



The Edit by Sarah Gordon

Educational Pack for key stages 4 and 5



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What is this pack for?

This pack has been created by a teacher on the creative team to help give you information that is relevant to the GCSE and A-Level syllabi, regardless of which board you study. The pack aims to give in depth detail on the process, design and performance methods used in the performance. It will help with Live Theatre Essays, helping pupils to access the 'behind the scenes' perspectives and information into how the designs and performances were created.

This pack will also look into how professionals approach the process of taking a script and putting it onto the stage. It will give suggestions of methods and activities that we used that can also be used in the classroom.

When should I read this pack?

Ultimately this is up to you. If you are going to use the pack to help analyse and evaluate the play then the first part can be used before seeing the play to introduce students to the key themes and narrative. The second part of the pack can then be used to help with analysis as it will offer insights into the intended meaning and artistic intentions of the creative team alongside details of the design elements.

If you are using this pack to help with a 'from page to stage' process then the third section outlines good starting points and ideas of how to approach the process.

Introducing the play

Creative Team

Writer - Sarah Gordon

Director - Joe Hufton

Creative Producer - Lizzie Stables

Theatre Designer - Sam Wilde

Lighting Designer - Sam Thomas

Sound Designer - Liam McDermott

Stage Manager - Zoe Burnham

Assistant Director - Tansy Parkinson



What do they do?

Writer - Sarah Gordon

Playwrights write the script of a play. This can be an original idea that's completely fictional, inspired by real events or adapted from other material.

The essentials that the playwright is responsible for creating are as follows:

1. Select the specific subject matter and purpose of the play
2. Determine the focus and emphasis
4. Establish the point of view
5. Develop the dramatic structure or story arc
6. Create the characters.

After a draft of the script is ready, the playwright then begins to collaborate with a producer, director and cast to bring the script to life. Most commonly, playwrights will also work with a Dramaturg to redraft and improve the script.

Alternatively, some plays are created through workshops with directors and actors, devising the story together.

Creative Producer - Lizzie Stables

Being a theatre producer can mean many different things, depending on the scale of the production. In all productions, the producer is the person who raises the money, manages the budget and brings the creative team together, with the help of the Director. On small-scale productions like the *The Edit*, the producer is also responsible for everything from booking the tour, negotiating deals, drawing up contracts, creating schedules, booking travel and accommodation, to press and marketing, overseeing script development, casting and everything else in between.

The producer is responsible for the budget but is often the last person to get paid - their fee is the first thing to go in an emergency. It's a very exciting, rewarding job but one that's not for the faint-hearted!

Theatre designer - Sam Wilde

As a theatre designer my role is based in the visual language of the show, through meetings with the director and collaborating with the lighting designer, movement director and the rest of the creative team it is my job to create the "world" of the show. On smaller scale shows the designer is sometimes required to physically build and source items, whilst

on larger productions a department head is in charge of the teams which do these things. Generally speaking, it is usually split between two basic areas: Set and Costume.

Set designs can range from small scale to the truly epic, they can be naturalistic (a play set in a living room with three walls, carpet, sofa etc) or can be incredibly abstract (doing a performance of *Carmen* on a giant dead cow for example). All of these are developed by a designer, starting by working in a model box, drawing them up to technical drawings and working with scenic artists, production managers and build teams. It is the designer's job to make sure that everything is kept on track and proceeds as they need it to. Set designers are also in charge of personal props.

Costume designs can be a lot broader in content. They start with the clothing the actors wear, both naturalistic and abstract, but also include "personal props" (things like swords, guns, armour, phones, bags) as well as hair and makeup (including bodily wounds, blood) and sometimes puppets. It requires a good understanding of historical accuracy as well as cloth, texture and artistic flair.

KEY WORDS

Model Box - when developing a set design we usually make a scale model of the theatre and then make scale versions of the set to try ideas out in "the box"

Scale Model - The idea of a model box is that it is a smaller version of the theatre that you can try things out in, in theatre we generally work at 25 times smaller than reality, we call this 1/25 scale.

Technical drawings - Once an idea is finalised we do technical drawings (or blueprints) of the space. These are used to build the set but also by the lighting and sound designer to position lights and speakers. There are multiple computer programmes available to assist with this - it's not as hard as it sounds.

As a general rule a designer is in charge and responsible for everything you can **see** on the production.

