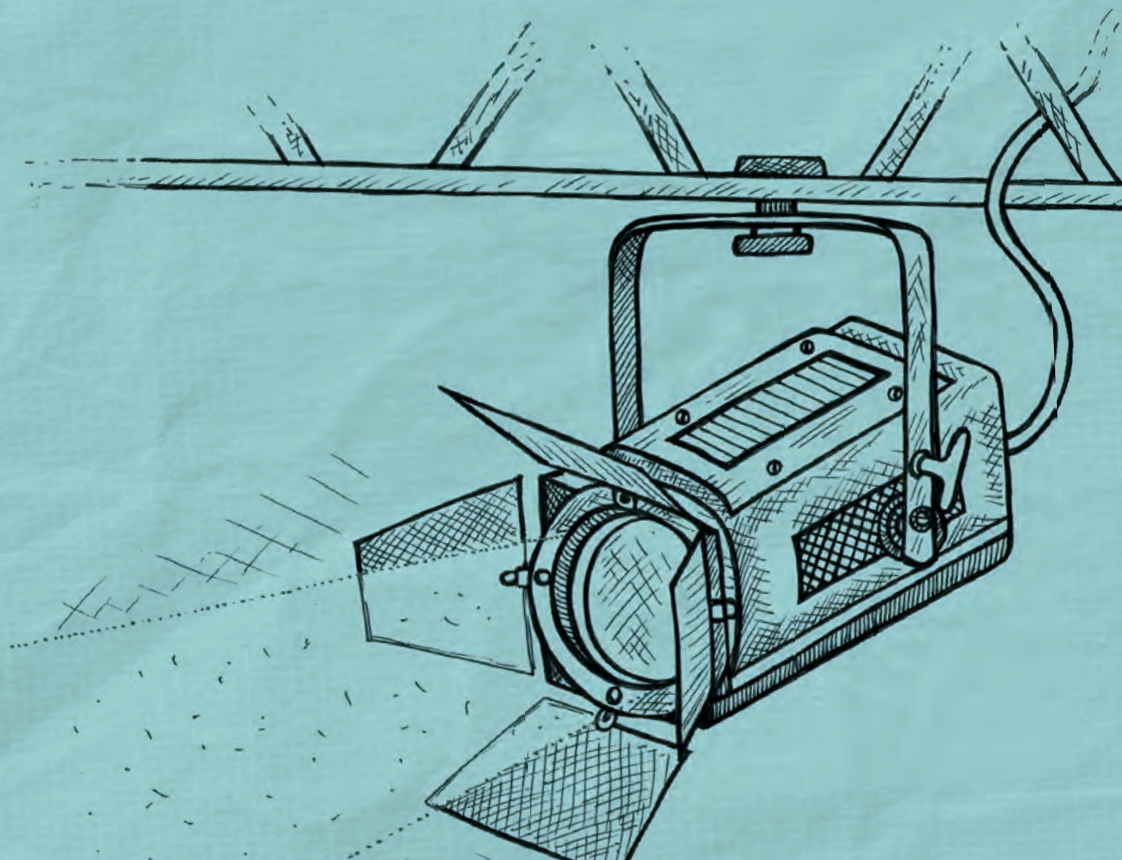


# REVISE BTEC NATIONAL Performing Arts REVISION GUIDE



# REVISE BTEC NATIONAL

## Performing Arts

# REVISION GUIDE

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# Introduction

## Which units should you revise?

This Revision Guide has been designed to support you in preparing for the externally assessed units of your course. Remember that you won't necessarily be studying all the units included here – it will depend on the qualification you are taking.

BTEC National Qualification	Externally assessed units
Certificate	1 Investigating Practitioners' Work
Extended Certificate	1 Investigating Practitioners' Work
Foundation Diploma	3 Group Performance Workshop
Diploma	1 Investigating Practitioners' Work 3 Group Performance Workshop 5 Individual Performance Commission
Extended Diploma (General)	1 Investigating Practitioners' Work
Extended Diploma (Acting)	3 Group Performance Workshop
Extended Diploma (Dance)	5 Individual Performance Commission
Extended Diploma (Musical Theatre)	7 Employment Opportunities in the Performing Arts

## Your Revision Guide

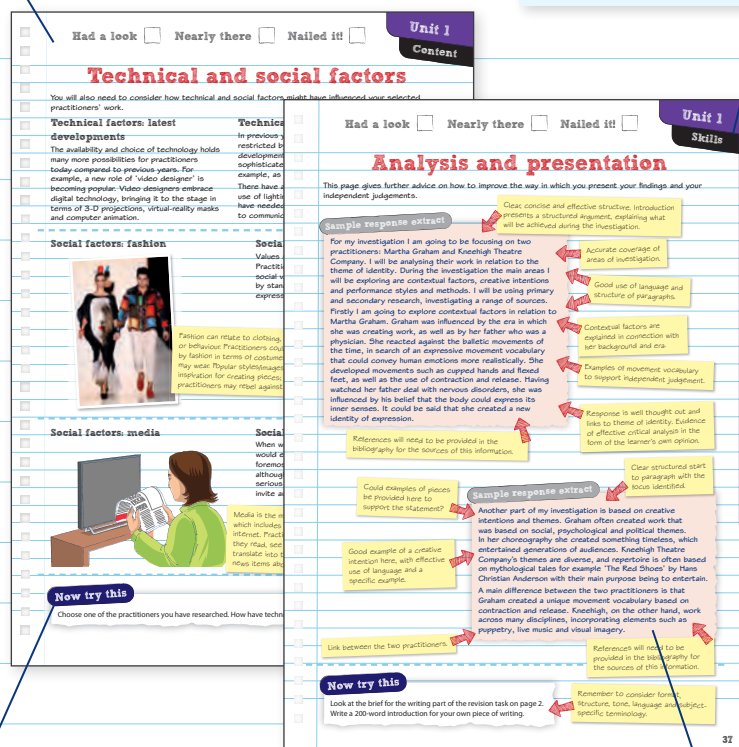
Each unit in this Revision Guide contains two types of pages, shown below.

### Content

**pages** help you revise the essential content you need to know for each unit.

### Skills

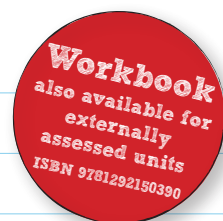
**pages** help you prepare for your exam or assessed task. Skills pages have a coloured edge and are shaded in the table of contents.



Use the **Now try this** activities on every page to help you test your knowledge and practise the relevant skills.

Look out for the **example student responses** to revision questions or tasks on the skills pages. Post-its will explain their strengths and weaknesses.

