

# KNOWLEDGE ORGANISER



## The Elephant Man Developing a Stimulus

Year 9  
Autumn 2

### By the end of this unit you will be able to;

- explore how we can use real life as a starting point for drama.
- understand what is meant by 'placing the audience' and experimenting with it.
- know that exploring a characters movement and gestures helps the actor understand how they feel; thereby helping communicate ideas to an audience.
- explore how music and space help create atmosphere.

### Context of the stimulus

**Joseph Merrick**, in full **Joseph Carey Merrick**, also called **the Elephant Man**, (born August 5, 1862, in Leicester and died April 11, 1890 in London), disfigured man who, after a brief career as a professional "freak," became a patient of London Hospital from 1886 until his death. Merrick was apparently normal until about the age of five, when he began showing signs of a strange disorder that caused abnormal growths of much of his skin and bone. His legs and one of his arms were seriously deformed, and a defective hip caused such lameness that Merrick could walk only with the aid of a stick. The disorder from which Merrick suffered was long thought to be an extremely severe case of [neurofibromatosis](#) but his deformities were probably the result of an extremely rare disease known as Proteus syndrome

### Styles of theatre that you could use to develop the stimulus

**Physical Theatre** is a type of performance where **physical** movement is the primary method of story telling. Also, it may incorporate other techniques such as mime, gesture and modern dance to create performance pieces.

**Naturalism** is a movement in European **drama** and **theatre** that developed in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. It refers to theatre that attempts to create an illusion of reality through a range of dramatic and theatrical strategies.

**Epic theatre** is a theatrical movement arising in the early to mid-20th century from the theories and practice of a number of theatre practitioners who responded to the political climate of the time through the creation of a new political theatre.

### Performance Skills

Experimenting with body language will be an important part of understanding how a character feels.

- Posture
- Gesture
- Proxemics
- Stance
- Pace
- Tension
- Direction



### Performance Elements and the Audience

Placing the audience. This will determine the audiences experience of the piece. Sound and music will also be important here.

- Immersive Theatre
- Site specific Theatre
- Promenade Theatre
- Open Air Theatre
- Black Box Theatre
- Theatre in the Round
- Proscenium Stage
- Thrust Stage

"The purpose of theatre is to put the audience in a better position to understand the world around them."



Conveying meaning in your work means that your piece needs to have structure.

The process of structuring work is closely linked to choosing genre, style and form. As with the exploration phase, it is best to start improvising and moving rather than sat down in discussions. Test sequences of material and discover how one moment can impact on another when juxtaposed in performance. The basic principles that should apply to all choices are:

- a strong and engaging opening
  - detailed development of character, theme or idea
  - an ending that reinforces the ideas of the whole performance.
- This could be that you need to knit different scenes together. However, you should explore different structures and how they impact on the material's meaning.