Lighting Designer - Sam Thomas

The role of lighting designer is, first and foremost, to tell the audience where to be looking on stage. This would be through lighting the objects/people that we need to focus on, and keeping light off of the areas we don't need to see. On top of this, the lighting designer helps to create atmosphere on stage. This can be created by adjusting the light's colour (plastic lighting gel is put in front of the light to do this), intensity (brightness of the light) and its position (where the light is hung.) The positioning of the light is key as it will affect the shadow on the performer's face.

The lighting designer's attendance in rehearsals is very important. It is an opportunity to collaborate with fellow members of the creative and production team alongside the cast too. Over the rehearsal process, the lighting designer will write up a list of lighting cues (different lighting states) that will be programmed into the lighting desk during plotting. (Plotting is when the lighting designer will sit down with the director in the theatre, and they decide what the lighting is going to look like for the show.) The technical rehearsal follows this, where all departments come together in the theatre to make the show come to life.

Stage Manager - Zoe Burnham

As a technical manager it is my job to oversee many aspects of the production. The role can vary from show to show depending on how many other stage managers or production managers are on the team. Whilst on tour I am the first point of contact for a lot of venues and provide crucial information about the show, like lighting plans, set drawings and get in times. For *The Edit*, I shall be in charge of driving the van with the set to the venue and, with the help of venue staff complete the get-in. I will be re-lighting the show and operating it. I will be facilitating the actors with anything they need, as well as helping maintain and wash their costumes. It is my goal to keep the show consistent and honour the designer's work. I will be in charge of show reports at the end of each performance and making sure budgets are met and the show has everything it needs. I am not in charge of making creative decisions but may facilitate meetings about those decisions.

Thoughts from the Director

The Edit deals with multiple themes, including histories of abuse, revisiting the past and male micro-aggression in a subtle and complex way. One of the strengths and challenges of the play is that all of these themes are explored in highly-pressured, real-time narrative across 90 minutes.

Key to understanding the play is that much of the behaviour that both Elena and Nick display is learned behaviour that has become part of their story. They have both cast each themselves in roles, as 'victim' and 'saviour' and breaking this pattern of behaviour is incredibly difficult. Much of Elena's journey in the play is about breaking free of the role of 'The Victim' and much of Nick's journey is about coming to terms with the fact that he has become comfortable playing 'Saviour' to Elena. Only by breaking free of these labels and looking at their situation afresh are they able to leave the flat changed. Ultimately, only by addressing these assumed roles can they figure out whether or not their relationship would ever have worked or will work in the future.

This production and the decisions that we have taken have hopefully served to highlight how claustrophobic the situation is, for Elena in particular. They must cast off the roles they have assumed all in the pressure-cooker environment of the small flat they once lived in together. We have used the design to help highlight this claustrophobia, but reducing the space and forcing the action to occur in close proximity living room. This will hopefully result in an engaging and focused piece of drama.



Meet the Actors

Jamie Wilkes



Jamie playing the role of Nick

Meghan Treadway



Meghan playing the role of Elena

The Design

Set Design

Influences:



