

# Working with Extracts

A Unit of Work for Devising Drama

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## Working with Extracts

On the following pages are a series of 1 page script extracts that I have used with Key Stage 3 and Key Stage 4 Drama groups to create drama, develop skills and perform work.

There are a million ways in which you can work with extracts and the exercises below are just a few. You may decide to use the extracts in completely different ways. You may for example use them only as a starting stimulus for students to create and devise their own work or you may choose to use them in a more direct way.

Lines have been numbered as a simple way for line learning and for referencing.

The extracts are deliberately without any stage directions and you may scaffold them as you need to for your own needs. The bare lines will provide for a range of creative exercises.

Depending on the depth of the work you are looking for and your particular aims, the work resulting from each extract may last 1 lesson or a series of lessons.

The working instructions are addressed to students but I have used these verbally and visually in lessons. Written instructions to students are useful for cover lessons for which these extracts are invaluable.

The final page ([click](#)) lists some other simple things you may try with extracts.

**R Toola**

**EXTRACT 1**

<b>A: Come in!</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>B: Thank you.</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>A: Well?</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>B: Well..... what?</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>A: Oh.... I didn't realise.....</b>	
<b>B: Can you stop leaving your sentences unfinished and tell me what you didn't realise?</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>A: I am sorry... but you really don't know?</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>B: Know what? You haven't told me anything?</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>A: I shouldn't have to if you knew... and you obviously don't.... so...</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>B: So?</b>	<b>9</b>
<b>A: Goodbye!</b>	<b>10</b>
<b>B: Oh.</b>	<b>11</b>
<b>A: Sorry to have wasted your time.</b>	<b>12</b>
<b>B: Have you? If only you'd tell me we could be sure?</b>	<b>13</b>
<b>A: Don't be so nosey!</b>	<b>14</b>
<b>B: Goodbye!</b>	<b>15</b>

### Working with Extract 1

- Read the lines in Extract 1.
- Put a situation to the lines :-

Where is this taking place?

What could this realistically be about?

Who are A and B? Do they have names?

- Do you start the lines straight away?
- What sort of age do you think they are from the language and situation?
- Are both present at the start or do they have entrances.

Once you have thought about the questions above and any others that come into your mind:

1. Read and perform the work spontaneously with your partner to get an initial 'feel' of the extract. Were there any useful things that you did spontaneously, such as the positions you took? Movements you made? (Even if this was a raised eye brow!). Dramatic pauses? Emphasis of words?
2. Create a realistic piece using these lines and your chosen situation. You can add 3-5 more lines anywhere in the extract if you want to.
3. As you start to create your work think about who is on stage at the very beginning Just A? Just B? Both A and B?
4. What action or stage business is happening at the start with those characters on stage?
5. If you decide someone is off stage, where, how and when do they make their entrance so that it looks and feels real?

6. As you go through your lines think about how you want to use your voice, facial expressions and body language to show your character, meanings and the situation.
7. Do you think there is a subtext or hidden meanings under the lines and situation? How will you use your skills as a performer to show or communicate these to an audience? For example, can the way you use a pause or the way you use your face convey things deeper than the lines?
8. One simple way you can help yourselves to practically understand the sub-text is to say your line and then say aloud what you may be thinking (thought tracking). Repeat this as you go through the entire extract. Change or get rid of any thoughts that simply don't work. Think of ways you could communicate the thoughts you want to keep.
9. As you are developing your work, who do you think has the higher status over all? Does the status change? To get you to think about status of A and B try the following simple exercise. Face your partner and read your lines to each other. As you read each line, if you feel you have the higher status move forward a step. If you think you have the same status stay where you are and if you think you have a lower status take a step back. Use this to help you develop your work and think carefully how you can show the status clearly through your voice, face, posture, movement and body language.
10. Develop, perform and evaluate your work.

Extract 1 - Extension notes to the teacher

1. Students could carry out character exercises- role on the wall, hot-seating, emotional memory.
2. Students could devise the 'next scene' some time later.
3. You could ask students to develop the same lines for a completely different situation.
4. You could ask students to use the same lines to create a comic piece and evaluate how they used drama mediums and elements differently to achieve this.

