

# KS5 Reading List for Drama

Enhanced Reading list	Author
<p>Here's a curated wider reading and viewing list for A-Level Drama students exploring <b>Steven Berkoff</b>, <b>The Maids</b> (Jean Genet), <b>That Face</b> (Polly Stenham), <b>Verbatim Theatre</b>, and <b>Stanislawski</b>. These texts and resources will deepen understanding of the themes, styles, and theatrical methodologies associated with these works and practitioners.</p>	
<p><b>Steven Berkoff</b></p> <p>Berkoff's physical and expressionist style often defies conventional realism. His influences and approach to theatre can be better understood through these texts:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <b>Plays by Steven Berkoff:</b><ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>○ <i>East</i>: A gritty and poetic exploration of East London life.</li><li>○ <i>West</i>: A companion piece to <i>East</i>, focusing on gang culture.</li><li>○ <i>The Trial</i>: Berkoff's adaptation of Kafka's novel, showcasing his heightened physical style.</li><li>○ <i>Metamorphosis</i>: A study of Kafka's novella using physical theatre.</li></ul></li><li>• <b>Theoretical and Contextual Reading:</b><ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>○ "Steven Berkoff and the Theatre of Self-Performance" by Robert Cross</li><li>○ "The Theatre of Steven Berkoff" by Steven Berkoff</li><li>○ Articles or interviews that explore Berkoff's relationship with Artaud's Theatre of Cruelty and Brecht's Epic Theatre.</li></ul></li><li>• <b>Practical Guides:</b><ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>○ "The Frantic Assembly Book of Devising Theatre" (Berkoff's work often intersects with devising methods).</li></ul></li></ul>	
<p><b>The Maids by Jean Genet</b></p> <p>This absurdist and symbolist play explores themes of power, identity, and performance. Supplementary reading:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <b>Other Plays by Jean Genet:</b><ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>○ <i>The Balcony</i>: A provocative exploration of power and illusion.</li><li>○ <i>The Blacks: A Clown Show</i>: Focused on racial and cultural identity within a theatrical context.</li></ul></li></ul>	

- **Theoretical and Contextual Reading:**

- "*Jean Genet and the Semiotics of Performance*" by Juan Carlos Rodriguez
- "*The Theatre of Jean Genet*" by David Bradby
- Explore essays on absurdism and symbolism in theatre.

- **Wider Viewing:**

- Watch productions of *The Maids*, including the critically acclaimed version directed by Benedict Andrews, starring Cate Blanchett and Isabelle Huppert.

### That Face by Polly Stenham

This intense family drama offers insight into contemporary British theatre and its exploration of dysfunctional family dynamics.

- **Other Plays by Polly Stenham:**

- *Tusk Tusk*: Another exploration of young people dealing with family breakdown.
- *No Quarter*: A darker reflection on privilege and self-destruction.

- **Related British Plays:**

- *Jerusalem* by Jez Butterworth (modern British theatre with raw emotional themes).
- *DNA* by Dennis Kelly (focused on group dynamics and moral corruption).

- **Theoretical and Contextual Reading:**

- "*In-Yer-Face Theatre*" by Aleks Sierz: Explores the raw and provocative style of plays like *That Face*.
- Articles or interviews with Polly Stenham about her writing process and inspirations.

### Verbatim Theatre

This documentary-style theatre uses real-life testimonies to create powerful performances.

- **Key Verbatim Plays:**

- *The Laramie Project* by Moisés Kaufman and the Tectonic Theater Project: Examines the aftermath of a hate crime.
- *My Name is Rachel Corrie* edited by Alan Rickman and Katharine Viner: Based on the diaries of Rachel Corrie.
- *London Road* by Alecky Blythe and Adam Cork: A verbatim musical about community reactions to a series of murders.

- **Practical Guides:**
  - *"Verbatim: Contemporary Documentary Theatre"* by Will Hammond and Dan Steward.
  - *"Theatre of the Real"* by Carol Martin: Explores how theatre intersects with reality and truth.
- **Wider Viewing:**
  - Explore filmed productions of *The Laramie Project* or *London Road* for stylistic inspiration.

## Stanislavski

The father of naturalistic acting, Stanislavski's methods remain foundational to drama students.

- **Core Texts by Stanislavski:**
  - *An Actor Prepares*: Introduces his system for developing a role.
  - *Building a Character*: Explores physicality and external work.
  - *Creating a Role*: Focuses on bringing characters to life.
- **Related Reading:**
  - *"The Stanislavski System"* by Sonia Moore: A concise guide to his methodology.
  - *"Stanislavski and the Actor"* by Jean Benedetti: A clear and practical exploration of Stanislavski's ideas.
- **Comparison to Other Practitioners:**
  - Brecht: *Brecht on Theatre* to understand how his Epic Theatre contrasts with Stanislavski's naturalism.
  - Meyerhold: Explore his biomechanics as an opposing theory of acting.

## General Wider Reading and Resources

- **Plays for Context:**
  - *A Streetcar Named Desire* by Tennessee Williams (Naturalism).
  - *Top Girls* by Caryl Churchill (Feminism and societal critique).
  - *The Birthday Party* by Harold Pinter (Absurdist influences).
- **Online Resources:**
  - Digital Theatre+: Hosts productions and interviews related to all the above themes and practitioners.

- National Theatre Collection: Includes adaptations and documentaries on theatre-making.

This reading list should equip students with a deeper understanding of the styles and themes they're studying while encouraging connections between texts and practitioners.