

# GCSE Drama J316

## Revision Guide for “Find Me” by Olwen Wymark

Tasks to be undertaken are all written in blue. You can type straight onto this document or create your own revision notes document.

Find Me by Olwen Wymark

Plot

(taken from: <http://ocr.org.uk/Images/311844-find-me-teacher-guide.pdf>)

**Find Me is a play based on a true story set in the early 1980s. The central character is a girl named Verity Taylor who suffers with mental health problems. The play studies the effects that her condition has on her family and questions the treatment she receives by the healthcare system.**

**The structure is episodic.**

**The scenes vary in length and each portrays an incident which contributes to Verity's downfall.**

**The play is not split into acts and scenes however there is a note in the front of the play script which states that there is an 'optional interval' and changes in setting are represented by the use of blackouts which are clearly noted in the stage directions.**

**Although the play is mainly linear, flashbacks are used and the end of the play is announced at the beginning.**

**Find Me is a social drama and tragedy as it 'shows the downfall of the central character, uses simplified characters narrowed down to what is essential, there is a significant impact on the audience during the Catharsis and there is no way out of the dilemma' that Verity and her family face.**

**The narrator's introduction explains the end of the story and the various settings in the play to the audience in the very first scene. The action then skips back to the beginning of the play when Verity was nine.**

**During the exposition of the play Edward is asked questions by the Interviewer about his daughter Verity. He explains that the birth was a little premature and that her mother wasn't allowed to have her for the first week. He goes on to explain that he found Verity to be a difficult child who was always a little distant. He describes times when she would wander off from home, flare up very suddenly and have tantrums. Verity's mother and father decided that physical punishment was wrong for Verity as she was a very sensitive child. When she was diagnosed with a mild epileptic condition they hoped that the treatment would help to settle her down, but it didn't. Verity was a solitary child who was always happier playing in her own private world.**

**The next section shows Verity playing with an imaginary village she has built out of blocks. The village is full of people that Verity promises to look after. When her mother, Jean, comes home and tells Verity to clear away the blocks to make room for the family to have tea Verity has a tantrum, knocks over all the blocks and accuses her mother of wanting all the people in her village 'killed'. This scene is the first to highlight the difficult relationship between Verity and her mother.**

Their relationship is displayed further in the school scene that follows. Jean waits to pick Verity up in the rain with the other mothers whilst the teacher finishes off the lesson inside. The scene opens with Jean reading Verity's school report out loud to another mother outside the school gates. Although Verity is able to answer difficult questions on primary colours of light and gets a good academic report, it is during this scene that Verity's social behaviour is questioned.

This is symbolised by a pair of Wellington boots; Jean brings them for Verity to wear on the way home, but instead of agreeing to put them on, Verity uses them to scoop up water from puddles and asks her classmates and mother if they would like to sip champagne from the boot. The scene ends with Verity and her mother standing at a distance from each other in the empty playground, before Verity runs off with Jean following distraughtly.

Verity's brother is the central character in the next scene; the family are out for dinner at a French restaurant. After a series of misunderstandings with the waitress, Verity begins to cause a disruption with a French family who are sitting at the table opposite. During this scene, Mark tells Verity that he hates her, before Verity is dragged out of the restaurant by her father, Edward.

In the following scene Mark is on a school trip and Verity is, in fact, the only child from the family at the bonfire. During this scene the audience is able to see the hope that both Edward and Jean have for Verity's recovery. They discuss that Verity has started a new school and has written a poem about bonfire night. Verity recites the poem and is congratulated by the friends and neighbours who are attending the party. There is a reference in the scene to Verity's interest in swimming, this builds up to the 'swimming gala' scene which is the climax of the play and precedes the optional interval.

Verity is the central character in the swimming gala scene. This part of the story is told from Verity's perspective. It is said that this part of the play was actually written by the girl who the play is based on. Verity is played by five different actors during this scene, all of whom represent her voice.

The five Veritys share a monologue which demonstrate the passion that Verity has for swimming and the critical importance of succeeding at the swimming gala. She explains how she feels safe in the water and that by winning she will make her mum and dad proud. Verity's monologue is broken by the teacher who tells her that she can't swim in the gala unless she has a swimming cap.

Verity goes rigid and silent, almost catatonic, before a blackout which allows the setting to shift back to the family home.

When the lights come up we find out that Verity has ripped up a whole box of her mother's photographs and locked herself in the bathroom. We find out later that she has smashed three windows and flooded the bathroom.

Because of her severe anti-social behaviour after the swimming gala, Verity, aged 11, is admitted to a mental hospital. She and her parents are interviewed by a nurse, clerk, registrar, doctor and another doctor, all of whom seem to be repeating the same questions. As they admit Verity, they place chairs in a circle around her like a cage, Verity turns away from her parents and they leave.

After a year in the hospital Verity has made very little progress. She was able to come home for Christmas but it ended in disaster with Verity cutting her arms with a knife when she was supposed to be setting the table for Christmas dinner. With her arms dripping in blood Verity snatches her mums cape and scarf and says that now she and her mother have swapped clothes that Jean should go back to the hospital in Verity's place. Mark is also home for Christmas. He defends his mother and tells Verity to 'go back to hospital, where she belongs'. Verity refuses to go back to hospital and her parents begin the search for more suitable support. In the meantime Verity stays at the family home.

In the following scene Jean is visited by a social worker, Miss Everitt. The social worker is unable to offer any residential care for Verity. She explains that there are no suitable boarding school places, the children's ward at the hospital won't take her again, as in their view she is no longer in need of hospital care, and that the Rudolf Steiner Centre wouldn't accept her either as last time she was there she 'incited the other children to destructive behaviour and vandalism'. Despite Jean explaining to the social worker that she can't cope with Verity at home, Miss Everitt leaves without offering a solution.