# Contents



## Unit 1 Investigating Practitioners' Work

- 1 Your Unit 1 set task
- 2 Task brief
- 3 Theme and practitioners
- 4 Assessment outcomes
- 5 Selecting primary sources
- 6 Selecting secondary sources
- 7 Research
- 8 Different formats
- 9 Collating information
- 10 Sources, formats and collating details
- 11 Documenting research sources
- 12 Footnotes and your bibliography
- 13 Historical and cultural factors
- 14 Economic and political factors
- 15 Technical and social factors
- 16 Geographical and physical factors
- 17 Other influences
- 18 Themes
- 19 Intentions, genre and target audiences
- 20 Influences on others, collaborations and responses
- 21 Collaborations
- 22 Critical analysis: getting started
- 23 Critical analysis: the next stage
- 24 Making condensed notes
- 25 Critical analysis skills
- 26 Further critical analysis skills
- 27 Performance styles: repertoire
- 28 Performance styles: the performance
- 29 Performance styles: relationships
- 30 Performance styles: production
- 31 Investigating performance styles
- 32 Summarising key information
- 33 Comparisons, conclusions and further research
- 34 Communicating your key points
- 35 Presentation of findings
- 36 Presenting judgements
- 37 Analysis and presentation

## Unit 3 Group Performance Workshop

- 38 Your Unit 3 set task
- 39 Task brief
- 40 Revision stimuli
- 41 Types of stimulus
- 42 Theme as stimulus
- 43 Visual stimulus
- 44 Text stimulus
- 45 Aural stimulus
- 46 Media as stimulus
- 47 Responding to stimulus
- 48 Analyse your stimulus
- 49 What, for whom and how?
- 50 Where and who?
- 51 Primary research
- 52 Secondary research
- 53 Research and analysis
- 54 Discussion skills
- 55 Improvisation
- 56 Let's experiment!
- 57 Let's get technical!
- 58 Thinking about structure
- 59 Developing physical performance skills
- 60 Developing vocal performance skills
- 61 Developing musical performance skills
- 62 Developing communication skills
- 63 Develop, shape, create!
- 64 Developing early stage ideas
- 65 Developing more early stage ideas
- 66 Personal management skills
- 67 Rehearsal skills
- 68 Teamwork and collaboration
- 69 Developing mid-stage ideas
- 70 Continuing to progress
- 71 Performance preparation
- 72 Process review
- 73 Process strengths and developments
- 74 Performance review
- 75 Performance strengths and developments
- 76 Reviewing the process
- 77 Reviewing the performance

## Unit 5 Individual Performance Commission

- 78 Your Unit 5 set task
- 79 Task information
- 80 Task stimuli
- 81 Understanding commission briefs
- 82 Commissioning bodies (1)
- 83 Commissioning bodies (2)
- 84 Commissioning bodies (3)
- 85 The purpose of a commission
- 86 Considering commissioning bodies and their purpose
- 87 Target audiences
- 88 Connecting the work to the audience
- 89 Considering the target audience and context
- 90 Requirements and constraints
- 91 Assessing requirements and constraints
- 92 Generating ideas for performance
- 93 Working from a thematic stimulus
- 94 Working from a visual stimulus
- 95 Working from a textual stimulus
- 96 Working from a media stimulus
- 97 Working from an aural stimulus
- 98 Primary and secondary research
- 99 Justifying ideas
- 100 Planning your written proposal
- 101 Practical exploration of stimulus
- 102 Establishing links
- 103 Developing materials and ideas
- 104 Structure and present action
- 105 Technical elements
- 106 Performance skills
- 107 Individual performance skills
- 108 Rehearse, practise and review
- 109 Managing your preparation time
- 110 Preparing for your solo
- 111 Evaluation: artistic effectiveness
- 112 Evaluating artistic effectiveness
- 113 Evaluation: professional effectiveness
- 114 Evaluating professional effectiveness
- 115 Evaluation: meeting requirements
- 116 Evaluating fulfilment of purpose
- 117 Evaluating the use of stimulus



## Unit 7 Employment Opportunities in the Performing Arts

- 118 Your Unit 7 set task
- 119 Task information
- 120 Planning your preparation time
- 121 Organisational requirements
- 122 The purpose of an organisation
- 123 Vision, mission and values
- 124 Intended audience and stakeholders
- 125 Scope
- 126 Types of legal constitutions
- 127 Types of organisational structures
- 128 Advantages and disadvantages of different organisational structures
- 129 Funding restrictions and opportunities
- 130 Public sector funding
- 131 Private sector funding
- 132 Third sector funding
- 133 Access to funding: grants and contracts
- 134 Fundraising and direct selling
- 135 Marketing, HR and finance
- 136 Organisational operations
- 137 Education, creative and technical areas
- 138 Analysing information
- 139 Researching the organisation
- 140 Skills for professional practice
- 141 Experience for professional practice
- 142 Effective communication skills
- 143 Effective written communication skills
- 144 Pitching ideas
- 145 What is a promotional portfolio?
- 146 Alternative portfolio formats
- 147 Highlighting discipline and skills
- 148 Highlighting relevant skills
- 149 Understanding practical work
- 150 Selecting relevant video footage
- 151 Promotional intent
- 152 Are you right for the job?
- 153 Ensuring professionalism

- 154 Relating the employment opportunity to your skills
- 155 Thinking of workshop ideas
- 156 Your performance skills
- 157 Writing about your performance skills
- 158 Your employment skills
- 159 Your communication skills
- 160 Planning your written response
- 161 Planning your digital promotional portfolio
- 162 Content of your digital promotional portfolio
- 163 Creating your CV
- 164 Preparing video evidence
- 165 Selecting relevant video footage
- 166 Planning your supervised assessment time

167 Answers

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### A small bit of small print

Pearson publishes Sample Assessment Material and the Specification on its website. This is the official content and this book should be used in conjunction with it. The questions in *Now try this* have been written to help you test your knowledge and skills. Remember: the real assessment may not look like this.

## Your Unit 1 set task

Unit 1 will be assessed through a task, which will be set by Pearson. In this assessed task you will need to research and analyse the work of performing arts practitioners in response to a given brief.

### Set task skills

This unit will help you to **revise essential content and skills** that might be needed in your assessed task.

You will practise:

- extending your knowledge and understanding of the contextual factors that influence practitioners' work and creative intentions
- honing your ability to critically analyse practitioners' work and the connections you make to a given theme through communication of independent judgements
- completing a structured piece of writing, investigating contextual influences and critically analysing the work of performing arts practitioners.

You will learn how to structure your writing so that it includes:

- research on selected practitioners
- contextual factors that have influenced and informed the practitioners' work
- critical analysis of their work in relation to a given theme
- critical analysis of at least one piece of repertoire by the practitioners
- clear examples to support your findings, judgements and conclusions
- a comprehensive bibliography of references and research sources.

### Assessment checklist

Before any assessment session, make sure you:

- ☒ have double-checked the time and date of your assessment session
- ☒ get a good night's sleep.

### Check the Pearson website

The skills pages are designed to demonstrate the skills that might be needed in your assessed task. The details of your actual assessed task may change from year to year so always make sure you are up to date. Check the Pearson website for the most up-to-date **Sample Assessment Material** to get an idea of the structure of your assessed task and what this requires of you.

### Now try this

Visit the Pearson website and find the page containing the course materials for BTEC National Performing Arts. Look at the latest Unit 1 Sample Assessment Material for an indication of:

- the structure of your set task, and any preparation time
- what briefing or stimulus material might be provided to you
- any notes you might have to make and whether you are allowed to take selected notes into your supervised assessment
- the activities you are required to complete and the amount of any writing you may need to produce.



## Task brief

The revision task below will help you to practise your skills of carrying out research, and writing up your findings, in response to a brief. It follows a similar format to your assessment, but it uses different practitioners and a different theme.

### Task

A performing arts evening is being organised. This year, all the performances will be based on the theme of 'Identity' and will include works from Martha Graham and Oscar Hammerstein II.

You have been asked by the organisers to investigate contextual influences and critically analyse the work of either Martha Graham or Oscar Hammerstein. They would also like you to select a second practitioner of your choice, whose work you would recommend to be included in the evening.

The organisers would like you to explore the theme of 'Identity' and justify the inclusion of the work of your two chosen practitioners in relation to the theme.


Before you begin the activity, you are required to complete the following preparatory work.

