

SAMPLE PAGES: BRECHT AND THE 3 LITTLE PIGS

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The samples are intended to give you an idea of what the product is like.

This brand new scheme of work has been designed around the story of *The 3 Little Pigs*. The reason for choosing a fairytale is because Brecht wanted to make his audiences look at the familiar in an unfamiliar way and what better story to choose than a well-known children's classic?

The scheme has been split into four different 'workshops'. Each workshop has been given a detailed teaching ideas page. On this, we have tried to include a variety of practical drama activities, written tasks and theory articles. We have also included lesson objectives, should you wish to adapt these ideas into formal teaching plans. How you structure your workshops is entirely up to you- you might want a workshop to last one lesson, or to go across several lessons. We have designed the scheme so that there are enough teaching suggestions, both practical and theory, to enable you to deliver a series of workshops of any duration that you feel best suits your timetabling requirements and your students. This is why we have deliberately avoided suggesting time frames.

Each workshop has accompanying student handouts to help you to deliver the theory and the practical tasks. These handouts are fully photocopyable and student-friendly.

This sample extract shows you what a workshop page looks like and includes a student handout about Brecht's political messages. We hope that you can use these with your classes and if you like it, why not order the pack?

sample page 17, taken from Brecht and the 3 Little Pigs

Lesson Title:	Brecht's Political Beliefs and the A-Effect
Lesson Summary:	Looking at the political motivations behind using the A-Effect, in particular the influence of Communism.
Level:	Sixth Form
Approximate Time:	1 or 2 sessions.

WORKSHOP C

Accompanying pages needed:
Pages 18-22

Teaching Content and Suggestions	<p>1. Explain to students that, when focusing upon Brecht's A-Effect, it is important to understand his political motivations, because his messages were often political or had political undertones and Brecht used distancing techniques to convey his political ideas. Students could be asked to look at Brecht's quote on Page 18. Ask students to decide what it tells us about whether Brecht was a political playwright and director. Does this quote reveal some of his political beliefs or reveal his political ideas about certain social classes? It is also a good quote to try to transform into a still image. Encourage students to see that Brecht had strong views (influenced by Karl Marx's Communist ideas) against capitalism, especially against the wealthy classes. He wanted to use his theatre to challenge capitalist ideas and improve situations for the working classes.</p> <p>2. Students could then be asked to read the article on Page 19. This introduces Brecht's political beliefs in more depth. After reading they could be asked to work in pairs to answer the questions on Page 20.</p> <p>3. Students could then turn back to their own productions of <i>The Three Little Pigs</i>. They should work in their groups to decide whether, as directors, they feel there are political messages that they could convey. They could be asked to focus upon Section 2 of the story and try the following performance idea:</p> <p><i>Perform Section 2 but make the following changes to the characters: -the wolf should be played as a hungry, wealthy businessman who wants to buy up the land that the little pigs live on. The first and second little pig should be the lowly, working class pigs.</i></p> <p>4. For students who you feel could be extended, they could be encouraged to carry out further research into how Marxist ideas have influenced Brecht's work. They could be given Page 21 to read. This introduces them to more about how Marxist ideas can be seen in Brecht's plays and the depiction of his characters. Students could be encouraged to read some of Brecht's plays to identify some of the common political themes, such as <i>The Caucasian Chalk Circle</i>.</p> <p>Students could also look at a quote taken from The Communist Manifesto on Page 22. This helps students to understand Marx's ideas about the Bourgeois and the Proletariat and where it originated from. Students could try to visually represent this quote, perhaps using still image to explore the different levels of society. One half of the class could create an image entitled 'the old feudal society' and the other half could create one called 'modern society according to Marx.' They should understand that Marx believed that society has always had class divisions, however modern society has only 2 distinct, rival social classes-the Bourgeois and the Proletariat. Students could be encouraged to consider this quote in terms of their production of <i>The Three Little Pigs</i>-could the wolf represent the new emerging Bourgeois?</p>
Student Objectives/ Outcomes	I understand that, when applying the A-Effect, I should consider Brecht's political motivations for using such a technique, especially the influence of Communism on his ideas for theatre.

Introducing Alienation

"Life does not have to be like that.
There are options." Brecht



BRECHT'S DIDACTIC THEATRE AND HIS POLITICAL MESSAGES.

Brecht's theatre was political and it was heavily inspired by Karl Marx (a famous German socialist and philosopher who developed theories about Communism). Brecht's beliefs of Marx's theories influenced his own theories for theatre. The aspects of Marxism that Brecht seemed to be most inspired by are class struggles and the representation of the bourgeois (the wealthiest social class of society) reality on stage. Brecht wanted to create theatre that showed a different view of social class, especially one that concentrated upon the poorer members of society and their struggles.

Brecht believed that the theatre of his day represented a particular political ideology or a view of society that was not susceptible to change. He thought that the majority of theatre was based on bourgeois ideals and he wanted to challenge this.

Brecht was heavily inspired by Marx's thinkings which went against the capitalist society of his day. Marx objected to a capitalist society because he felt that it made human lives become seen as products, where workers are dehumanised and are incorporated into the machinery of production. Marx believed that in such a society, the only people who could succeed were wealthy ruling classes (the bourgeois). Brecht also took on these beliefs and wanted to use his theatre to help audiences look at the bourgeois reality being presented on stage from a new perspective. Brecht wanted to alienate his audience in order to let them watch events which they might have thought as inevitable and suddenly start to question the capitalist world in which they live, and even perhaps change it. He wanted his audiences to rethink and redefine their views of the world.

Brecht was not really interested in portraying characters as individuals, instead he wanted them to represent humanity. He did not want his audiences to approve of them, or even relate to them. Instead they might admire their qualities, rather than them as a person. For example, one of Brecht's famous characters Mother Courage is the hero of the play, but she is not a woman who is very likeable. However, an audience is always struck by her physical endurance and her strength to endure horror after horror. Brecht did not want audiences to see the characters as individuals, instead they should be viewed as types. The characters were his tools to help theatre become a way of engineering social change.

Early on in his career, Brecht explained that all of his theatre was 'didactic' (something that has the intention to teach or instruct), and later he did accept that it was also a form of entertainment. One thing he did always try to strive for was to produce theatre which helped promote the discovery of a new truth. The spectator of epic theatre has to be able to say at the end, 'life does not have to be like that. There are options.' Brecht would encourage his actors to suggest to the audience that a character's behaviour is not the only course of action; he wanted them to see the alternatives. He wanted them to focus more upon the human relationships than on the individual human natures.

Because of Brecht's political motivations and ideas, his theatre appealed less to audience's emotions and more to their reasoning. Instead of becoming absorbed in the experience, they had to challenge or critically judge the experience and learn from Brecht's politically inspired messages.

Introducing Alienation