In the following monologue Jean delivers a direct address to the audience in which she considers the cause of Verity's condition. She talks about her guilt and asks whether it is her fault that Verity is the way she is, whether she contaminated her daughter when she was pregnant. This is Jean's emotional release following Verity's breakdown.

In a series of letters, Edward tries desperately to get Verity a place at a variety of residential centres. All applications are turned down by voices that represent the replies to his letters. In one of his letters Edward explains that Verity is affecting the wellbeing of their young son Nicky, that he has a lack of appetite, sleeplessness and bedwetting. It is because of this that Jean eventually decides to leave the family home and take Nicky with her.

Verity is finally placed into care, but it is in a halfway house, not a mental hospital. Although initially this works well and Verity is said to be contented she eventually has an episode and falls/jumps from her first floor room. The fall resulted in her breaking most of the bones in her feet and she was admitted to the general hospital. However, once in hospital, she pushed a nurse who then fell over and hit her head. The nurse had a severe concussion and therefore Verity was placed on a locked geriatric ward. When Jean protests the consultant agrees that the locked ward is the wrong place for her, he says that 'there has

never been enough money spent on facilities and staff to provide environments for this kind of case, he admits that they do not know how to treat Verity.

Verity then delivers another monologue.

This time it is a stream of consciousness where Verity talks about seemingly unrelated event and ideas. The monologue represents Verity's declining mental state and the lack of structure is perhaps a metaphor for the loss of control and her mental confusion at this point in the play.

Two new characters are then introduced. This scene depicts Verity sitting on the front wall of a house belonging to Ted and Dora. After inviting her in to the house, they call the police, after she claims she has been raped by a lorry driver. Ted and Dora are considered to be 'normal' characters; they offer Verity a sandwich and a cup of tea. They have been used as a narrative function to contrast to the highly abnormal behaviours of Verity. It is soon apparent that Verity has escaped from the locked ward at the hospital and found herself lost outside Ted and Dora's house.

The lights fade and come up on the consultant who explains that because of the incident Verity has now been placed in a locked chronic ward for Geriatrics.

Whilst in the locked chronic ward for geriatrics, Verity is cared for by Sister Moses and a physiotherapist. It is during a physiotherapy session that Verity causes a disturbance and is sent back to her room. Verity is angry that she has had to go back alone and so decides to use the matches she has been hiding under her bed to set fire to a waste paper basket. She places Sister Moses' chair over the basket to burn it, saying that she is going to 'burn her ass off!'

As a result of setting fire to the chair the police and fire brigade were called. After a hearing which investigated the incident at Canterbury Crown Court, Edward and Jean are told that Verity will be admitted to Broadmoor Hospital under Section Sixty five of the Mental Health Act.

The narration from the beginning of the play is repeated. All five Verity's say one after another, loudly. Find Me!

## Characters in Find Me

- Narrator
- Verity (five of)
- Edward
- Nicky
- Mark
- Jean
- Interviewer
- Teacher
- Mother I
- Mother II
- A child
- Another child
- A third child
- Waitress
- French Family in restaurant
- Neighbour I
- Neighbour II
- Nurse
- Clerk
- Registrar
- Doctor I
- Doctor II
- Miss Everett
- Three voices
- Tom
- Dottie
- Harry
- Geoff
- Violet
- Ted
- Dora
- Patient I
- Patient II
- Patient III
- Patient IV
- Sister Moses
- Miss Blake

This play should be performed by a minimal cast who all take on more than one role (multi-role). A concept for this could be to have five Verity's and then the family, apart from Nicky, stay as their role throughout so the others can constantly change role.

**Point of discussion – why are there so many characters without names?**

**What is Olwen Wymark saying about these particular roles?**

**Which practitioner uses this concept in his work and why does he do this?**

## **Themes of Find Me**

**With each of these themes, find key moments in the play where these themes are shown clearly:**

Parent / Child Relationships

Treatment of Mental Health through the years.

Seeking safety

Authority figures and their relationships with others.

Family dynamics

## Style, Structure and Genre

Genre:

What is meant by Genre?

A "Type" of Drama, Novel or story

Examples of Genre are:

Comedy	Farce
Tragedy	Tragicomedy
Mystery	Epic
Thriller	Kitchen Sink Realism
Biographical	Black Comedy
Autobiographical	Morality
Drama	Melodrama

**Although it could be justified for a number of the above genres to be connected to the play. Find Me is a social drama and tragedy as it 'shows the downfall of the central character, uses simplified characters narrowed down to what is essential, there is a significant impact on the audience during the Catharsis and there is no way out of the dilemma' that Verity and her family face.**

Structure of Find Me

What is meant by structure?

**How the play is organised or shaped.**

**Episodic – Lots of relatively short scenes that are linked together via a character, theme or place. – This structure is the most appropriate for Find Me as it has a number of short scenes running together with the link being the character of Verity and the theme of her Mental health problems.**

Naturalistic – unity of time and place – usually one place and takes place over a specific time period – **Find Me does, however, have moments of Naturalism where an audience could be encouraged to feel empathy or sympathy for a character. Also, it could be argued that the fact that Find Me is based on a true story allows it to be considered as Naturalistic.**

Classical – like Shakespeare – broken up into Acts and scenes.

Surreal – not set in a specific place or time; takes audiences on a journey of the subconscious or dream-world.

