurry to complete the story. Try to make the stories interesting and complex.

Discussion

What are the things you notice in a drama script that are different from your storybook? Name a few that are unique.



A story is a narrative or account of events, experiences or adventures, real or imaginary presented in a structured or coherent form. It typically involves a series of connected events that unfold over time, often featuring characters who face challenges, undergo transformations and contribute to the overall development of the narrative.

A conversation is an interactive, verbal exchange between two or more people. It is a social and communicative process where participants take turns in speaking and listening, engaging in a dialogue that may be casual, formal or structured.

A striking difference is that the story is in the form of a paragraph, while the script has ‘conversations’.

I’m sure you see or hear people having conversations every day. At home, on the road, in schools—everywhere. Let us try to write a simple conversation between a shopkeeper and customer. It can be from what you have seen or completely imaginary.

Customer: _____

Shopkeeper: _____

Customer: _____

Shopkeeper: _____

Use your notebook if you want to continue the conversation. It can be as long as you want.

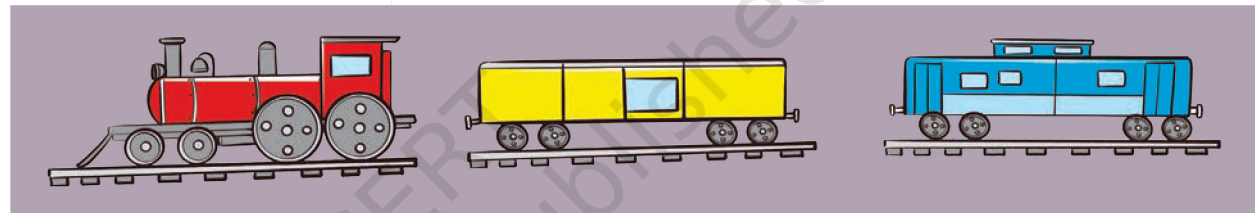


Congratulations you have written your first script!

Let us now go to the next level. If you carefully observe, the script you have written is different from a drama you have watched or a story you have heard. What is it that is missing?

This let us know the three parts of a story or a script

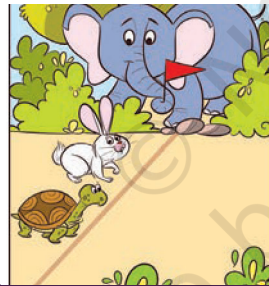
Beginning	Middle	End
Who are the characters? Where and when? What do the characters want?	What is the problem they have? What happens to the characters? How do they react to it?	Is the problem solved? How and who does it? What is the conclusion?



Conflict is the struggle or disagreement between characters or elements within the story that create obstacles and take the story forward.

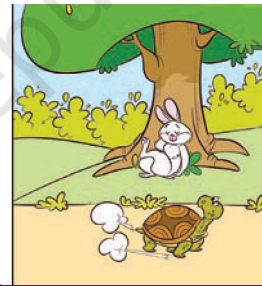
Conflict is a fundamental element in storytelling, as it introduces challenges, dilemmas or opposing forces that characters must resolve.

This tension is essential for building interest, engaging the audience and providing a framework for character development in a script.



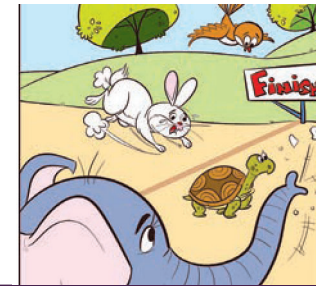
Beginning

Hare and tortoise in a race



Middle

Hare rests, tortoise overtakes



End

Tortoise wins the race, hare is disappointed.

If you notice the 'middle', we talk about a 'problem'. This is the most important part of any story or script. It is called — **'the conflict'**.

Here is an instance of how conflict is used in this popular story that all of us know — 'Hare and Tortoise.'

Example 1 — Conversation without conflict

Customer: *Namaste!* I want a chocolate for my sister's birthday.

Shopkeeper: Okay. What kind of chocolate do you want?

Customer: My sister likes vanilla flavoured chocolates.

Shopkeeper: We have three varieties. Plain vanilla, vanilla with nuts, and wafers with vanilla and chocolate in it.

Customer: I will have the vanilla with nuts.

Shopkeeper: Do you want a gift wrapping?

Customer: Yes, please.

Shopkeeper: Here you go, chocolate wrapped in gift paper! It will cost you ₹ 50.

Customer: Here is the money. Thank you!



Let us see how the conflict will make a difference.

Example 2 — Conversation with conflict



Customer: *Namaste!* I want a chocolate for my sister's birthday.

Shopkeeper: Okay. What kind of chocolate?

Customer: My sister likes vanilla chocolates.

Shopkeeper: Sorry, we have three varieties. Plain, strawberry and caramel.

Customer: Oh, but my sister likes vanilla. It's okay. Give me caramel and please wrap it in gift paper.

Shopkeeper: Oh, we have run out of gift paper. Can I wrap it in a regular brown paper?

Customer: This is not fair. First, you did not have the chocolate I wanted, now you don't have the gift wrap! I will go to the other shop. I don't want anything from here.

Shopkeeper: Hey... wait... I will try to arrange it (picks up the phone and talks to someone). Don't worry. You are getting the vanilla chocolate and the gift wrap. I am getting it for you from our storage. Sorry for the trouble.

Customer: No problem. Thank you!

Has the **conflict** in the second example ignited some emotion and drama into the otherwise boring conversation you saw in the first example? This is how you can make your entire script interesting.

Now, go back and check if you have a conflict in the shopkeeper conversation you wrote. Did you also have a conflict in the story building game? Let us play it again.

Activity (In class — continued)

Let's play level two of the same story building game.

Instructions: Everyone sits in a circle (can sit in their respective places if a circle is not possible). The teacher will start with the first sentence. Each of you add one line to build a story. Listen carefully to what the last sentence was. You have to continue from there.

Don't be in a hurry to complete the story. Try to make the stories interesting and complex.

Advanced: Make 10–15 chits with random phrases written, like, 'The protagonist forgets to' or 'This character is very hungry' or 'Suddenly the lights went out'. These are meant to bring a 'twist-in-the-tale' or in a more professional language, that you now know—these are 'conflicts'.

Like you did previously, contribute a sentence to the story. After every ten lines you pick out a chit, there is a twist in the tale and you have to include it in the story. Pay attention to the Beginning-Middle-End. The last set of children has to resolve the conflict and conclude.

Play this game as many times as you want. Change the order of the children. It will help you (them) to get familiar with the flow of the story, conflict and its resolution. With such an understanding of the basics, you can now get down to some serious script writing.

Here are simple steps to write your own play! First make notes in your book about the three parts —

Start with the BEGINNING	You can then think of the MIDDLE	Finally, the END
Who are the characters (their names, age, work, etc.)? Where and when is it happening?	What is the conflict? How is it introduced? What do the characters do?	How is the conflict resolved? What happens to the characters? Conclusion.
<i>With this in your book, you can start writing conversations.</i>		

Popular Writers of our Times (Eng)	
Stories or Novels (Authors)	Drama (Playwrights)
Sudha Murthy RK Narayan Ruskin Bond	Rabindranath Tagore Shel Silverstein Taro Yashima
Reading others' works is inspiring and can give ideas for your work.	

In every story, you read or a movie that you watch, try to identify the three parts of the story: Beginning-Middle-End. Also, find out how a conflict is introduced and resolved. Write down the details—

Name of the Movie or Storybook	Parts of the Story
_____	Beginning _____
_____	Middle (Conflict) _____
_____	End _____



Write Away! Happy Writing!