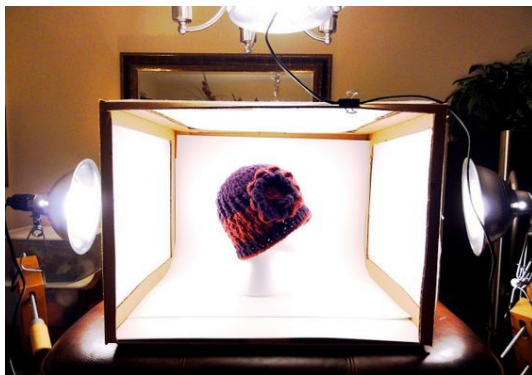
David Hockney



Brno Del Zou



Television Studio



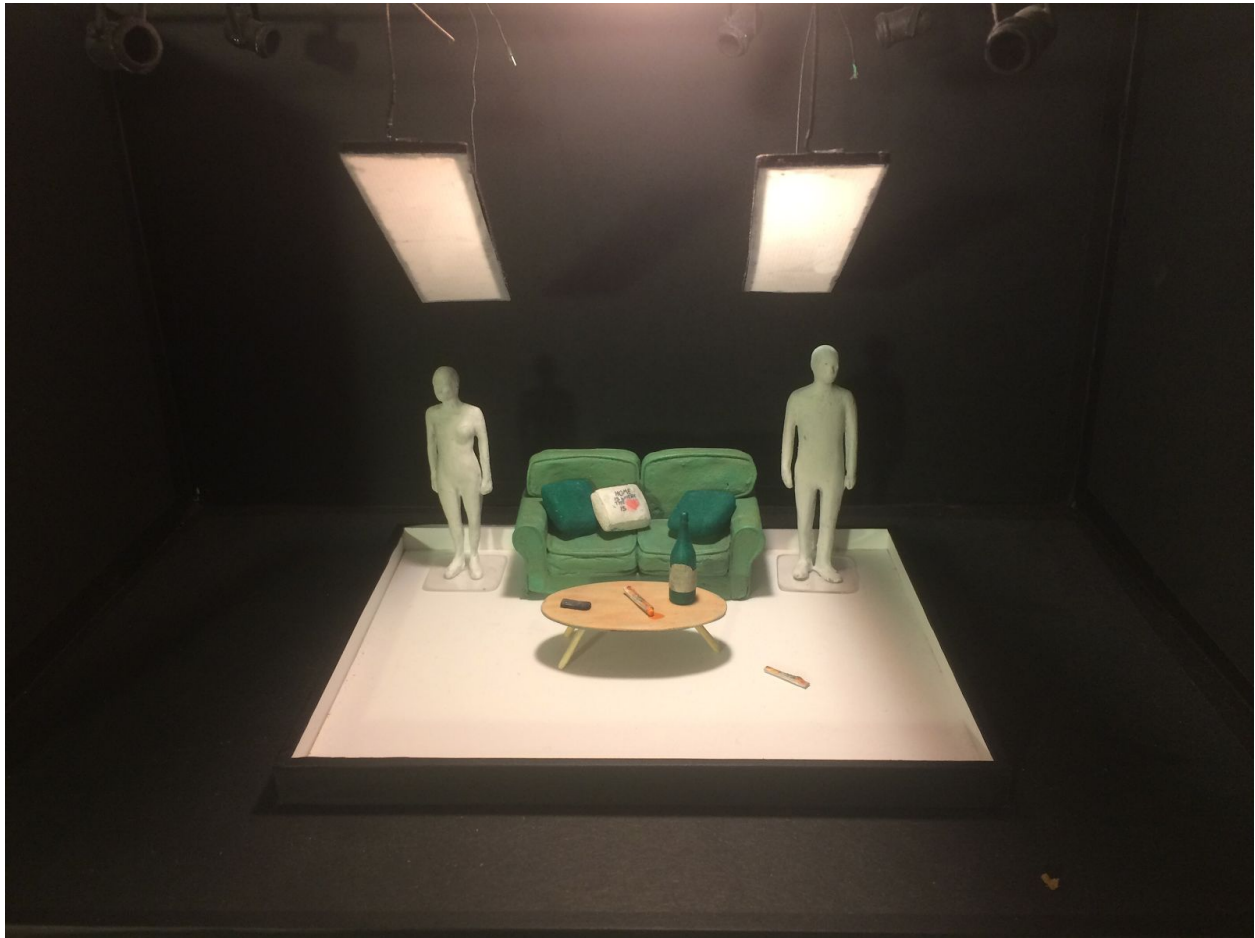
Object Photography

For this production I initially started a process of gathering images, these included the collage works of David Hockney and Brno Del Zou, I was attracted to these images as they were suggestive of a single event/image/person being interpreted from various viewpoints and how that changes the way we see it. The person/event remains the same but the place that we view it from affects our understanding and opinion on that object. This seems to me to be the cornerstone of what *The Edit* is about, that our point of view and perspective of something can literally change the way we view a person or event. These images became quite key in the development of the piece, not only directly as the use of squares and flat surfaces found a place in the set, but also in the positioning of the doorways and objects in the world, Elena's initial entrance places her off centre with her back to the audience, not a traditional approach or viewpoint - we view this character from a new perspective. This element is further translated by placing the stage on a thrust - the audience are on three sides and each sees the show from a different angle.

The other images that influenced the work were of television studios and object photography images. *The Edit* is a great title for this play, it is very descriptive of what the

play is about and stage directions within the script give clear direction of how minimalist the staging should be. Television studios and object photography images were a response to these stage directions. There is also reference to a person being given a “dodgy edit” within the text. These references inspired a lot of the textures and colours of the set as well as the presence of the flown lights. They are there to light the *examination* of this relationship.