Context – Social, Historical and Cultural

**Context = what is happening at the time the play was written.**

**Social = Social issues; how people interact with each other – what is happening in Society.**

**Cultural = Relevance of 21<sup>st</sup> Century – what is happening now that makes this play relevant to today's culture?**

**Historical = Events of the past; the way people were treated, what happened historically.**

**Task:**

**Find moments in Find Me where the contexts are clearly highlighted. Compare this to how things are today. Why do you think communication of this context is still important today?**

## Semiotics

### Definition of Semiotics:

#### How theatrical elements are used in live theatre to convey meaning

The analysis of theatre semiotics is a methodology developed by Elaine Aston and George Savona that considers performance as a system of signs that create meanings.

<https://www.mytutor.co.uk/answers/8368/A-Level/Drama/What-does-Theatre-Semiotics-means>

- ▶ Those visual signifiers are divided into two categories:
- ▶ **Synthesis**, which is everything involving the staging (including costumes, props, sets, lights and venue).
- ▶ **Kinesics**, which is every aspect of the space in relation to the actors (including the bodies and movement of the actors).

You may be asked a question about Semiotics in Section so it's worth thinking about moments in the play where you as a director, designer or actor may use Semiotics. Write down some ideas in note form.

#### Task:

Use the three columns: **Acting**                      **Directorial**                      **Design**

**Under each of these headings; write key moments from each perspective where Semiotics could be used effectively to convey meaning or to communicate Olwen Wymark's intentions.**

## Subject Specific Vocabulary – Performer

- An actor's job is to bring the vision to physical life.
- An actor's interpretation of the role being played is communicated clearly on stage in light of the director's initial vision.
- To follow the instructions given by the director to help realise their concept.
- An actor may implement his or her own interpretations and ideas into the direction of a play.
- Learning lines
- Taking part in rehearsals; rehearsal techniques to help develop understanding of role, play and / or concept..

Performance skills:	The performer uses various skills to communicate with the audience including voice, movement, characterisation and use of space.
Engaging the audience:	Perhaps the most important aspect of being a performer is the relationship with a live theatre audience. This communication makes live theatre unique.
Working with others:	Performers rarely work on their own and even solo shows include a design team and director. So, working with others or as part of an ensemble is a key aspect of performance.
Working with the text:	Performers may have to consider an actual text, working with the language of a play and considering the playwright's intentions. The text might also be a stimulus such as a poem, quotation or an image particularly in devised theatre. The performer must explore and understand the text in as much depth as possible.
Developing the performance:	A strong performer works continuously on developing their performance. This starts in rehearsals but continues as the live performance work progresses and the performer develops a closer understanding of the play, the playwright's intentions and the director's vision.
Communicating character:	Performing often requires the interpretation of a particular character, and this can be vital in helping to tell the story of the piece.
Interpretation /style / purpose:	Directors and designers often have a strong vision for how they want to interpret a play, they will have selected a style and a have a clear sense of purpose and message. A performer needs to understand what the director is trying to say and consider how they can help to communicate this vision to the audience.

Voice skills:

The use of voice can convey:

- Emotion
- Relationships
- Intentions
- Subtext

Carefully combining different vocal elements is vital for a successful performance.

Using voice to communicate character – voice can convey a character's:

- Age
- Background
- Emotional state
- Status

Understanding use of voice can help a performer to find a way to convey their character to an audience.

Tone	This describes how the lines are said to convey meaning or emotion. For example – a sarcastic tone might mean that while a character says they are pleased to see someone; they are, in fact, not.
Intonation	The rise and fall of the voice to provide variation and interest. Makes speech sound more natural.
Pause	Starting and stopping to emphasise a point or provide contrast and variation. Can also be used to create tension.
Pitch	How high or low the voice is / lines are delivered.
Clarity:	This is making sure the audience can hear the words and that their intended meaning is clear. For example; even if a character is scared or nervous, the actor needs to make sure that the lines are heard and understood by the audience.
Pace:	This refers to the rhythm and speech with which words are spoken. For example; a fast pace might indicate excitement whereas a slower pace might suggest sadness.
Accent:	This is used to indicate where a character is from. It might also help distinguish class and status.
Inflection:	This refers to the ups and downs of spoken language. For example, inflection can go higher at the end of a sentence to make it sound like a question. This is called “upward inflection”.

Emphasis / Stress	This is used to place greater significance on chosen words, or to highlight meaning behind the words being spoken.
Volume / Projection:	This refers to how loud or quiet the voice is. You can still project your voice if you are using a soft, quiet voice.
Diction:	This is pronouncing the words clearly. It is important for performers to articulate what they are saying so that the audience can understand what is happening on stage. This is also known as enunciation.
Nuance:	This describes the small differences in sound that can alter how a line is spoken to change the meaning or feeling in the text. The use of nuance in vocal skills is often very subtle. Nuance has similarities to how an actor uses tone and intonation.

**Task:**

**How would you use voice to portray the change in character of ONE role in the play Find Me? Outline four ways you would use your voice and back this up with four moments where this use of voice would be most appropriate.**

## Physical Skills

A performer's use of physical skills is central to how they interpret and convey the message of the text. So it is vital to consider how these are used to communicate to an audience.

A performer's use of Facial Expression can be grouped into seven basic emotions:

- Fear
- Anger
- Disgust
- Sadness
- Contempt
- Surprise
- Happiness

Facial Expression:

A performer's facial expression can reveal a character's innermost feelings or thoughts to an audience as well as communicating their response to what is happening on stage or to other characters.

