

# Want to teach a new play?

Our Play Recommendation of the Month:

## Gizmo by Alan Ayckbourn

### What is the play about?

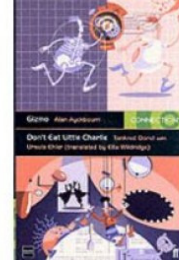
Written in 1999, this is a perfect play for perhaps Year Nines or GCSE groups. It was written specifically for young people to perform. It has a mixed gender cast of 17, but could easily be performed with smaller groups, with some students doubling-up roles.

It offers a challenging and exciting opportunity to teach physical and imaginative theatre because of the unusual storyline: the play is set in the future and follows the life of a young man Ben who, after suffering a paralysing shock, has had a 'gizmo' inserted into his head. This futuristic device allows someone else to control his movements. However, the controller for the gizmo falls into criminal hands.

Because of the unusual storyline, it is a great way to introduce classes to physical theatre. The students will have to choreograph scenes as they attempt to show Ben's movements being controlled by the wearer of the gizmo. Once the wearer switches the gizmo on, Ben must mirror the wearer's movements. It will require great concentration and ensemble acting and will focus students' attention upon the importance of movement. It could pave the way for some great teaching opportunities such as looking at the physicality of Marcel Marceau, the ensemble acting of Brecht, the physicality of Berkoff, the old physical improvisation styles of Commedia dell'Arte, slapstick comedy approaches, Meyerhold's Biomechanics or contemporary physical theatre companies' approaches such as Complicite and Kneehigh.

The play will also provide some interesting discussions about the dangers of new medical technologies which could lead to some interesting devising work.

May half term reading?



Gizmo by Alan Ayckbourn

Product Code: TXT126

Price: £5.99

*"This is a great play to use with Key Stage 3 classes because it's funny, imaginative and a great way to teach physical theatre. It's short (only six scenes), so it's really easy to teach the entire play in a limited timetable. I'll definitely be using it with my Year Nines, to start the new term."*

Emma, Head of Drama, Chester

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# Let us do your Key Stage 3 planning for you!

Objectives/Aims	Teaching notes	Differentiation/Extension	Working notebook/ Homework
<b>Lesson One</b> To read and understand the opening of a play and the conventional conventions used. To use early still images as a rehearsal approach. To explore stage movements and control. To use written narratives within an improvisation to help students consider character motives.	The class could read <i>Scene One</i> of the play. After reading the opening scene of this play students should be told that the playwright has tried to convey the play in the first scenes and has provided the audience with a clear idea about what has previously happened to Ben. Explain that it is essential that as a reader you understand the events that previously happened to Ben. In order to understand this bit of the play, students should be asked to create a series of three still images that capture all the details of Ben's previous story that we learn from this scene. The still images should capture the following events: <b>BACKGROUND:</b> Ben was once a well-known, well-loved and successful actor. <b>BACKGROUND TWO:</b> When writing one evening he was out on an evening out of violence in the city. <b>BACKGROUND THREE:</b> Ben is a man of his own, he is finally four with Ben. Students could be asked to focus and explore their last snapshot, where Ben is shown with Ben. Students could experiment with walking around the room and using a hand mirror, or hand, they should attempt to 'show' their Ben. Students need to consider how they could show that Ben is a man of his own, and just that moment, but that Ben, showing as a man's hand? Ben could be asked to walk around and show a Ben in a show as Ben, he has to be clearly Ben. They could experiment with, when Ben, slowly starting to add in moving functions, such as talking or holding. Students could then spend the rest of the lesson preparing an improvisation of the scene where Ben was writing in the cockpit bar and he witnessed the appalling act of violence. Students should be encouraged to use their movement ideas when portraying how Ben 'Toss with Ben'.	When creating their own still images, perhaps more than one group might want to experiment with the <i>Actor's</i> idea of taking a snapshot that completely contrasts with what is happening in the scene. This could be done by the students playing happily out, during the appalling act of violence, or the students may invent their own sound that they feel best captures the appalling event. Throughout their improvisations students could use written narratives. The teacher could randomly stop various groups and ask the students to pause and describe their written thoughts at crucial points.	Students could be asked to reflect upon how drama approaches such as still images can help actors to consider a character's previous life. They could be asked to write down their evaluation of their group improvisations. Students could be asked to create an imaginary journal entry from a perspective who was called to attend the cockpit bar after the appalling act has taken place. The journal entry should describe their impressions of Ben and be created to the event.

### Exploring Ted's Feelings: The Iceberg

This is a drama iceberg. You must fill the top of the iceberg (the part above the water) that with scenes from *Scene One* which show how Ted is feeling.