Model box image



The set developed directly from the research images as well as from agreement between the set designer, director and producer that we have a minimalist set, and that the objects that the actors touch, sit on and interact with have *real* texture, colours and tones and that everything else is absent and open to individual perspective and interpretation, both by the characters and the audience.

Costume Design

Original Mood Board for Nick created by Sam Wilde.



Nick's costume is a reflection of various aspects of his personality. Firstly I wanted to get across that this was Nick's home and that he very much grounded in this flat. (Nick has remained there after his relationship with Elena has ended and he has even gone so far as to buy the apartment). This was done mainly through colour. Nick's predominantly green costume tones link with the green highlights of the set, but we also later decided not to give Nick any shoes to highlight this further.

I also wanted to communicate Nick's awkwardness about his current situation. I saw him as a fiddler and wanted to give him something to fiddle with, a shirt that was undone showing

an untucked t-shirt gives the actor ways to alter his appearance without altering the costume - it gives him something to play with.

Original Mood Board for Elena created by Sam Wilde.



One thing I wanted to communicate with the costume was that both characters were in their "casual best", that they both wanted to dress up without appearing that they had. I also wanted to give the play a sense of weather as well, that they are both in summer clothes and that a world exists outside the single room in which the play takes place.

For Elena I also wanted to show that this was not her home and that she didn't quite fit. Again, this was done with colour: where Nick is tonally similar to the set, Elena has none of these tones (with the exception of a small green stone in a necklace she wears as I do think that there is love in this relationship). I also wanted to practically show Elena's arrival and departure. She has to remove her coat and put down her bag to arrive, and pick these up again as she leaves which feels like a very powerful symbol of her journey within the piece.

Lighting Design

The aim for the lighting design was to be as subliminal as possible. The changes in lighting are very gradual and subtle which aids keeping the piece as naturalistic as we can. In response to what is happening on the stage and in the text, I subtly change the colour temperature of the lighting. In simple terms, in a slightly more uncomfortable situation, we shift to a colder feel, and in times of intimacy and positivity we shift to a warmer temperature of light.

From Page to Stage - The Process

Starter Activities

Convergence

Convergence is a game we often played in rehearsals. It works as a good way to get you thinking, working collaboratively, not to mention that more often than not it leads to some hilarity in the process.

It is a simple word association game that would be a good starter if you want your students to start thinking about language and how association can create meaning - a good one, perhaps, for the beginning of a scheme of work dealing with scripts as it will get students to start thinking about the meaning of words and how, depending on the person, the word can be associated with many different things. This could then lead onto a discussion about how, when working with a script, you need to use vocal and physical skills to convey your intended meaning.

How to play:

Start in a circle (if your class is big then you can always set up multiple circles so more students can be involved).

To begin, two students walk into the centre of the circle, count down from 3 to 1 and then say the first words that come to mind. For example, one student could say 'strawberry' and the other could say 'garden'. Then two more students enter the circle, count down again and say a word that links the first two words together; for example, they could say Wimbledon or Summer or picnic. If the students say the same word then they win. If they say two separate words then the game continues with the next students entering and trying to link the second lot of two words together.

An example of what this may look like is below:

1st round - strawberry and garden

2nd round - Wimbledon and summer

3rd round - tennis and sun

4th round - ball

I wish I could promise you that it would only take 4 rounds, but there is no way to guess how long it will take for the students to get a 'convergence'. Due to this it may be useful to put a time limit on it.

When they do get a convergence they should all do a robot dance and repeat 'convergence' three times in a robot voice (This is not compulsory but good fun!).

Tongue Twisters

If you are a seasoned teacher, I am sure it will be no surprise to you that we suggest using tongue twisters and you may even breathe a sigh of resignation! However, tongue twisters are often undervalued and when students are preparing to work with a script they can be really helpful with improving diction and experimenting with dynamics.

A good way to teach them is call and response with the teacher giving the pupils a line and then getting them to repeat them back. By teaching them this way the teacher can deliver lines using various dynamics which can warm up students' voices and also get them thinking about how dynamics can create tension and alter meaning. It also teaches them that the more they pronounce their words, the easier it is to deliver more difficult lines.

As an extension to this is to get the students to say only the vowels or consonants in a tongue twister to really challenge them.