Body Language:

This is the way a performer communicates non-verbally. Performers can use their body in a wide variety of ways to convey emotional responses. Body language can provide an incredibly powerful and instant way of transmitting information and connecting with the audience.

A performer's use of gesture:

- Can help to sum up how a character feels at any given moment in the production. A character shaking a fist, for example, may convey a great deal to the audience without the need for words.
- Can be socially, culturally or historically important. It is important to be aware of this when approaching your performance text.

Gesture:

A way of expressing a character's thoughts or emotions and often works together with body language. Gestures can reflect an action and can be an instant way of communicating.

Proxemics:

The distance between performers / characters on stage to indicate relationship or between actor and audience.

## A performer's use of stance

This can also be referred to as posture. A performer's use of stance can reveal the following about the character:

- Status
- Gender
- Profession
- Age
- Emotional State
- Physical Well-Being

**Stance:** The way a person stands or the pose they adopt. A person's stance is affected by their emotional, environmental and physical experiences. If a person is upset, tired and cold, they may look down with arms crossed and held close to the body, and knees slightly bent. This is a non-verbal way of communicating the character's thoughts and situation to an audience.

**Stillness:** Lack of movement. A performer may choose to keep still on purpose, to convey a character's caution or lack of control over their physical response. It can also be used to build tension.

### **Task:**

**Outline at least three moments in Find Me where a character's use of stillness would build tension or convey a character's feelings. Fully justify your ideas.**

A performer's use of movement:

Movement is an essential form of expression and is vital for any performer to consider:

- How they will move
- Where they will move
- Why they will move

Movement often follows on from a character's objectives of motivation in a scene. The performer first needs to decide on the purpose of the movement before deciding on what form it will take.

**Movement:** This connects to stance, stillness, facial expression and body language as movement can encompass all of these elements. This quality of a performer's movement can convey a great deal about a particular character.

**Spatial Awareness:** This describes how a performer may use space on stage and what this might reveal about their character's personality. It is linked to proxemics, which describes how space is used on stage.

## Interpreting Character

Understanding and interpreting characters is a large part of approaching plays. A performer will consider the personality and purpose in order to understand their role in more depth.

### Bringing character to life

All performers must understand the personality of the character they will act as on stage.

**Personality:**

- Determines a character's thoughts, feelings and behaviour.
- Can explain what characters say and do and why they do or say it.

**Personality:** These are the characteristics or qualities that describe an individual's distinct character or way of behaving.

**Purpose:** A character's purpose in a play often drives his or her behaviour. It can explain why they act in the way they do. Purpose often connects with aims and objectives.

## Motives, aims and objectives

When approaching play texts, as well as understanding a character's purpose, a performer needs to consider the motives, aims and objectives of the character they are playing.

- Motives:** The character's deeper motivation and the underlying reason why they act in the way they do. Motives are behind a character's aims and objectives.
- Aims and objectives:** A character's aims are their immediate and conscious goals; their objectives describe how they will go about achieving these goals.
- Character Development:** This outlines how a character develops throughout the "action of the play". It can be shown by events during the course of the play or by referring to events that took place before the start of the play's action begins.
- Character Relationships:** In all performance texts, character relationships are important to character development. Performers may also consider a character's relationship with the audience in texts, particularly if they speak a soliloquy.

### **Task:**

**Choose one character from Find Me and, through reading the play, outline what you think their motives, aims and objectives are. Outline this by referencing to key moments of the text to help back up your ideas.**

## Research and Impact

When understanding and interpreting a character, a performer may explore and research the character's past as well as considering the impact of the character on the audience.

Researching a character's past – reading the play really carefully and making notes on things that are said about a character by others is a useful tool for this.

### **Task:**

**Choose any of the characters from Find Me and make a list of "Things others say about..." for the main roles such as Verity, Jean, Mark and Edward. Through this task, you will see the character from different perspectives and see how others see them.**

Research: This is the work a performer does to understand the character they are playing in more depth. This may mean researching the historical time period during which the play is set as well as considering the playwright's intentions.

Impact on the audience: Different characters can affect the audience in different ways, for a number of reasons. A performer must consider what the impact of their character's behaviour will be, and how this will be conveyed at different moments in the play.

**Task:**

**What impact do you think the following characters have on the audience:**

**Verity – find key moments to back up your thoughts**

**Jean – find key moments to back up your thoughts.**

**Edward – find key moments to back up your thoughts.**

## Performance Skills:

A performer may use a number of possible techniques or approaches on stage to enhance a performance:

- Still Images
- Asides
- Monologue
- Physical Theatre
- Narration
- Multi-Role
- Mime
- Flashback and Flash forward
- Symbolism
- Split Scene (Cross-Cutting)
- Caricature
- Choral Speech

Audience asides can be used to communicate important information directly to the audience and a still image can be used to capture an important moment.

**Aside:** A character's moment of discussion with the audience. Aside often works well when one character wishes to connect with the audience without wanting the other characters on stage to hear.

**Still Image:** Sometimes known as a tableau or a freeze frame – this is a moment in time that has been stopped, with the performers still on stage. Still image can be a powerful, visual way of connecting with an audience.

### **Task:**

**Outline two moments in the play Find Me where a Still Image could be used to represent a key moment or to visually engage the audience. Justify your choices.**

The use of a monologue may explain a character's thoughts or feelings. Physical theatre can be used to capture a moment using the body in performance.

A playwright typically uses monologue:

To impart information from one character to others on stage.  
As a way of connecting with an audience.

When a character is alone on stage and delivers their inner thoughts or feelings out loud, this is known as a soliloquy.

