Theater Spaces
GSIS MYP Drama
Mr. Blanck
Stage Terminology

Front of House

House

Stage

Wing

Stage Door

Wing
Rigging Terms (More to come!)

- Main Drape
- Travelers
- Borders (Teasers)
- Legs (Tormentors)
Creating the Environment

- Even before the curtain rises, the theatrical experience has begun.
- The atmosphere of the theater building can set the audience’s mood as well as create expectations.
Art Nouveau / Post-Modern
The First Purpose Built Spaces

- Cultures around the world built performing spaces.
- The theatre developed as a specialized structure in Greece around the 6th Century BC.
- The Theatre of Dionysus in Athens is well known, but the Theatre of Delphi is one of the most spectacular!
The Theatre of Delphi
By the 15\textsuperscript{th} century in England, theatres made a “comeback” after having disappeared during the middle ages.

These “Playhouses” were based on the old custom of acting troupes pulling pageant wagons into tavern yards to perform for the patrons.

Shakespeare’s “Globe”, now reconstructed in London, is probably the most famous.
The Reconstructed Globe (Street View)
The Globe (Interior)
The Globe: View of the Stagehouse
Other Famous Theaters

- London’s Drury Lane Theatre (also known as the Theatre Royal Haymarket) is probably most famous for having burnt down 3 times. The present structure dates to 1812 and is owned by composer and dramatist Andrew Lloyd Webber. It is very much a working theatre to this day!
Drury Lane #3 (from an old postcard)
Drury Lane Exterior (I don’t know where the muffin man lives!)
• Ford’s Theater was (and still is) one of Washington DC’s finest performing spaces when Abraham Lincoln was shot in the back of the head by John Wilkes Booth while viewing a production in 1865. Typical of the time, Lincoln’s box was positioned as much to be seen as to see the stage. Booth escaped by jumping onto the stage and exiting the stage door.
Types of Theater Spaces

Proscenium Stage

- The most well known type of theatre space.
- The word proscenium comes from the proscenium arch (the frame that outlines the stage and separates the stage space from the audience space).
- The audience seats are slanted or raked to allow all rows the ability to see the stage clearly.
- Many proscenium auditoriums include a balcony or two, and the main floor seating is known as the orchestra.
Proscenium
Typical Proscenium Stage
The Guilded Age
Orchestra Pit
Thrust Stage

- With a thrust stage, the audience sits on three sides or in a semicircle, surrounding the stage which projects into the middle of the audience.
- The thrust stage makes the play seem more intimate, with the performers acting within arms reach of the audience.
- The Guthrie Theater in Minneapolis, MN is a prime example of a thrust stage.
Thrust Stage Diagram
Another Thrust Stage
**Arena Stage**

- Also known as circle theatre or theatre-in-the-round.
- In an arena stage, the playing space is in the center of the room, with the audience surrounding the stage on all four sides (much like a boxing ring).
- Often either the stage is raised or the audience is raised above the floor. The arena stage is intimate, allowing the audience to literally form a circle around the performers.
- Elaborate and large scenery is both unnecessary and impossible because all sides of the audience must be able to see the performance.
Theater in the Round
The Colloseum in Rome
Theater Spaces

Created and Found Spaces

- Non-theater buildings
- Adapted Spaces
- Street Theater
- Multifocus environments
- All-purpose ("Black Box") Spaces
Black Box Theaters
Outdoor Shakespeare Festival in Wisconsin