- 1 Research the theme: 'Identity'.
- 2 Select **one** of the following practitioners:
  - (a) Martha Graham
  - (b) Oscar Hammerstein II.
- 3 Select a second practitioner of your own choice whose work addresses the theme of 'Identity'. For the purposes of this Revision Guide the other practitioner investigated is Kneehigh Theatre Company, in conjunction with Martha Graham or Oscar Hammerstein II.

*A practitioner can be an individual or a company with international recognition and an established reputation and presence.*

During the investigation of your selected practitioners' work, you will need to:

- research both of your selected practitioners using a range of relevant sources
- select relevant information related to the practitioners' work and the theme
- record information
- collate information
- reference and document your research in the form of a bibliography.



It's always good practice to document your sources while you are researching. If you leave this until you have to write up the bibliography, you will have to go back and try to trace all the references, which is a big job!

### Reading a brief

This revision task is used as an example to show the skills you need. The content of a task will be different each year and the format may be different. You will need to refer back to this revision task when completing some of the 'Now try this' activities in your Revision Guide. Read through the information on this page and the next two pages so you are familiar with the theme and practitioners, and also the outcomes.

## Theme and practitioners

Below is information about the theme and practitioners in the revision task on the previous page. You might not receive anything like this in your actual assessment, but you can use it to support your investigation and analysis in response to the revision task.

### Theme: Identity

Identity in its simplest form is about who a person/group is, or what makes a person/group different from others. At a more complex level, identity is made up of many factors such as nationality, class, ethnicity and gender. Some parts of an identity are ascribed (you have no choice – such as gender, race) whereas others are achieved (you have made choices – such as employment, family life).

Postmodernists believe that identity is now much more complex, and that a new 'hybrid' identity has emerged. This is a combination of different types of identity, and has been influenced by the mass media and globalisation.

Performing arts practitioners and influential companies have always explored the theme of identity in their work, and challenged their audiences to think about identity, whether it be related to gender, race, nationality, sexuality, location or class.

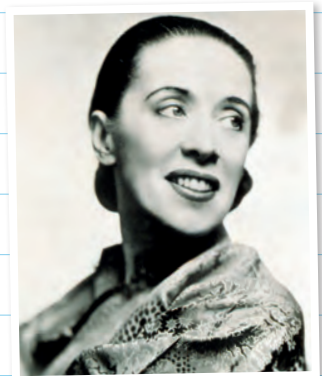
### Practitioner 1: Martha Graham (1894–1991)

Martha Graham was a groundbreaking artist of the 20th century. She saw the human body as an instrument of human expression and rebelled against the rigidity of ballet, creating a language of movement based on exhalation and inhalation of breath. Graham believed that the purpose of dance was to illuminate the life and struggles of the human experience. Some of Graham's work relates to national identity, such as *Frontier*. Also, much of her work relates to female identity; Martha Graham moved in a way that was radical for women at the time.

She adopted a psychoanalytical viewpoint on dance, stating that:

'Art is the evocation of man's inner nature. Through art we find man's unconscious – race memory – is the history and psyche of the race brought into focus.'

(Giguere, M., *Beginning Modern Dance*, 1998, Brown, Mindlin & Woodford, p. 50)

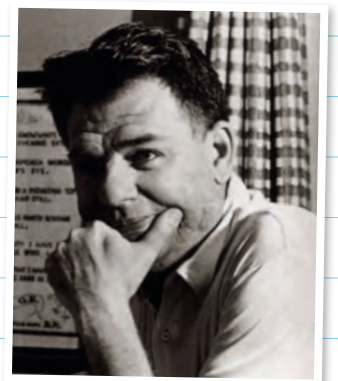


### Practitioner 2: Oscar Hammerstein II (1895–1960)

Oscar Hammerstein II was a theatrical producer, librettist, lyricist and theatre director of musicals for almost 40 years. He reversed the process of musical writing, writing the lyrics first; his collaborators would then write the score. Hammerstein's most famous collaboration was with Richard Rodgers; together they created numerous popular Broadway musicals. Hammerstein II strongly believed that shows should tell the truth and convey a story. He wanted to communicate real issues, such as racial identity, which is explored in *South Pacific* and *Carmen Jones*. He said:

'I know the world is filled with troubles and many injustices. But reality is as beautiful as it is ugly. I think it is just as important to sing about beautiful mornings as it is to talk about slums. I just couldn't write anything without hope in it.'

([www.brainyquote.com/quotes/authors/o/oscar\\_hammerstein\\_ii.html](http://www.brainyquote.com/quotes/authors/o/oscar_hammerstein_ii.html), Brainy Quote, para 3, last accessed 7 April 2016)





## Assessment outcomes

Whatever your actual assessed task, you will need to plan the completion of your task, setting yourself clear aims and objectives in relation to the four assessment outcomes. You could use these to help you structure your research and preparation, thinking about what each one involves and how long it will take you to complete.

### AO1: Investigating contextual factors

This first outcome is about the investigation process, and covers conducting research from different sources, to collating and recording your information. You will need to show that you:

- carefully identify and select the relevant contextual factors
- know and understand the contextual factors that influence practitioners' work.



See pages 13–17 for information on contextual factors.

### AO2: The relationship between contextual factors, creative intentions and themes

You will then need to explore the contextual factors that have influenced and informed the work of the selected practitioners. You will need to relate this to the given theme and apply your understanding. You will need to demonstrate that you:

- can apply your knowledge and have an in-depth understanding of contextual factors
- understand how contextual factors deeply influence practitioners' work
- can make insightful connections between the creative intentions of practitioners' work and the theme, using perceptive examples.

### AO3: Critical analysis of the work of performing arts practitioners

You will be required to critically analyse the work of both selected practitioners in relation to the given theme. You will need to break down and study the parts (such as a scene/dance number/selection of repertoire from your selected practitioner) and give your own opinion. You will need to show that you:

- can apply critical analysis skills
- can critically analyse practitioners' work
- understand performance, production and repertoire, using perceptive examples to support your work.

### AO4: Be able to present conclusions and independent judgements through effective investigation

You will need to show that you can summarise information in a structured fashion, as well as draw your own conclusions from the knowledge you have gained through investigation. You will also need to produce a bibliography to reference your sources effectively. You will need to show that you:

- can select sophisticated sources to fully support and inform your understanding
- can make authoritative independent judgements, justifying your argument with concise reasoning and perceptive use of evidence
- can use sophisticated and accomplished language, structure, tone and subject-specific terminology
- can reference your outcomes comprehensively.

### Key questions

It is essential that you set clear aims and objectives:

- ✓ Who are your chosen practitioners?
- ✓ What types of research are you going to undertake?
- ✓ How will you structure your writing?
- ✓ How will you divide your time between research and writing?

### Now try this

Look at the revision task on pages 2–3.

- 1 Write a short time plan for this task.
- 2 List your aims and objectives for the task.

You may wish to do this as a spider diagram.

# Selecting primary sources

You need to select relevant ways to access information relating to the theme and practitioners you will be writing about. One method of research is **primary** research, which involves going out and collecting research yourself.

## Interviews

An interview is a direct method of gaining information, although it can be difficult to achieve. Conducting an interview with a practitioner, director, choreographer, playwright, tutor or performer can give you further information about your theme or practitioners.

You must be well prepared, so plan ahead. Write a list of clear and sensible questions, and decide on a system for documenting answers – either by writing them down or recording the interview.

### Recording the interview

You could always record the interview and then make notes which can inform your proposal and/or evaluation.