### Marcel Marceau and His Use of Mime

**MARCEL MARCEAU: THE FACTS**  
Who was he?  
Marcel Marceau was a French mime artist born in France in 1923. His combination of the precise and the comic to his head.  
He was famous for being particularly good at performing without the aid of language. His shows were considered to be powerful and thought-provoking and performed in many theatres.  
He increased the popularity of a minority form.  
He has influenced many artists, for example the singer Michael Jackson (his character Jackson One) and inspired by some Marceau's sketches. Michel Bouillon has also been inspired by his movements and facial expressions. A man continues to be inspired after the fact, looking at him he has been inspired to perform an emotion through using a small gesture and even often look at him to be able to teach meaning that their words cannot, the small gesture features on their stage through movement, such as having a walk, going up the stairs, straightening a suit.  
Inspired by the above performance was the British actor, Marceau created a stage program named *By the Dawn of the Second World War*. This was his first major work and his popularity grew all over the world. His work has been used by the United Nations, the United Nations and the United Nations.  
Marceau created his own International School of Mime in Paris in 1978. His influence has spread to the world of theatre, dance, film and popular culture. With his exceptional performance talent he made the silent art form popular to millions of people and showed the potential for a theatre without words, only movement.

*Within your drama, why not just using some of Marceau's ideas? Here are some suggestions:*

- *Walking Against the Wind*
- *In some of Marceau's mime demonstrations, he would switch between different roles. For example, in one demonstration called the 'Wind', he would switch between a variety of characters within one sequence. Each character required a new type of movement, gesture and walk. Why don't you try to experiment with that?*

The teaching pack is based around a series of eight main lessons. It has been designed to be flexible and will suit any timetable. Each lesson is based around objectives, outlines detailed teaching ideas and provides suggestions for how to differentiate or extend able students.

The teaching pack is accompanied by a collection of photocopiable student handouts to help provide you with fun, hands-on activities to be completed during your lessons.

## Why not use our new *Gizmo Resource Pack* to provide your department with a comprehensive scheme of work for Key Stage 3?

*Gizmo-Key Stage 3 Teaching Pack*, Product Code KST007, Price £40

The teaching pack includes an assessment section to help you evaluate pupil progress throughout your teaching of this play, both short and medium term. The assessment sheets will help you collect a range of evidence throughout your students' studies. It also contains an exam paper, with detailed mark scheme to help you, should you want to, deliver a formal method of assessment at the end of a term. These sheets are designed to support you in making judgements about your students' progress, and will help you to identify targets or help with report writing.

An Overview of Topics and Skills Included in this Scheme:

Still images

Improvisation

Action narration

Artaud's use of sound

Ensemble acting techniques

Concentration on stage

Mime artists such as Marcel Marceau and Chaplin

Forum Theatre

Thought-tracking

Subtext

Method acting

Flashbacks

Conscience corridor

Digital media within drama

Characterisation games

Jacques Lecoq's neutrality

Circular narratives

Drama Written Paper: <i>Mark Scheme</i>	
Level	Mark
1	1-10
2	11-20
3	21-30
4	31-40
5	41-50

**Level 1 (1-10):** A candidate who has written a drama which is a mixture of 20 or more words. The candidate will have written a plot, but it will be very simple and will not be clearly related to the story. The candidate will have written a plot, but it will be very simple and will not be clearly related to the story. The candidate will have written a plot, but it will be very simple and will not be clearly related to the story.

**Level 2 (11-20):** A candidate who has written a drama which is a mixture of 20 or more words. The candidate will have written a plot, but it will be very simple and will not be clearly related to the story. The candidate will have written a plot, but it will be very simple and will not be clearly related to the story. The candidate will have written a plot, but it will be very simple and will not be clearly related to the story.

**Level 3 (21-30):** A candidate who has written a drama which is a mixture of 20 or more words. The candidate will have written a plot, but it will be very simple and will not be clearly related to the story. The candidate will have written a plot, but it will be very simple and will not be clearly related to the story. The candidate will have written a plot, but it will be very simple and will not be clearly related to the story.

**Level 4 (31-40):** A candidate who has written a drama which is a mixture of 20 or more words. The candidate will have written a plot, but it will be very simple and will not be clearly related to the story. The candidate will have written a plot, but it will be very simple and will not be clearly related to the story. The candidate will have written a plot, but it will be very simple and will not be clearly related to the story.

**Level 5 (41-50):** A candidate who has written a drama which is a mixture of 20 or more words. The candidate will have written a plot, but it will be very simple and will not be clearly related to the story. The candidate will have written a plot, but it will be very simple and will not be clearly related to the story. The candidate will have written a plot, but it will be very simple and will not be clearly related to the story.

**Teacher Assessment Sheet: Written Feedback**  
to evaluate your progress and help identify your next steps in learning

**Self Assessment Sheet: Group Work**  
to evaluate your progress and help identify your next steps in learning

Questions to Consider	Always? Sometimes? Never?
Did my work show that I can explore, experiment and respond to new ideas?	
Did my work show that I can successfully communicate my ideas using drama?	
Did my work show imagination and creativity?	
Did my work show that I can successfully draw upon and work with the ideas of others, for example, without such ideas being solely in the playwright's hand?	
Did my work show that I can easily cooperate with other people?	
Did my work show that I can perform using a range of ideas, styles and ideas?	
Did my work show that I understood different drama terms and concepts?	
Did my work show that I understood the play and an ability to look at a Ben's performance perspective?	
My notes for improvement are:	

Don't just take our word for it:

"This resource is fantastic. I'll be using it with Year 9 next year. It's got all the stuff I just wish I had the time to create—the assessment pages are especially useful! Thank you."

Claire, Head of Drama, Brighton.