Physical Theatre                      A distinct style of theatre where a performer uses movement and physicality in a visual way to communicate with the audience.

Monologue:                              A speech that a performer delivers on their own. A monologue can be spoken to other characters on stage or directly to the audience.

**Task:**

**Find one moment from Find Me where Physical Theatre could be used. Outline how you would approach this moment – what would you intend to communicate to your audience and why.**

**Choose one monologue from Find Me, outline how you would stage this using set, lighting, props and how you would create mood and atmosphere through the lines being delivered and theatrical elements.**

Narration is one device that helps to tell the story of the play, while the technique of multi-role can allow a performer to communicate a number of different characters.

Multi Role can:

- Provide an effective way of telling a story with a small company of performers.
- Be a device to tell the story, so that the audience can focus on the story's message.
- Be achieved through the use of costume and physical and vocal skills.
- Be an effective way to engage an audience.

Multi-role is often referred to as a Brechtian technique, as it was a key idea of the theatre practitioner Bertolt Brecht. Brecht wanted his audiences to focus on the message of the play rather than becoming too attached to any particular character. Brecht believed that a performer can “distance” themselves from a role they are playing by portraying a number of roles to an audience in the same play.

Multi-Role:                              When a performer plays various roles on stage in one play. Multi-Role can include performers playing different genders and personalities. These changes are often portrayed through an adjustment in the performer's costume, physicality or voice.

Narration:                                The process of telling a story. It can take many forms, including a character narrating sections of the play, or the playwright using a specified narrator or narrators to carry out a specific role in the play.

**Task:**

**Find moments in Find Me where Multi-Role is used and tell me why the playwright has indicated that this technique should be used.**

**Find moments in Find Me where Narration takes place. How are these sections narrated and why do you think they are written in this way?**

Mimed sequence: This is a moment in a play that relies solely on the use of non-verbal communication such as body language, physicality and facial expression.

Flashback/Flash Forward: The use of flashback and flash forward moves the action in a performance backwards or forwards in time.

**Task:**

**Outline how you could use a mimed sequence in Find Me to enhance one moment. Be clear about how this mimed sequence would help to tell the story of the play.**

Split Scene / Cross-Cutting: Also referred to as Cross-Cutting, this is where two scenes are cut between each other on stage at the same time. The idea is very similar to a filmic device that moves between scenes in a seamless way.

Symbolism: Ideas, images or suggestions that are used to represent thoughts, emotions or qualities. Symbolism can be obvious at times but can also be fairly complex in performance.

**Task:**

**Find one moment in Find Me where you could use either symbolism or split scene to enhance the performance. Justify your decisions.**

## Caricature

Performers can approach a role by exaggerating the characteristics of that role, creating a caricature that is often larger than life.

Caricature works particularly well in a stylised form of theatre, rather than in naturalistic theatre.

**Caricature:** A performer can decide to use caricature to play a character in an exaggerated way, so creating a character that is a larger than life version of the original.

**Choral speech:** This is when more than one person speaks or reads text at the same time. It can emphasise or highlight key moments on stage.

### **Task:**

**Explain where the use of either caricature or choral speech could enhance Find Me. Base your ideas on the context or style of the text as a whole. Justify your ideas fully.**

## Subject Specific Vocabulary – Design

What is the role of the Designer?

Works closely with the director to ensure that the vision / concept is realised.

Overall responsibility for aspects such as:

- ▶ Set and props
- ▶ Sound and/or Music
- ▶ Costumes
- ▶ Lighting

Making decisions of what will appear on stage; the types of lights used and when, the style and colours of costumes, the amount of props used and so on.

The designer will take into account the type of theatre space /staging that the director has chosen.

Things to consider when designing Find Me:

- ▶ Minimal props, scenery.
- ▶ Type of theatre space being utilised.
- ▶ Multi role
- ▶ Semiotics
- ▶ Gels, Gobos, Flood lights, Fresnels, Spotlights, Barn Doors – how these are being used scene by scene and to what dramatic effect.
- ▶ Actor / Audience relationship.

### **Task:**

**How would you use design elements in a key scene of your choice from Find Me to engage the audience? Fully justify your ideas using key moments from your chosen scene and outline your reasons for your design decisions.**

Costume Designer:

Costume and context

Aspects of costume: Masks, Make-up, Accessories, Hair style

Materials of costume: cotton, lace, metal, plastic/PVC, Wool, velvet, Leather

Colours and symbolism:

<b>Brown</b>	<b>earth, dirt, nature</b>
<b>Pink</b>	<b>compassion, femininity, love</b>
<b>Grey</b>	<b>boring, plain, oppression, routine</b>
<b>Red</b>	<b>anger, danger, blood, passion, love, fear</b>
<b>Green</b>	<b>nature, growth, innocence, progress, jealousy</b>
<b>Blue</b>	<b>opportunity, depth, strength, truthfulness, water, cold</b>
<b>Purple</b>	<b>royalty, high status, power</b>
<b>White</b>	<b>purity, innocence, goodness, faith</b>
<b>Black</b>	<b>night, evil, high status, mystery, death</b>
<b>Yellow</b>	<b>light, joy, youth, energy</b>

Lighting Designer

The lighting designer has a major responsibility for designing and conveying the mood and atmosphere of a performance. They work collaboratively with other designers to help to communicate the director's intentions.

Jobs include:

- Working with the director and other designers to ensure that the vision is being realised through all the design elements.
- Problem solving
- Creating a lighting plot
- Creative lighting control – must have the vision and to consider what is possible on stage.
- Understanding the themes of the play and the style of the performance.
- Visual consistency
- Selecting the colours, shades and tone in the lighting.