## Live performance

If you are able to, watching a live performance is an excellent way of discovering the practitioner's artistic intentions, as well as the factors that influence their work. Make sure that you:

- make notes about the performance, either during the show or soon after the event
- buy a programme.



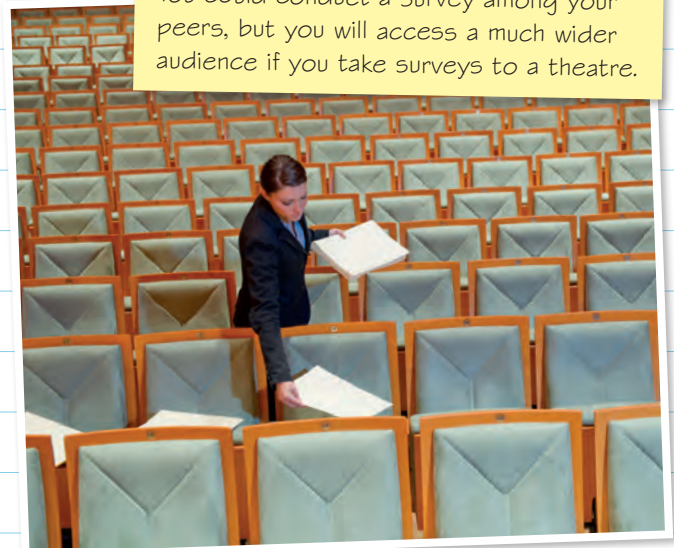
You might also be able to attend (and record) an after-show talk or discussion which could provide valuable insight into the practitioner and their artistic intentions.

## Surveys

Conducting a survey to obtain information is a popular form of primary research. A survey can provide an unbiased approach to decision-making. These are the main things to remember when putting together a survey:

- Why are you sending it? Think about the main reasons so that all of your questions are relevant.
- Pinpoint your demographic: decide who you want to be completing the survey. You may want responses from several different groups.
- Sample size: make sure that you have enough people to complete the survey, so that the results are meaningful.
- Timing: work out which time is convenient for people to answer the survey; for example, at the interval of a performance.

To boost your survey's credibility, you need to consider these points.



You could conduct a survey among your peers, but you will access a much wider audience if you take surveys to a theatre.

Your survey can be online or on paper. Many web companies (such as SurveyMonkey) provide free, customisable survey services – would this be the best way of reaching your target audience?

## Now try this

- 1 Look at the practitioner information on page 3. Create a short survey for a theatre audience at a production of one of Oscar Hammerstein II's musicals.
- 2 Write down the aim of your survey, and briefly describe how you could carry it out.

If you include vague, open-ended questions, it will be difficult to reach any firm conclusions from your research.



## Selecting secondary sources

**Secondary sources** are pieces of research that already exist and you do not need to create them; for example books, film footage or the internet. These sources are often very useful for finding out more about your theme and chosen practitioners.

### Web-based sources

Considerable research is undertaken on the internet, as it is so fast and accessible. You can use search engines to gain access to information, but make sure that you type in key words in order to get the best results. Remember that not all websites are reliable in terms of providing accurate information.

Take a screenshot of useful information you find on the internet, so that you can take notes from it which may contribute to your writing. Don't forget to reference your sources (see pages 11–12).

### Print

It is worth making an effort to access print-based sources: visit your local library to consult books, journals, notated dances and musical theatre scores. This might be a more focused form of research, as it is easy to become overwhelmed or distracted when browsing the internet for information.

Using different methods to perform extensive research will impress your examiner.

### Archives

You can access information by visiting archives. This might help you to become familiar with different practitioners' work, particularly if you are struggling to find information. Archives contain information documented over a long period of time, so historical factors that no longer exist but influenced practitioners' past work may well be available.

### Recorded/digital resources

Recorded or digital footage of a practitioner is an easily accessible secondary source. Watching a performance or an interview with your selected practitioners can support your investigation. You can find videos of productions on the Digital Theatre website, iTunes and YouTube.



Remember to take notes so that you don't forget any vital information!

### Case studies

A case study is an account of a person, group or situation that has been studied over time. Looking at case studies of practitioners or performance styles can help you to understand performers' artistic intentions and the characteristics of different styles.

### Key theories

Reading key theories of performance could boost your understanding of the principles of dance, acting or musical theatre. Also, historical, political or social theories could be relevant to your research in terms of how they impact on the theme, as well as your selected practitioners' work.

### Now try this

- 1 Perform some brief secondary research on the internet about Kneehigh Theatre Company, related to the theme of identity.
- 2 Document your findings in note form.

# Research

Consider the following tips and guidance in relation to your **research**. You can refer to pages 5 and 6 as a reminder of the skills required.



## Links

See Unit 3, pages 51–52 for skills advice on primary and secondary research.

### Primary research

- Carrying out primary research can be time-consuming, but you will create evidence that no one else will be using.
- In your extended writing you will need to give your own opinion, backed up by evidence; results of your primary research might be used to justify your judgements.

### Secondary research

- Spend time looking at different types of secondary research: books, journals, digital archives.
- Internet sources are not always reliable, so make sure that you are accessing professional, trustworthy sites.
- Record your findings accurately, and make sure that you note the correct website address for your bibliography.

Using a balance of both primary and secondary research will give depth to your writing.

Here is an extract from a learner's writing, explaining the research techniques they used. Read the post-its to understand where they could improve.

### Sample response extract

In terms of primary research I was able to see a live performance of Oscar Hammerstein II's work. This helped me to gain more insight into the motivation behind the work, as well as whether this was typical of Hammerstein's work.

In terms of secondary research I undertook internet research as well as visiting digital archives. I then collated my findings. While participating in internet research, I did extensive searches, making interesting discoveries. Also I found useful information in some books and journals that I found in the library, relating to political and social factors surrounding identity.

Assume that the reader will know nothing about the practitioners and theme. How did the performance help regarding the motivation behind the work? What is the motivation/intention? Was it typical of the practitioner? What work is typical of the practitioner?

Some valid points made regarding the types of research involved. However, detailed explanation is lacking, such as what discoveries were made. What useful information was found? Why was it useful?

### Now try this

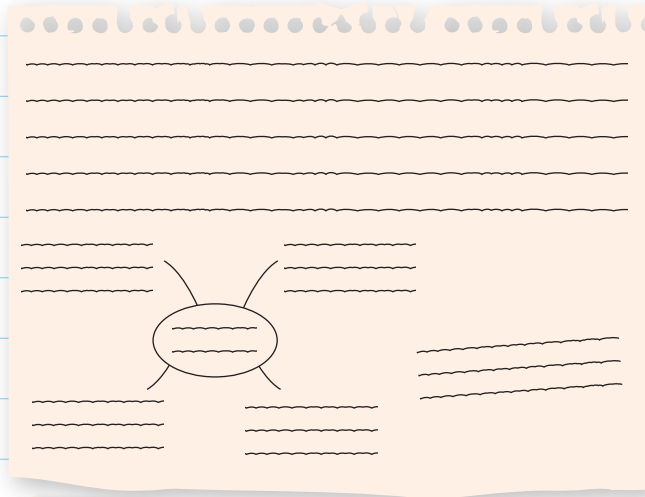
Choose one of the practitioners on page 3. Write down **three** types of primary research and **three** types of secondary research you could use to investigate this practitioner.



## Different formats

As you collect your research, you can record it in a variety of **different formats**.

### Journals and notebooks



You can easily record information in a journal or notebook. You can make notes, create spider diagrams and mind maps or write longer pieces of text.

