Overview of topic: students will explore the style and conventions of two opposing theatre practitioners- Artaud (Surrealism), Stanislavsky (Naturalism). Students will explore these in theory and in practice.

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<th>Key content/ ideas/ concepts</th>
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**Konstantin Stanislavski**

17 January 1863 – 7 August 1938 was a seminal Russian theatre practitioner. He was widely recognised as an outstanding character actor and the many productions that he directed garnered a reputation as one of the leading theatre directors of his generation. His principal fame and influence, however, rests on his ‘system’ of actor training, preparation, and rehearsal technique.

**Stanislavski’s background**

Stanislavski’s real name was Konstantin Sergeyevich Alexeyev but he adopted the stage name of Stanislavski in 1884. Born in 1863 to a life of considerable comfort as a member of one of the most affluent families in Russia, he died in 1938 at the age of 75. His family loved the theatre and he was able to indulge in amateur theatricals as a boy.

**Realism in the theatre**

What makes up a realistic production? It’s hard to come up with a ‘recipe’, but there are a number of important elements that you might expect to be present:

**The fourth wall** The set of a realistic production will be solid, three dimensional, and most often in a proscenium theatre that enhances the sense of that fourth wall. The performers present the action realistically, without using techniques such as addressing the audience or a tableau, which immediately shatter any illusion of real life being played out.

**Everyday conversations and style of speaking** A realistic play would use prose rather than poetry and would use ordinary language, rather than a heightened emotional vocabulary.

**Ordinary people** Generally, the stories are about people who are more readily defined as middle or working class. For Stanislavski, it was substantially the middle class or bourgeois, to use the right term in the Russia of his day, that he put on stage.

**A carefully rehearsed acting style that creates or confirms the impression of reality** This is true whatever approach is adopted.

**Real settings** These plays are set in realistic contexts. They won’t have fairy tale or fantasy settings and are likely to be contemporary.

**Wider reading**

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iB1fPZX5Zgk
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### Key content/ideas/concepts

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<th>STANISLAVSKI – THE SYSTEM</th>
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<td><strong>Given circumstances</strong></td>
<td><strong>Subtext</strong></td>
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<td>The given circumstances are the information about the character that you start off with and the play as a whole. How old is the character? What’s their situation in the play and in relation to the other characters? Are there any notes provided about the play and its characters? Such notes and stage directions may not tell you everything you need to build a character but they are the starting point from which you’ll work to examine the other questions.</td>
<td>The script of a play could be called the text. The subtext is the actual meaning and motivation behind the lines that are spoken and the actions taken. For example, the heroine might say to the hero, “I love you” and we might assume that it is the happy ending fairy tale moment. But the delivery would be very different if she was worried that he was about to walk out on her.</td>
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#### Emotional memory

Emotional memory is when the actor finds a real past experience where they felt a similar emotion to that demanded by the role they are playing. They then ‘borrow’ those feelings to bring the role to life.

#### Method of physical actions

Imagine a simple activity like cleaning your teeth and then imagine a husband cleaning his teeth whilst deliberating on how to tell his wife about his mistress. This is a simple illustration of how a physical action can release the necessary emotions.

Stanislavski said that the character should answer the question, 'What would I do if I was in this situation?' Also known as the ‘magic if’, this technique means that the actor puts themselves into the character’s situation. This then stimulates the motivation to enable the actor to play the role.

#### Wider reading

[https://www.bbc.com/education/guides/zxn4mp3/revision/1](https://www.bbc.com/education/guides/zxn4mp3/revision/1)
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<th>Self-Quiz Questions</th>
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<th>Challenge Self-Quiz Quizzing</th>
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<tr>
<td>1. Who was Konstantin Stanislavski?</td>
<td>1. What is the system?</td>
<td>1. Research Q- what is a ‘character’ actor?</td>
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<tr>
<td>2. What is Stanislavski known for?</td>
<td>2. What was the purpose of Stanislavski’s ‘method’?</td>
<td>2. What is the difference between the method and the system?</td>
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<tr>
<td>3. How did Stanislavski’s parents support his love of theatre as a child?</td>
<td>3. What are the 8 techniques that make up the system?</td>
<td>3. Research Q- why is given circumstance an effective technique to develop a character?</td>
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<tr>
<td>4. What is the fourth wall?</td>
<td>4. What is given circumstance?</td>
<td>4. Research Q- What effect would breaking the fourth wall have on the audience?</td>
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<td>5. What type of staging enhances the fourth wall?</td>
<td>5. What is emotion memory?</td>
<td>5. Research Q- What effect did Stanislavski want to have on his audience with his style of naturalism?</td>
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<tr>
<td>7. Breaking the fourth wall shatters what illusion?</td>
<td>7. What is the magic if?</td>
<td>7. Why is a through line important in naturalism?</td>
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<tr>
<td>8. What is naturalism?</td>
<td>8. What is subtext?</td>
<td>8. What is the difference between the text and the subtext?</td>
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<tr>
<td>9. How is realism created through the style of speaking?</td>
<td>9. What is an objective?</td>
<td>9. What performance skills would best help communicate a character’s subtext?</td>
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<tr>
<td>10. What kind of ‘ordinary’ people did Stanislavski use to create realism?</td>
<td>10. What is a super-objective?</td>
<td>10. What type of audience did his style of theatre best appeal to?</td>
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