Aspects to consider:

- Colour
- Atmosphere / Mood
- Symbolism
- Time
- Position
- Effect
- Location
- Angle

Style – naturalistic is a look and feel that resembles real life. If the selected style of a performance is naturalism, then it is important that the lighting reflects this.

- Colours will tend to be quite neutral and evenly spread
- Lighting will also need to support other design areas, such as sunlight coming through a window – just as it would be in reality.

Style – abstract – when something is abstract, it doesn't try to represent real life directly. Instead, it attempts to express ideas through elements such as colour and shape. In an abstract performance the lighting:

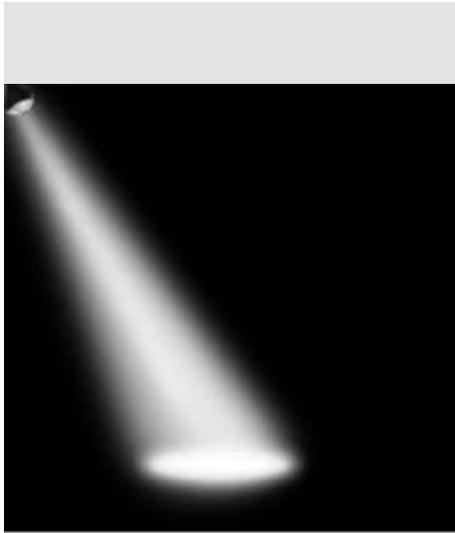
- May be more symbolic
- Will use colours to represent emotions. Strong colours may represent characters or locations, rather than a physical set.

Lighting states, cues and changes:

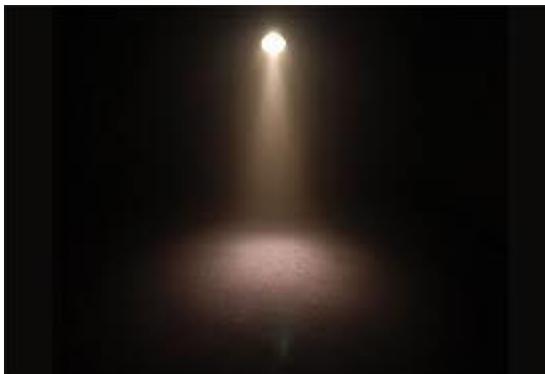
- **Fade** – This technique gradually rings in or takes out a lighting state. The exact amount of time required for a fade can be pre-determined and programmed into the lighting board. Therefore, a fade can be fast or it can happen very gradually over a long period – for example to represent a sunrise over a whole scene.
- **Snap** – This is where the lighting suddenly changes from one state to another. A snap can be used effectively to create tension or to signify a change of situation in a performance. For example, when a character goes from being part of a scene to directly addressing the audience.
- **Cross-Fade** – Similar to a fade, a cross fade occurs when one lighting state gradually fades out while the next lighting state fades in. This allows smooth transitions between different lighting states.
- **State** – This refers to which lights are being used at any one time.
- **Blackout** – This signifies all the lights going out at once and can be a strong signal at the start or end of a scene, an act or a whole play. Blackouts can also create a sudden moment of tension, leaving the audience in total darkness. However, they should be used sparingly so they do not disrupt the pace and flow of the performance for the audience.
- **Cue** – This is the indicator of when the next lighting state should take place. Often, the cue will be a specific line the performer says or a move the performer makes.

## Types of Lantern

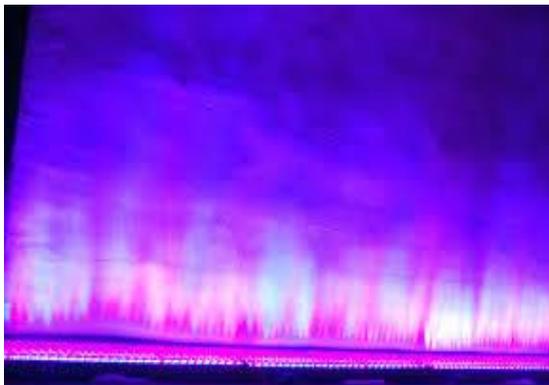
**Spotlight:** Creates a harsh edge circular beam. The lantern has a clear front.



**Fresnel:** A soft edged spotlight. The lantern has a frosted pattern at the front.



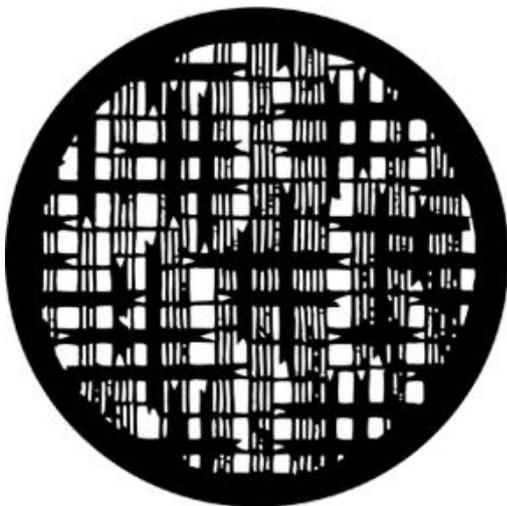
**Flood light:** - Fills the whole stage with light. The lantern is flat and rectangular.