### Photographs



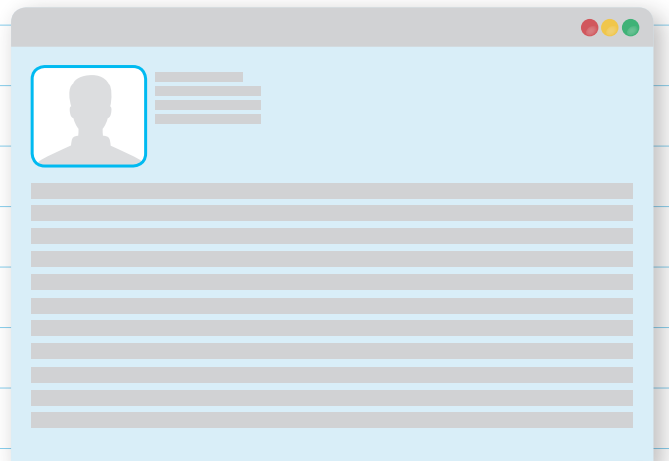
Photographs can be useful in recording research, such as demonstrating a movement or facial expression. They can also provide contextual information such as the historical or social background.

### Videos



It might be useful to video some of your research; for example, if you have interviewed someone or watched a performance that you were able to record. You could also record yourself speaking about research you have collected, which you can transfer into note form at a later date.

### Blogs



Blogs are a useful way of recording information online in an informal fashion. You can keep updating your blog regularly with relevant information, and might prefer the accessibility of this format.

### Now try this

Use the internet to research the Martha Graham Dance Company.

- 1 Create a spider diagram of key facts about the company.
- 2 Choose an image which is representative of the company.
- 3 Write a short blog entry about your findings.

Try to find at least two different online sources.

# Collating information

You will gather a lot of information as you conduct the research and you will need to collate it. You will need to select relevant information and discard irrelevant information. You will then need to organise the information into the format you can use effectively for further work and to help you shape your writing. Read the tips below to help you organise your material.

## Selection

You will need to select and organise your findings so that you are left with the most relevant research for the tasks and purpose. You could:

- focus on each of your practitioners using spider diagrams/mind maps
- create files/folders for each practitioner
- use highlighter pens to indicate where most relevant information is located.

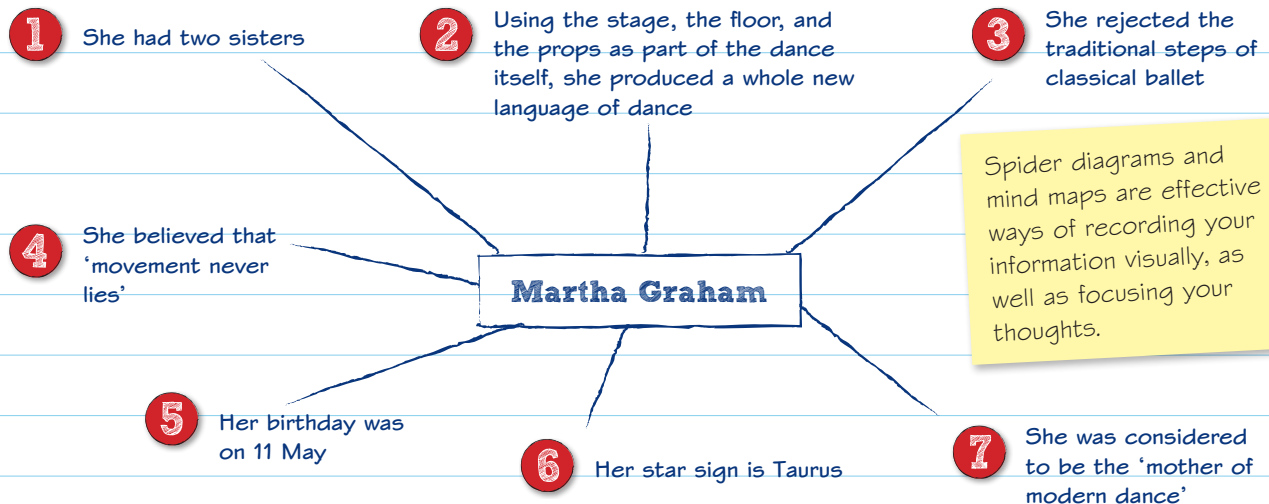


**Links**

There is further information on collating any notes you might be able to take into your supervised assessment on pages 23 and 24.

You can keep electronic files or print out information and keep it in separate folders.

Your notes should be well organised and preferably in chronological order, so that you can work through them methodically.



Spider diagrams and mind maps are effective ways of recording your information visually, as well as focusing your thoughts.

## Rejection

You will need to reject some of your research findings. Make sure that you focus on the **key information** in relation to your theme and selected practitioners. For this set task, you could:

- put to one side any information that does not relate to the theme of identity
- look at each piece of research in terms of how relevant it is to your investigation. For example, Martha Graham's star sign might not be vital information!

Don't automatically delete or throw away rejected information – you may have second thoughts and decide that you need it after all.

## How do I organise?

It may be useful to organise your information according to:

- ✓ contextual factors
- ✓ the practitioner's creative intentions and themes
- ✓ performance styles and methods.



**Links**

See pages 13–17 for information on contextual factors.

## Now try this

Look at the spider diagram above. Divide the points into useful and less-useful information – what would you select, and what would you reject?

Give reasons for your choices.

## Sources, formats and collating details

Read the extract written by one learner below, along with the accompanying post-it notes. These should help you understand what you should **not** do in your own writing.

### Sample response extract

I have used research from one book for my essay, as it provided me with all the material I needed about Martha Graham, Kneehigh Theatre Company and the theme of identity. I found out a lot of extremely relevant information about identity and wrote it all down in my notebook. I also found it interesting to watch Martha Graham's work such as:

#### Deaths and Entrances (1943)

A prime example of Graham's early psychological works, the dance is inspired by the lives of the three Brontë sisters and the struggle of women to follow their deepest impulses in the face of convention and tradition. Music: Hunter Johnson; Set: Arch Lauterer; Costumes: Graham; Dancers in this clip: Miki Orihara, Katherine Crockett, Virginie Mecene, and members of the Martha Graham Dance Company.

I also enjoyed watching:

#### Deep Song (1937)

A deeply resonant response to the Spanish Civil War, a cry of anguish, this solo is an embodiment of Graham's fears for a world torn apart by man's inhumanity to man. Music: Henry Cowell; Set: Graham; Costume: Graham; Dancer in this clip: Carrie Ellmore-Tallitsch.

I also watched other works such as 'Dark Meadow' and 'Dance is a Weapon' to gain further understanding of the Martha Graham technique.

Try to use a variety of sources rather than just relying on one. This will allow you to gather information from different places which will broaden your knowledge and provide a less biased viewpoint.

The learner has not stated **why** the pieces they watched were relevant and how they relate to the theme. Some of the information included is irrelevant, such as the list of dancers, set designers, etc.

The learner will need to acknowledge the sources in the bibliography, otherwise this could result in plagiarism.

Remember that each point you make needs to be clear, concise and relevant. It is not a review about why you like a certain practitioner.

To improve this answer, you would need to explore how Martha Graham's technique relates to the theme of identity rather than simply mentioning the names of her other works.



Martha Graham's work  
– Letter to the World

### Now try this

Choose a practitioner you have researched.

- 1 Describe **one** piece of work you watched as part of this research.
- 2 Explain why this piece was relevant to your research.