**EXTRACT 2**

<b>A: As you know....</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>B: Yes?</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>A: One doesn't take these things lightly...</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>B: Of course not!</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>A: And one must be careful.</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>B: Not to upset anyone. I know this...</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>A: So how can you explain?</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>B: Explain?</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>A: Yes, explain?</b>	<b>9</b>
<b>B: What?</b>	<b>10</b>
<b>A: Do I need to spell out the obvious?</b>	<b>11</b>
<b>B: It may seem you do as I don't know what you're talking about!</b>	<b>12</b>
<b>A: You can't explain why he (or she) was so upset?</b>	<b>13</b>
<b>B: After Friday?</b>	<b>14</b>
<b>A: Yes... after Friday</b>	<b>15</b>
<b>B: No!</b>	<b>16</b>
<b>A: No?</b>	<b>17</b>
<b>B: Yes! No I can't explain....</b>	<b>18</b>
<b>A: But I thought.....</b>	<b>19</b>
<b>B: Well you obviously thought wrong....</b>	<b>20</b>

## Working with Extract 2

Read extract 2 and think about the following:

- Can you think of more than one situation for this extract?
  - Where is this taking place?
  - What could this be about?
  - Who are A and B?
1. You are given a set consisting of a table that you will use as a bar to fix drinks. B is already on stage behind the bar fixing drinks and you have to decide how and when A comes in. During your piece, B must make A a drink. A at some point must go behind the bar to fix himself/herself another drink.
  2. Start rehearsing this piece with specific concentration on staging, blocking and proxemics to try and convey meanings, situations and relationships. You may do this in a linear fashion by looking at each in turn - so staging first, then blocking and then proxemics.  
  
Alternatively you may decide you work better in a more diffuse way and consider all 3 at the same time as you work through the piece.
  3. As you continue to develop your piece think about how you will use your space to stage and block bearing in mind what you want to show and communicate with the audience.
  4. Perform your piece.
  5. Did your use of the bar fit in with your piece or did it look out of place? How effective do you think your staging, blocking and proxemics were?



**EXTRACT 3**

- A: So... how did it go? 1**
- B: Not good.... You know what she's like. 2**
- C: That's a little unfair. I mean yes she can be insensitive at the best of times but I thought she was really listening and gave the impression she wanted to help. 3**
- B: Are we talking about the same person? 4**
- C: What's that supposed to mean - I was there with you! 5**
- A: Oh.... really.....and you think ... 6**
- C: Yes! 7**
- B: No! How can you even think about standing up for her? 8**
- A: But just let's hear things through... 9**
- B: And whose side are you on. Don't you believe me? 10**
- C: See what I mean? 11**
- B: What do you mean by that remark? Oh....I see now... so both of you think I'm wrong ... 12**
- A & C: Oh come on... 13**
- B: No no... don't worry.. I understand perfectly 14**
- A: Come on – we're friends; we know you're not happy about this so let's hear what you have to say... 13**
- C: Yes. Come on then... 14**
- B: Nothing more to say is there..... 15**

### Working with Extract 3

- Read the lines in Extract 3.
  - Put a situation to the lines - these prompts might help:
    - a. Where is this taking place?
    - b. Who are A, B and C?
    - c. Can you give them names?
    - d. What is the relationship between them?
    - e. Can you create these characters?
    - f. What sort of age do you think they are from the language and situation?
1. Working in a group of six read the extract together and come up with 3 still images that visually captures what your group thinks the extract is about. Share this with the rest of the class.
  2. Now use this information to start rehearsing a non-realistic piece. First, three of you read through the piece and the other three thought track for you after each line.
  3. Discuss what the thought tracks tell you and keep no more than two of these to include in your final piece.
  4. As you rehearse, could you mark the moment in this piece - for example with a still image, slow motion, a sound or a spot light? Why have you marked your chosen moment?
  5. As you develop your work you will be asked to use a flashback and soundscape in your drama. You will need to decide what you will reveal through your flashback and soundscape.
  6. Rehearse and polish your work before you perform this.