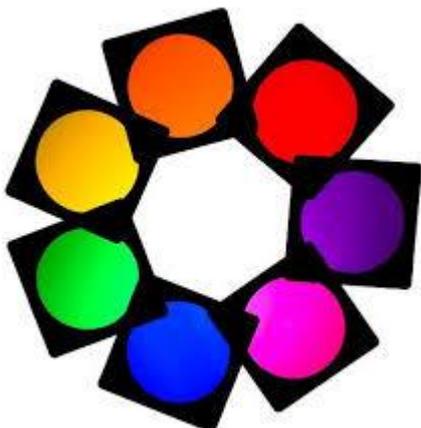
**Barn Doors:** These are the “doors” that go in front of a lantern to vary the shape and size of the beam.



**Gobo:** A steel filter that is placed in front of a lantern to create various shapes through the beam.



**Gels:** A coloured plastic sheet that is placed in front of a lantern to change the colour of a beam.



## Task:

Using at least three different scenes from *Find Me*, outline how you would use lighting and lighting techniques to communicate meaning to an audience.

### Set Designer

The set designer is responsible for creating the physical location in which the performers work. The set helps indicate where scenes are set and convey important messages to the audience. The set designer works collaboratively with other designers and the director to help communicate the director's intentions and vision.

Things to consider as a Set Designer:

- |                            |  |
|----------------------------|--|
| Creative intentions:       | The set designer must have a clear vision for how the set will look in performance and consider what is possible in the chosen performance space.  |
| Visual consistency:        | The set designer must ensure the set is consistent with all the other production elements to ensure a smooth visual experience for the audience.   |
| Creating the set:          | The set designer will work with a construction team to ensure the set design is created and realised as closely and as practically as possible.  |
| Working with the director: | The set designer will work with the other designers and the director to ensure ideas are consistent with the overall creative feel of the performance.   |
| Levels, space, entrances:  | The set designer must select and design the most effective use of space, levels and entrances / exits to communicate specific locations and ideas to the audience at key moments of the performance. |
| Themes and style:          | The set designer must ensure that the design team have a clear understanding of the themes and issues in the play and how these could be communicated to the audience.                               |

## Types of set design:

**Naturalistic** set design will strive 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, so they look as they would in real life.

**Abstract** set design will 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.

**A set design for Physical Theatre** will be adapted so it provides opportunities for performers to use the space in unusual ways, from different directions and different levels. This is because Physical theatre often relies heavily on the set to help support the performers and the style of the production.

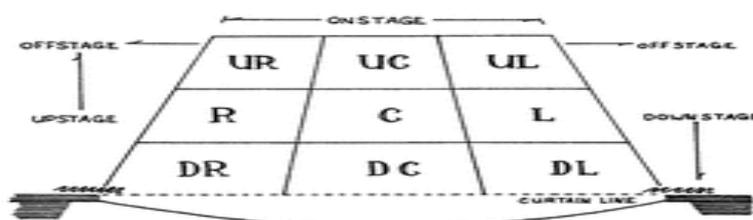
**Minimalistic** set designs tend to be brought right back to basics. However, the set designer may decide to make what is there extremely symbolic. It may also be that, while there is a lack of physical material on stage, the use of colour plays a prominent part in conveying ideas about the performance.

## Areas of the Stage:

Remember that the areas of the stage are always from the **actor's** perspective whilst on stage facing the audience.

upstage right	upstage centre	upstage left
centre stage right	centre stage	centre stage left
downstage right	downstage centre	downstage right

Centre stage right and Centre stage left are also known simply as stage right and stage left.



**Task:**

**Outline in some detail your choice of set for the play Find Me. For this question, you must consider Olwen Wymark's opening stage directions of "a bare stage" and outline your set decisions fully by referencing to key moments from the play.**

**You may choose to sketch out your set design but you won't receive any additional marks for this.**

## Sound

The sound designer works with both music and specific sound effects to enhance the production in various ways. The use of sound can signal many different things to an audience and can have a powerful impact on mood and atmosphere.

Creating a sound plot	The sound designer will work with a sound team to ensure the design is created and realised as closely and as practically as possible. If the sound is to be produced live, then the sound designer will work with musicians and / or performers to ensure the correct type of sound is created at the right time.
Working with the director:	The sound designer will work with the director and other designers to ensure ideas for the sound design are consistent with the overall creative feel of the performance.
Production consistency:	The sound designer must ensure the sound is consistent with all other production elements to ensure a smooth experience for the audience.
Themes and style of the play:	The sound designer must select and design the most effective use of sound effects, music, volume levels and other audible aspects of the production to communicate specific ideas and emotions to the audience at key moments in the performance.
Selecting volume, style and tone:	The sound designer will select and design levels and styles of music, and even the specific location in the performance space from which the sound is produced (for example, speakers behind the audience). This helps to communicate specific emotions and ideas to an audience at key moments.
Creative audio control:	The sound designer must have a clear vision for how all audio will sound in the performance space and consider what impact this will have on the audience.

## Music and sound effects

These can be either live or pre-recorded.

### Live sound:

- Can be completely integrated into the performance
- Can be perfectly timed to fit into the performance
- Can sound much more authentic
- Can be inconsistent and can differ each time
- Can add extra strain on the performance as a whole.
- May need additional crew / performers, costing more.

### Recorded sound:

- Will be consistent in every performance
- Can be re-recorded until perfected.
- Relies on technology.
- May be difficult to adapt timing to the performers.
- Is less “authentic”, so there is some loss of quality overall.

If a text is naturalistic, you may choose to use naturalistic sound effects such as rain, car door closing, thunder etc.

If a text is more abstract, you could use a sound effect such as a loud “swish” to represent someone looking through a pile of papers or music that represents a specific style, such as atonal music (clashing chords and notes) to represent confusion and conflict.