Here are some of the tongue twisters that we used in rehearsals:

Betty bought a bit of butter,
But the bit of butter Betty bought was bitter,
So Betty bought another bit of butter,
To make the bit of butter better.

How much wood could a woodchuck chuck,
If a woodchuck could chuck wood?
As much good wood as a woodchuck could chuck,
If a woodchuck could chuck wood.

Unique New York,
New York's unique,
You know you need unique New York.

And if you have found those easy have a go at this one:

The sixth sick sheik's sixth sheep's sick

How to Approach a Script - for students

Often in the GCSE and A-Level courses you are asked to perform an extract of a script. The most important advice we can give you at the stage is to read the WHOLE play, not just the extract and an online summary! Once you have read the play you can understand where your extract(s) fits into the bigger picture of the play. By doing this you can begin to see the characters' journeys through the play, how they develop and what has changed by the end.

The next step is to discuss what you think the play is about, not just referring to the plot, but looking at:

- The main themes
- The writer's intentions
- The characters' arcs
- The important events happen in your extracts
- Or, if you are condensing the play by cutting bits out, what are the most important events and what is gained or lost by cutting bits out?

After you have discussed these areas and feel as though you have a cohesive overview of the play as a group you need to decide what your artistic intentions for your extract are.

There are a few ways to approach your intentions, but the most important things to consider are:

- What do you want to show in the extract?
- What do you want the audience to think/feel?
- (For some exam boards) Are there any practitioners' techniques you think that will use to achieve this?

Write your group's intention down in your books. Come back to this often to make sure that you are making creative decisions that support this intention. Also, don't be worried if your intention evolves over the process - it's okay if you want to adapt it!

The Process

The process here is influenced by the way that we approached the script in the rehearsal room. *The Edit* is a mostly naturalistic play and so this process involves more character work and has a real focus on bringing the script to life in a naturalistic way. Due to this, this process may not be as helpful for non-naturalistic pieces.