You could use one of the practitioners on page 3, or another practitioner that you have researched.



# Documenting research sources

It is vital that you **document** your **research sources** using citation, referencing and a bibliography.

## Citation

**Citation** means indicating where the information you are using came from so that you give credit to the authors of the source. For example, when you want to use some phrases or words from websites or books, you should let the readers know what kind of sources you used, who created the source and when the source was created.

You are therefore giving credit to the authors of the source and avoiding **plagiarism** (effectively 'stealing' ideas from other people).

You will need to use citation throughout your writing for Unit 1. You can cite a work by inserting the author's name and the date of publication in brackets directly after the quoted material in your writing, for example 'Smith, 2010'. This title should then also be listed in the bibliography (see below). Alternatively you can use footnotes to cite sources.

## Other useful phrases

'**Paraphrasing**' means taking words or sentences from your sources and putting them into your own words. You still need to mention the original author.

'**Quotation**' means taking words, phrases or sentences directly from the person who created them, putting them inside quotation marks.

Footnotes are used as a way of numerically listing your sources. Insert a footnote reference straight after the quotation. If you are using a word processor such as Word, a number will appear after the quotation and at the bottom of the page. You can then add the relevant source at the bottom of the page. The source will also need to be listed in the bibliography in alphabetical order.

## Referencing

**Referencing** means the format in which you give all the information about a source. There are various systems of referencing, such as 'Harvard referencing'. The approach you will need to take is shown below.

## Bibliography

As part of your assessment you may have to write a **bibliography** – a complete alphabetical list of all sources used in your work with the correct referencing format.

Try to organise your bibliography into different sections for books, websites, journals, DVDs and so on, so that it is easy to navigate.

Do not only list sources that you have taken direct quotations from; you also need to write down sources that you have used for background reading, or where you have paraphrased information. This differs from a reference list, where only sources that you have cited/quoted from are listed.

The information you will need for videos or YouTube clips is similar to that for books and websites, requiring the video title or URL as well as key information such as date of recording, publisher/author, location, format and date accessed.

## Standard referencing method

For the standard form of referencing, you need to provide this information:

### Printed sources

- the author's name (surname then initial)
- title of work
- year it was published
- name of publisher
- page number.

Example: Williams, D. J., 'The Performer on Stage', 2016, Theatre Books, p. 100.

Each detail of a reference is important.

### Online sources

- website address (copy and paste this from the browser)
- title of the web page
- paragraph number
- date you last accessed the source.

For example: [www.theatrestudies.com](http://www.theatrestudies.com), Epic Theatre, para 4, last accessed 1 September 2016.

Web pages change quickly and are sometimes removed, so it is important to date your research.

## Now try this

Choose one website and one book that you have used as part of your research. Write a paragraph containing a quote from each source, making sure that you correctly cite or reference the sources.

# Footnotes and your bibliography

You will need to document your research sources effectively to avoid plagiarism. Use the tips below to develop your skills in this area.

## Sample response extract

I have researched Martha Graham and the theme of identity and I found out that there is a vitality, a life force, an energy, a quickening, that is translated through you into action, and because there is only one of you in all time, this expression is unique which really shows what Martha Graham thought about identity.

The learner has taken a quotation and used it as if the words were their own, which is inappropriate. Anything directly quoted from a source should be in quotation marks. It should then be referenced at the bottom of the page in a footnote and in the bibliography.

## Improved response extract

I have researched Martha Graham and the theme of identity, and I found out that 'there is a vitality, a life force, an energy, a quickening, that is translated through you into action, and because there is only one of you in all time, this expression is unique'.<sup>1</sup>

This quotation gives you some idea about how Martha Graham viewed identity, seeing everyone as expressive individuals.

<sup>1</sup> [www.goodreads.com/author/quotes/47790.Martha\\_Graham](http://www.goodreads.com/author/quotes/47790.Martha_Graham), para 2, last accessed 14 June 2016.

The learner has put the quotation in quotation marks, which is correct. A footnote number is also provided which will take the reader to the bottom of the page where they can see the source.

## Sample response extract

### Websites

<http://marthagraham.org/about-us/our-history/>

Martha Graham Dance Company, para 3, last accessed 10 February 2016.

### Books

Thoms, V., 'Martha Graham: Gender & The Haunting of a Dance Pioneer', 2013, University of Chicago Press, p. 31.

Graham, M., 'Blood Memory: An Autobiography', 1993, Sceptre, new edition, pp. 45–48

### DVDs

'Martha Graham in Performance', 2002, DVD, California, Kultur Video.

The learner has produced a well-organised bibliography which is split into clear sections and includes references from both websites and books.

Websites have been referenced effectively, with the title of the website underneath.

The learner has included the author name, book title, publisher and year. This list would be improved by placing the author's surnames in alphabetical order.

DVDs have been referenced effectively.

## Now try this

Practise your referencing skills by organising some recent research into a bibliography.

Remember to use sections to organise the type of sources you have used.

Unless you noted all of the information down when you performed the research, you will have to track it down again. Save time by noting down complete references while you work.

# Historical and cultural factors

As part of your research you need to look at the context of the work of your selected practitioners. Consider how they were influenced by elements such as historical and cultural factors.

## Historical factors: key events



## Historical factors: epoch

'Epoch' means a particular period of time in history or a person's life. Researching the epoch of your selected practitioners may help you gain a better understanding of the intentions behind their work. For example, if a practitioner was working within the postmodernist epoch (late 20th century), this may have influenced the kind of work they were creating.

This is a picture of Nelson Mandela and his wife Winnie when he was released from prison in South Africa on 11th February, 1990. Significant events in history such as this one could have impacted on the work of your practitioners. Perform research to discover if this was the case, looking at what key events occurred within their lifetimes, or close to their lifetimes. You may then be able to draw parallels between historical events and the practitioners' creative themes and intentions.

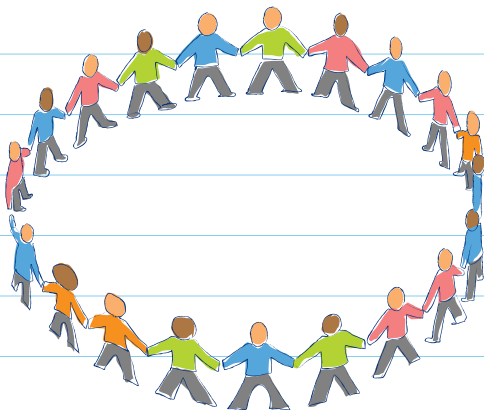
## Cultural factors: minority group

Minority groups are people who have less control/power over their lives than the majority or dominant population. If your practitioners belonged to a minority group, this could have impacted on their work and creative intentions.

## Cultural factors: world influences

These can be issues, trends and events. World influences are influences caused by anything that affects the whole world. Consider whether your practitioners were affected by world/global influences. If they were, why, and how?

## Cultural factors: communities



## Cultural factors: other art forms

Other art forms may have influenced the creative outlook of practitioners. For example, an actor/director may be influenced by musicians, dancers or artists from the same era, or a previous one.

Communities are groups of people living in the same place or having a particular characteristic in common. Your selected practitioners may have lived in communities that had a direct impact on the work they were creating.

## Now try this

Choose one of the practitioners you have researched. How have historical and cultural factors impacted on their work?

Try to be specific, listing works or quotations that show the influence of different historical or cultural factors.



# Economic and political factors

You also need to investigate how **economic** and **political** factors might have influenced your practitioners' work.