### **Task:**

**What sound effects or Music would you use in your production of Find Me? Make the decisions a sound designer would make and justify your ideas through key moments from the play.**

## Subject Specific Vocabulary – Director

### Role of the Director:

- ▶ Responsible of the practical and creative interpretation of a script.
- ▶ Involved in the whole process including working with designers, stage managers right through to the final performance.
- ▶ Responsible for the “vision” or “concept” of the performance of the chosen play.\*
- ▶ Works closely with the actors and all the technical team to realise the “vision” or “concept”.
- ▶ Casting the play – holding auditions and making final decisions.\*
- ▶ Organising, preparing and running rehearsals.
- ▶ What theatre space will be used and how this will be executed.\*

### Task:

**With the roles of the Director highlighted with \* make decisions with reference to the play Find Me. Make your notes in the space below:**

What is a vision / concept?

- ▶ An idea or interpretation of the play in performance.
- ▶ What the play will look like in performance.
- ▶ What the play will feel like in performance.
- ▶ Communicating a particular message to an audience through the performance.
- ▶ Using practitioners to help realise the idea or interpretation (i.e. they may choose to do a Brechtian version of a Shakespeare play).

Things to consider whilst directing Find Me:

- ▶ Stick to the text as written – don't change the order of scenes or what happens in them.
- ▶ As much as possible, use the stage directions to assist in your concept / vision.
- ▶ The playwright's intentions must be central to the concept – Olwen Wymark wrote the play for a reason – what is it?
- ▶ Episodic structure will only lend itself to certain practitioners – which practitioners?
- ▶ Minimal props and scenery
- ▶ Multi-roles are evident in the play.

Other aspects to consider as a Director:

Messages – Plays often carry a strong message, sometimes more than one. A director may choose to expand on key messages in their production of a play.

Subtext - Describes the unspoken thoughts and messages behind the text. Characters may say one thing but mean the complete opposite. Clues as to the play's key messages, and the context of those messages may be given both in the spoken words and the stage directions.

## Types of Staging:

### Proscenium Arch Stage

- Audience tends to sit on one side.
- Associated with Naturalistic Theatre.
- Tiered seating
- Raked stage so all audience can see the full stage.
- Three areas: Stalls, Dress Circle, Balcony.

### Thrust Stage

- Audience are sat covering three sides of the stage.
- Creates an intimate atmosphere.
- Audience see different perspectives of the play at all times.
- Actors may have their backs to audience members at some point.
- Breaking of the fourth wall is easy due to the close proximity between actor and audience.

### Black Box

- Small, intimate space that is flexible staging wise.
- All four walls are black.
- Seats can be flexible and change depending on the performance being staged.
- The Studio Theatre in Sheffield (downstairs from the Crucible).
- Simplistic and minimalistic staging allowing for the audience to make up their own minds and visually create the setting themselves.
- A bare stage.

### In The Round

- Stage is positioned in the middle of the auditorium.
- Audience are sat all the way round the stage witnessing the play from different perspectives.
- Creates an intimate atmosphere.
- Good for theatre that wants / needs audience involvement.
- Easy to break the fourth wall.

### Promenade

- Can happen anywhere.
- No divide between actor and audience.
- Realistic and intimate atmosphere – audience can be part of the performance.
- Often audiences move round and follow the actors round a large space.
- Frees up actors to make the best use of the space and even interact with the audience.

### Traverse

- Audience sits at two sides of the stage.
- Audience can see each other.
- Stage is like a catwalk although not necessarily that narrow.
- Limits the use of set although projected images can be used.
- Creates an intimate atmosphere due to the actor / audience relationship.

### End On

- Audience are situated at one end of the space facing the action.
- Tiered seating.
- Acting tends to take place on the floor level; actors can look up to the audience and audience may look down on the actors.
- Creates an intimate atmosphere.
- Effective for a play where a judgement or opinion is to be made of a character or situation

### Task:

**What staging would you use for your production of Find Me and why?**

Consistency and communication:

A director must consider:

- The impact the staging of the production will have on the audience.
- The implications for audience awareness which must also be planned carefully – knowing exactly where the audience is positioned will help a director decide on the positioning of set, props as well as blocking of the actors.
- The communication of the central message or messages of the play.

Purpose:

As well as deciding on the central message of a play, the director must also be very clear about its purpose. Knowing why the play was written, and what it is designed to do, is vital when making decisions about the wide range of production elements.

Plays exist for many different purposes – for example to teach (didactic) or to entertain.

While a playwright may have a very specific reason for writing a play, a director may have a different purpose driving their production.

To ensure a production is successful, a director must understand the original purpose of the play. This will help them to define the purpose of their particular production.

Examples of Purpose:

To entertain  
To educate  
To influence  
To understand  
To empower  
To question  
To challenge

**Task:**

**What do you think the purpose of Find Me is from Olwen Wymark's perspective?**

**What is the purpose of your production of Find Me?**

Mood and atmosphere:

The Mood of a scene or whole production is:

- How that scene or production feels
- Linked to the emotions being communicated
- Created by the director, performers and performance elements all working together.

**Task:**

**What do you think the mood is for Find Me? Give examples of key scenes to back up your points.**

The Atmosphere of a production is:

- Closely linked with mood.
- Refers more to the emotions of the audience
- Is what the audience feels as a result of the mood of the scene.

**Task:**

**What do you think the atmosphere is for Find Me? Give examples of key scenes to back up your points.**

**Additional space for notes or tasks.**

**Additional space for notes or tasks.**

**Additional space for notes or tasks.**

**Additional space for notes or tasks.**