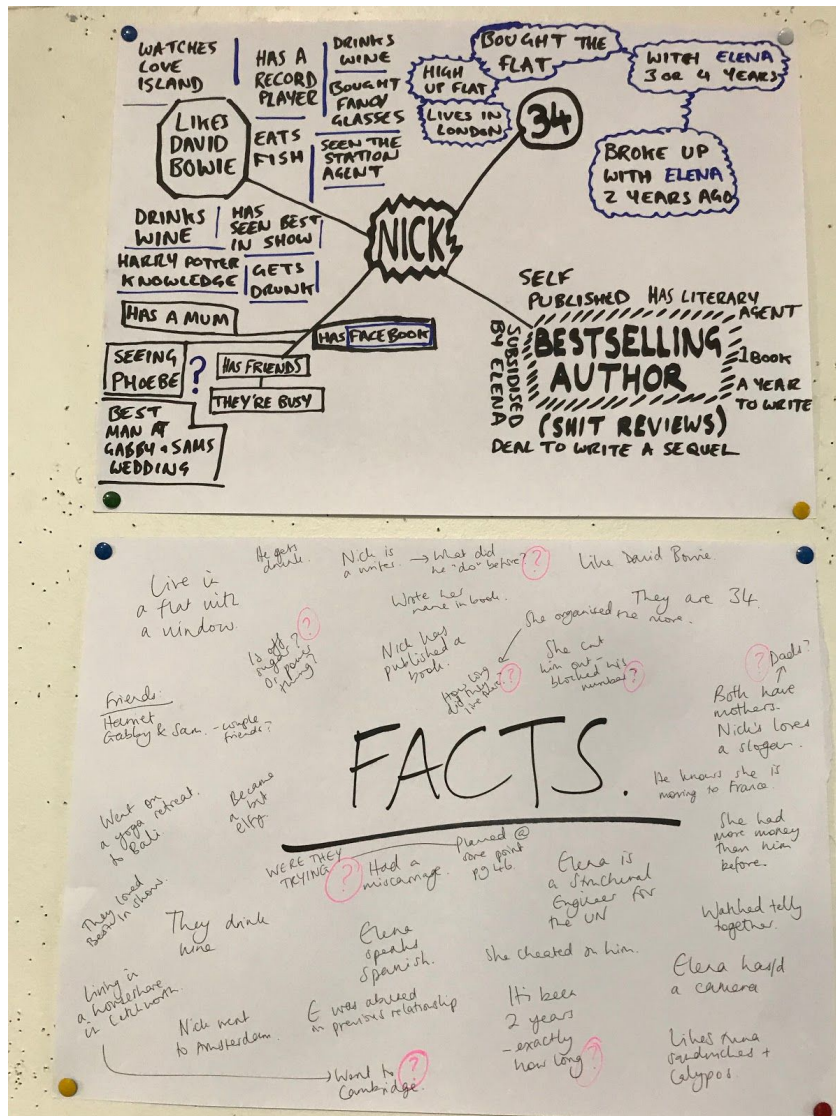
Read Through

Day one of rehearsals we began with a read through and then discussed ideas of how each actor individually sees their character progressing throughout the play. At this point it is important to take real ownership of your character and what you feel that their desires are. What do they want? Why are they there? How do they feel? This then needs to be shared as a group to ensure that you are all on the same page.

Character Work

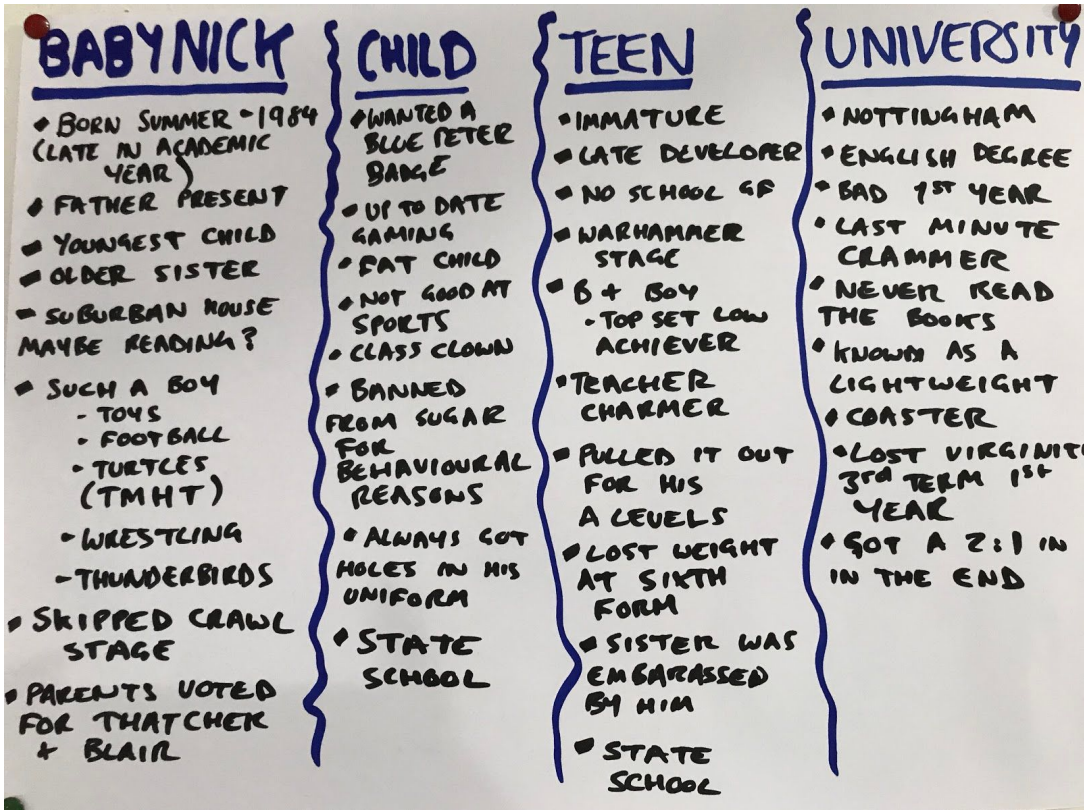
The next day we really focused on the individual characters. When working with a play it is important to remember that the play only covers part of the story. *The Edit* looks at Nick and Elena's reunion 2 years after their break-up, but before this came their meeting, their 4 year relationship and the 2 years of their being apart. Equally, after the play the characters will go on to live out the rest of their lives whether that is apart or together. What happens after is often unimportant; however, what happens before the play begins is crucial to understanding how to perform the characters during the play.

An exercise that we used in rehearsals was mapping out the characters' lives at different stages. Meg and Jamie began by creating mind maps of all of the 'facts' that we knew from the play. Below is an image of the mind maps that they created and for Meg, the questions that these facts made her ask (signalled by a pink question mark).