## Economic factors: funding conditions

Consider your practitioners' work in relation to what kind of funding was available at the time, and how this may have impacted on the decisions they made. For example, the availability of funds might have affected the scale of their performances or how much they could pay their dancers; these factors would have shaped their work.

## Economic factors: financial climate

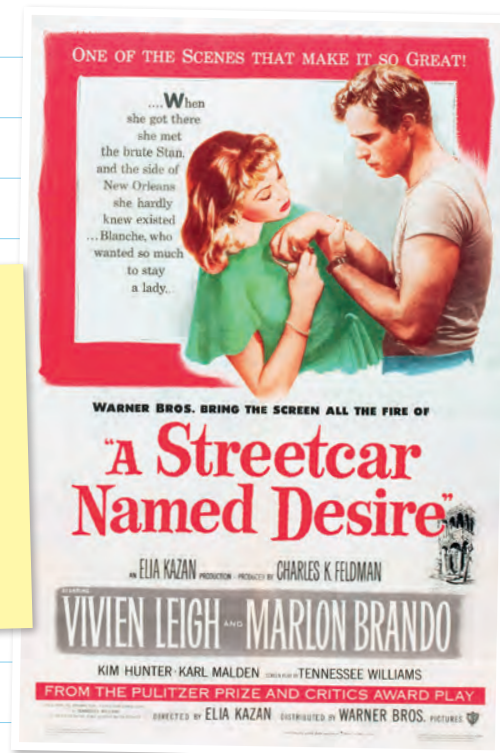
Your selected practitioners might have been affected by the financial climate – how financially stable the country was at the time of writing/performing. For example, a recession could mean unemployment and cuts to funding, but alternatively, a financial boom could help to strengthen or develop artistic companies.

## Political factors: legislation

This means a law or set of laws made by a government. Legislation exists for most areas of our lives, such as education, health and even the arts. In putting on a performance, practitioners need to observe legislation such as employment laws, or health and safety issues in relation to the venue.

Propaganda is information used to promote a political point of view; it is often of a misleading nature. When artists or practitioners create work that challenges conventions propaganda might be used by their opponents to discourage its popularity. For example in Tennessee Williams' *A Streetcar Named Desire*, law and propaganda were used by the government to discourage the messages and themes of the play.

## Political factors: propaganda



## Political events: satire

Satire is a genre of literature and performing arts – forms of ridicule such as sarcasm or irony are used to highlight inadequacies or vices. Practitioners may choose to use satire to communicate political messages or intentions, or have been influenced by forms of satire. Modern examples of political satire include the plays of David Hare, or the television programme, *Have I got News for You*.

## Political events: current events

The political climate may have an impact on practitioners' work, such as the people in government at the time and their policies. Political events such as elections, referendums, budgets and summits may influence artists, who might choose to communicate to their audiences at a particular point in time.

## Now try this

Choose one of the practitioners you have researched. How have economic and political factors impacted on their work?

It might be helpful to create a spider diagram or mind map to record this information.

# Technical and social factors

You will also need to consider how technical and social factors might have influenced your selected practitioners' work.

## Technical factors: latest developments

The availability and choice of technology holds many more possibilities for practitioners today compared to previous years. For example, a new role of 'video designer' is becoming popular. Video designers embrace digital technology, bringing it to the stage in terms of 3-D projections, virtual-reality masks and computer animation.

## Technical factors: restrictions

In previous years practitioners may have felt restricted by the technical elements available. Recent developments allow practitioners to incorporate more sophisticated sound equipment into their work for example, as well as more complex set designs.

There have also been advancements in the choice and use of lighting. In previous eras, practitioners would have needed to rely more on the content of the work to communicate artistic intentions.

## Social factors: fashion



Fashion can relate to clothing, hair, decoration or behaviour. Practitioners could be influenced by fashion in terms of costumes that performers may wear. Popular styles/images could provide inspiration for creating pieces; alternatively, some practitioners may rebel against popular fashion.

## Social factors: values

Values are principles or standards of behaviour. Practitioners may wish to reinforce or challenge social values in their work. They may be influenced by standards of behaviour, which are then expressed in their work.

## Social factors: media



## Social factors: audience expectations

When watching a performance, an audience would expect to be entertained, first and foremost. Practitioners will strive to do this, although they may also want to communicate serious messages, challenge conventions or invite audience participation.

Media is the main means of mass communication, which includes television, radio, newspapers and the internet. Practitioners can be influenced by what they read, see or hear in the media. This could then translate into the work they create, whether it is news items about earthquakes or television comedies.

## Now try this

Choose one of the practitioners you have researched. How have technical and social factors impacted on their work?



# Geographical and physical factors

You will also need to consider how your selected practitioners were influenced by geographical and physical factors.

## Geographical factors: venues

Many different types of venues are possible for performance; for example:

- site-specific such as a beach or castle
- conventional theatre (proscenium arch)
- concert hall
- opera house
- in the round.

Practitioners are influenced by what venues are available and affordable, as well as the particular setting they want for their work. Sometimes work has to be adapted to fit within a type of venue. For dance performances, sprung floors may be a consideration, as well as where the wings are situated. A raked stage may be more suitable for an acting or musical theatre performance.



Outdoor theatres include amphitheatres which are open circular/oval buildings surrounded by tiers for spectators. This structure had an important impact on Ancient Greek drama.



## Physical factors: physical characteristics of a place

Physical characteristics of a place include:

- bodies of water
- climate
- natural vegetation
- animal life.

A practitioner's work could be influenced by the natural environment in which they grew up. Also this might stimulate them to create work about places where they lived / aspired to live / disliked living.

Living in a harsh or beautiful natural environment can influence a practitioner's work.

## Now try this

Choose one of the practitioners you have researched, and consider how geographical and physical factors have impacted on their work.



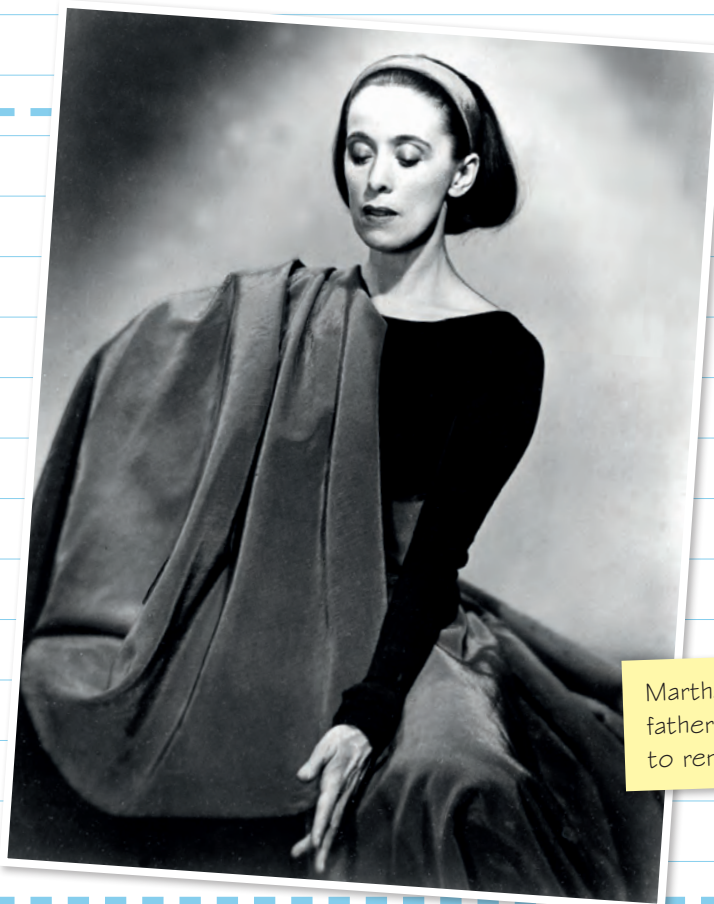
## Other influences

You will need to consider influences such as other practitioners, performers and educators, for example teachers and mentors.

