



**WESTMINSTER  
SCHOOL**

**The Challenge**  
Specialism Paper

**DRAMA**

**Syllabus and Guidance**

First Examination 2027

# Introduction

The Drama department is offering pupils the opportunity to prepare and perform two monologues as one of their two specialisms for The Westminster Challenge. Pupils will need to learn two monologues in advance. They should be no longer than one to two minutes long and must be fully memorised. Pupils should not bring props or costumes. Pupils should also be prepared to discuss their monologues and be re-directed.

**Below is a guide to selecting the monologues:**

***Piece 1:** Post-1990 modern play.*

***Piece 2:** Classical piece (Shakespeare, Marlowe, or Webster)*

**Top tips for selecting the monologues:**

At Westminster, we want to see pupils who can show authenticity and vulnerability in their performances. We also want to generate a strong sense of *the individual* and why they are passionate about Drama. Here are some guidelines for choosing a monologue:

1. **Play a young age:** Pupils should avoid playing characters significantly older or younger than themselves. The panel wants to see young people playing roles in which they could be cast. Whilst this may be more difficult with some of the classical pieces, they should still aim to prepare the younger roles.
2. **Read the whole play:** Pupils should not just pick a monologue from the internet and they should avoid performing a monologue from a script they have not read. They should understand the character's full arc and journey, and the context of the scene. Pupils must know about their relationship to the other characters. They will be asked questions, and so will need to know broader aspects of the play.
3. **Natural accent:** Pupils should aim to use their natural voice. Clarity matters more than an attempted accent that might distract.
4. **Choose contrast:** The two pieces should show two completely different characters to highlight a pupil's range.
5. **Keep it naturalistic:** Pupils should avoid excessively stylised or experimental monologues. Grounded, truthful work will serve the pupils best.

## Recommended Playwrights

Finding the right monologue can take time. Pupils should consider looking at these respected playwrights for inspiration. These writers are a strong starting point, though pupils are welcome to look beyond them:

- **Modern (Post-1990):** Simon Stephens, James Graham, Caryl Churchill, Conor McPherson, Lucy Prebble, Enda Walsh, Laura Wade, Polly Steinham, Jez Butterworth and Patrick Marber.
- **Classical:** William Shakespeare: *As You Like It*, *Much Ado About Nothing*, *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, *Romeo and Juliet*, *Twelfth Night*, or *The Winter's Tale*, John Webster, or Christopher Marlowe. Classical parts can be cross-gender.