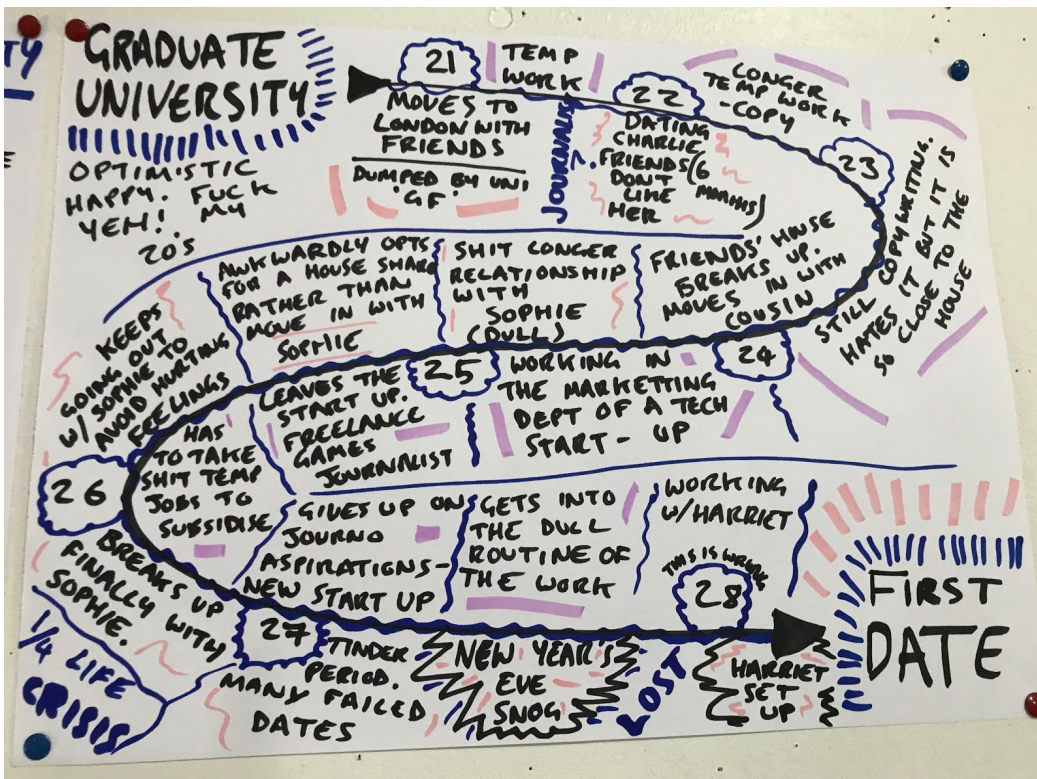


Next Joe, the director, asked Meg and Jamie to block out their lives drawing on these 'facts' expanding slightly and giving depth to the characters. The added their own ideas into the headings of:

- Baby years
- Child years
- Teen years
- University years



Finally the actors blocked out how their lives led up to this point. Below is an image of Jamie's ideas of Nick's life before they met:



By completing this process it allows the actors to understand their characters and the overall story of the character outside of the play.

Getting it on its feet

The next step needs to be getting up and moving, it is so important to try things out. Get up and start working your way through the text bit by bit, stopping to have conversations. Don't be afraid to get up and let it run for a bit before going back and altering bits. An organic way of blocking is to allow the actors to move how they want to and then to appoint a director to watch and identify what the story is that is being told.

Make sure that if you have to focus on a practitioner that all your creative decisions are in keeping with their methods. Also, refer back to your aims at the end of every rehearsal to make sure that you remember what you are aiming to do.

Make sure to spend some rehearsals developing and, later on, some rehearsals refining as your ideas will evolve (as will what you want to do on stage).

Other things to consider

- If you are struggling with a section you can always use Stanislavski's actioning to understand the characters' intentions. With this you may also want to identify the characters' super objectives early in your process, in collaboration with the rest of your group.
- Throughout the process you need to be thinking about your technical needs. If you are fortunate enough to have a technical candidate in your group, the technical candidate needs to be involved in the preliminary chats and kept in the loop with regards to your intentions in the piece.
- Pay attention to stage directions: beats, pauses, actions. All of these are highly important and have been written for a reason. Don't ignore them!