**EXTRACT 4**

<b>A: Hello!</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>B: Hello.</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>A: So?</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>B: Yes?</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>A: I heard it all went well.....</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>B: Yes... I wasn't sure at first but ...</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>A: Go on, do tell.....</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>B: Well not being modest but I was pleased with myself...</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>A: And so you should be!</b>	<b>9</b>
<b>B: You don't mind? It was supposed to be your idea...</b>	<b>10</b>
<b>A: No no... really I'm pleased that you took it on</b>	<b>11</b>
<b>B: Thank you but only because .....</b>	<b>12</b>
<b>A: Let's not go there ...I'm trying to be supportive</b>	<b>13</b>
<b>B: I know but if only you could have done it...</b>	<b>14</b>
<b>A: Yes....</b>	<b>15</b>
<b>B: Instead of me...</b>	<b>16</b>
<b>A: Yes.....</b>	<b>17</b>

### Working with Extract 4

Learn the lines for extract 4 and start developing your ideas practically. Always bear in mind that you are going to be asked to create a scene before or after the extract.

You can develop the piece making all your own creative decisions as to the style of the piece. Think carefully how you will stage your piece and which drama techniques are best suited to your ideas. Think carefully about how you can use your performance skills to realise your ideas.

Create, develop and perform your work.

**EXTRACT 5**

- A: So that's it then....just like that** 1
- B: I guess so...** 2
- A: I can't believe you're willing to do this.** 3
- B: It's not easy...you're my best friend...** 4
- A: I'd hate to be your enemy if this is what you would do to your best friend.** 5
- B: Like I said it's not easy but it's your own fault...** 6
- A: Everyone makes mistakes you know.....** 7
- B: Yes and some idiot like me has to pay the consequences.** 8
- A: I didn't mean for things to happen this way..** 9
- B: So you said, but they did ...didn't they?** 10
- A: YES** 11
- B: Leave me alone and stop the guilt trip and face up to your responsibilities.** 12
- A: I've said sorry... that's not easy ...what responsibilities do you want me to face?** 13
- B: How about telling them it was you and not me responsible for what happened...** 14
- A: I can't do that... I'd get into trouble...maybe even the police.** 15
- B: What about me and the police?** 16
- A: You can get out of it, you're better than me at finding your way through things.** 17
- B: Are you going to own up?** 18
- A: I can't** 19
- B: So that's it then....** 20
- A: I guess so....** 21

### Working with Extract 5

- Read the lines in the extract.
- Put a situation to the lines - what's happened between these two people?
- Where is this taking place?
- Can you find moments where the two people are thinking things to themselves? Underline some lines where you think they are thinking things to themselves.
- Now act out the script with the lines and learn them as you go along.
- Do this again but this time with thought tracks where you underlined the lines.
- There is tension in this piece between the two characters - the tension caused by **their relationship** and the **situation**. Try to create this tension as a performer so that your audience can feel it! You may consider using **any** of the following to achieve this....
  - Dramatic silences/pauses
  - Movement in relation to each other
  - Use of voice
  - Use of face
  - Pace of delivery of the lines
  - Stage actions
- Rehearse and polish your work before performing this.

## **Additional Notes to the Teacher**

When you use these extracts you may also consider:

1. Line learning as a technical exercise- something I start in Year 7 in a 'Voice' scheme of work.
2. Ask students to reduce the lines to a bare minimum to capture the essence of the extract. So no more than two words per line.
3. Create, develop and perform the extract in mime so the focus is on non-verbal mediums/elements of drama.
4. Add a narrator or ask students to direct address at 'important points'.
5. Develop characters for example by hot-seating or using role on the wall. Encourage students to discuss other characters and you can even role reverse.
6. Give students a simple piece of set or prop to work with.
7. Do a session on entrances and exits and apply this knowledge to one of the extracts.
8. Do a session on voice or movement and use apply the knowledge gained to develop these aspects in the extract.
9. Come up with 3 totally different interpretations of the script and develop these.
10. Use the extract to come up with starting ideas only and use this to develop and completely original piece of work.
11. Devise a complete (not necessarily lengthy) play using one of the extracts.