### Influences from other practitioners and performers

Your chosen practitioner might have been influenced by other practitioners or performers in their field. In fact, it would be difficult for practitioners not to be influenced by what they have watched as they are growing up or when they are developing as artists. Alternatively practitioners could rebel against popular practitioners or performers and instead try to create new works that may challenge conventions, such as the way in which Oscar Hammerstein reversed the process of writing musicals (lyrics before music).

Lloyd Newson created a new form of dance theatre with his company DV8: Physical Theatre.



### Influences from education, teachers and mentors

A practitioner's outlook and knowledge of the field will be shaped by where they received their training. This in turn could have an impact on their work.

Some practitioners attribute much of their success to their education, whether it is the institution itself, specific teachers or mentors. Practitioners could also be influenced by friends or family members.

Martha Graham was influenced by her father who used physical movement to remedy nervous disorders.

### Now try this

Choose one of the practitioners you have researched.

- 1 Describe the influences of other practitioners and performers on their work.
- 2 Describe how their education impacted their work.

## Themes

As part of your investigation you will need to consider the themes behind your selected practitioners' work.

### War

War is a common theme in performance. This ranges from showing conflict between people in the form of a physical theatre group piece, to musical theatre performances or plays taking the theme of war or based on a particular war. War enables conflict to be explored and shown, creating tension and taking the audience on an emotional journey, often to demonstrate the futility of war.

Many anti-war plays were created in response to the First and Second World Wars – for example, *Oh! What a Lovely War*.

Some dance styles are associated with war/ combat. For example, capoeira combines martial arts and dance, and originated in Brazil. It is viewed as a fighting method and a means of self-defence as well as being performed for entertainment.



The Punch and Judy puppet show is based on morality: Punch is both the hero and the villain

### Morality

Morality is about the extent to which something is right or wrong. It can be communicated through all disciplines, but is most famously demonstrated in 'morality' plays. Here, the hero is faced with choices of good and evil; he meets characters who symbolise abstract qualities such as vice or virtue. Morality plays were popular in Europe during the 15th and 16th centuries. The purpose of these plays was to teach a moral lesson.

### Romance

Love and romance is an ever-popular theme in performance. From musical theatre performances such as *West Side Story*, telling the tale of forbidden love, to Shakespeare's 'romance plays' such as *The Tempest*, this age-old theme is frequently used. Practitioners seek new ways to convey this universal theme, which often include an obstacle such as unrequited or unreciprocated love.

A new spin on the theme of love and romance by the physical theatre company Frantic Assembly in *Lovesong*.



### Now try this

Choose one of the practitioners you have researched. Identify a theme that they have explored and describe how they have interpreted this theme through their work.

Have they successfully reworked an old message, or defied convention and presented the audience with something totally new?



# Intentions, genre and target audiences

When investigating your practitioners, you will need to consider their creative intentions, genre and intended target audiences.

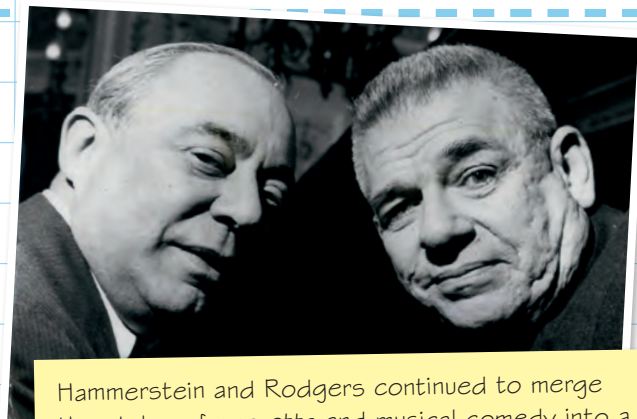
## Creative ideas and intentions

An intention or creative idea relates to what the practitioner is trying to express or communicate in performance. This could be a serious topic, or perhaps is purely for entertainment. For each of your practitioners think about these questions:

- Are there recurring themes/intentions in their pieces?
- Are the practitioners successful in conveying their intentions?
- How do they achieve this?



Kneehigh Theatre Company's themes have been described as 'universal and local, domestic and epic'. In their production of the legend *The Umbrellas of Cherbourg*, love and endurance are the main themes.



Hammerstein and Rodgers continued to merge the styles of operetta and musical comedy into a completely new genre known as the musical play. This became the most consistently successful partnership in American musical theatre.

## Genre

Genre means style, which in performing arts involves a particular set of characteristics. Examples of genre are: comedy, tragedy, fantasy, realism.

Some practitioners choose to rebel against the conventions of a genre. For each of your practitioners, think about these questions:

- What genre does their work sit in?
- Is it typical of the genre?
- Why?



Martha Graham's work intended to have a 'visceral' effect on the audience, connecting to their feelings rather than their intellect.

## Target audiences and intended effect

The target audience is a particular group at which a performance is aimed. When choreographing or directing, a practitioner will have a target audience in mind, as well as an intended 'effect' on the audience, whether this is to shock or entertain. For each of your practitioners think about these questions:

- What was their usual target audience?
- What was the intended 'effect' on the audience, and does this fluctuate between pieces?
- Why does it fluctuate?

## Now try this

Give **one** example of how creative intentions, genre or target audience could be affected by:

- |                                   |                                 |
|-----------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| (a) historical factors            | (c) social or technical factors |
| (b) economic or political factors | (d) geographical factors.       |



**Links**

Look at pages 13–17 for more on these contextual factors.



# Influences on others, collaborations and responses

When investigating your practitioners, you will also need to think about how they influenced others, who they have collaborated with and how the audience responded to their work.

## How practitioners' work has influenced others

As well as your selected practitioners being influenced by others, they have the capacity to have an impact on their audiences and other practitioners. In relation to your practitioners, think about these questions:

- Have they influenced others?
- Who have they influenced?
- How has this been expressed?

For example, Martha Graham was influenced by Ruth St. Denis and Ted Shawn. She then went on to influence many other dancers including Alvin Ailey, Merce Cunningham and Twyla Tharp whom she taught.

No practitioner works in a vacuum – each influences and is influenced by other practitioners, past and present.



Ruth St. Denis



Martha Graham



Twyla Tharp

## Collaboration with other practitioners

Practitioners often collaborate with other practitioners in the creation of work. This allows a combination of ideas to take place, with practitioners pooling their thoughts and drawing on each other's particular skills. In relation to your practitioners, think about these questions:

- Have they collaborated with anyone?
- Who?
- How has this affected their work?

For example, Martha Graham collaborated with some of the foremost artists of her time, including the composer Aaron Copland and the sculptor Isamu Noguchi.

## Public and critical responses to their work

Practitioners may receive mixed responses to their work, whether from the general public who pay to watch their performances, or the critics who are paid to write about them. In relation to your practitioners, think about these questions:

- How has their work been received by the public and critics?
- What are the reasons for this?
- Has this affected them when developing further material?

## Now try this

Choose a practitioner you have researched. Briefly describe:

- how their work has influenced others
- the public and critical responses to their work.

Use the questions above to help you.