

Talking *about* Theatre

*The* **EXPERIMENTAL** *Conversation*



# Talking about Theatre

## The Experimental Conversation

This booklet is designed to structure a conversation about your experience of theatre or dance. Operating through a series of questions or instructions it asks you to think and reflect on a performance you have just seen. You can have the conversation with yourself, with someone else, or with a group of people.

This is the Experimental Conversation, consisting of playful or metaphorical entry points to a conversation that should be shaped by the particular performance you are talking about.

Other booklets in this series are themed in order to structure different conversations – generic, narrative, scenography, performance and music & sound.

# Let's Begin

You don't need an art background or any specific information in order to have this conversation – you just need to have seen a performance and be in the mood to talk about it.

There are no right or wrong answers, no incorrect conversations.

Each page contains a question or instruction.

If you like, you can use the blank pages to write down your responses.

# One

Did you like the performance? Why or why not?

There are ten questions in this conversation.  
Please move on to question two.

# Two

If this performance was a colour, what colour would it be?  
Why?



When you have finished, move onto question three.

# Three

Make a sound, noise or word to represent how the performance made you feel.

Try to write this down. Why did you make this sound?

As soon as you are ready, move to question four.

# Four

Was there anything in the performance that made you think of your own life?

Draw a picture of that experience.

When you are done, please continue to question five.

## Five

Write a haiku (three line poem) expressing the emotions that the performance provoked for you.

When you've finished, turn to question six.

# Six

If you could have a conversation with a character or performer in the performance, what would you say to them?  
What might they say back?



Please remember that there are no right or wrong responses in this conversation.

# Seven

Draw a line depicting the story or progression of the performance (was it straight, looping, curved, etc).

Briefly explain why you drew the line that way.

When you have finished your line, move to question eight.

# Eight

Where in your body would locate your experience of watching the performance?

Was it a mind experience, a heart experience, a gut experience, a left toe nail experience? Why?

Turn to question nine.

# Nine

What one question would you like to ask the artist responsible for the performance?

When you are ready, turn to question ten.

# Ten

Think back on your answers to previous questions.

What have you discovered from thinking about this performance?

Has your opinion about it changed?

What else have you learned from these activities?



Please turn over.  
There is one last thing before you have finished this conversation.

# Post-Conversation Question

What additional question would you like to ask yourself or other people about the performance?





This resource was designed by  
Matthew Reason, York St John University, UK.  
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Talking *about* Theatre  
*The* **GENERIC** *Conversation*



# **Talking about Theatre**

## **The Generic Conversation**

This booklet is designed to structure a conversation about your experience of theatre or dance. Operating through a series of questions or instructions it asks you to think and reflect on a performance you have just seen. You can have the conversation with yourself, with someone else, or with a group of people.

This is the Generic Conversation, meaning that it is open and should be applicable to and shaped by the particular performance you are talking about.

Other booklets in this series are themed in order to structure different conversations – narrative, experimental, performers, scenographic and music & sound.



# Let's Begin

You don't need an art background or any specific information in order to have this conversation – you just need to have seen a performance and be in the mood to talk about it.

There are no right or wrong answers, no incorrect conversations.

Each page contains a question or instruction.

If you like, you can use the blank pages to write down your responses.

# One

Did you like the performance? Why or why not?

There are ten questions in this conversation.  
Please move on to question two.

# Two

What did you see? Try to be as specific as you can.

What shapes, colours, objects or people did you see?

If in pairs or a group take turns listing things that you saw.

When you have finished, move onto question three.

# Three

What did you hear?

Again, be as specific as you can.

What noises, voices or music did you hear?

If in pairs or a group take turns listing things that you heard.

As soon as you are ready, move to question four.

# Four

What emotions or feelings did the performance cause you to experience?

What prompted these feelings?



When you are done, please continue to question five.

# Five

Did anything in the performance remind you of something from your own life?

What was this and why?

When you've finished, turn to question six.

# Six

Did you think the performance was true to life?  
How real did it look or feel and why?

Please remember that there are no right or wrong responses  
in this conversation.

# Seven

If you could have been any of the performers or characters, which would you have been and why?

When you have finished, move to question eight.

# Eight

What would you have changed about the performance?  
Why?



Turn to question nine.

# Nine

What do you think you'll remember about the performance in the future?

When you are ready, turn to question ten.

# Ten

Think back on your answers to previous questions.

What have you discovered from thinking about this performance?

Has your opinion about it changed?

Have you learned anything about yourself or others?

Please turn over.  
There is one last thing before you have finished this conversation.

# Post-Conversation Question

What additional question would you like to ask yourself or other people about the performance?





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Talking *about* Theatre

*The* **MUSIC & SOUND** *Conversation*



# **Talking about Theatre**

## **The Music & Sound Conversation**

This booklet is designed to structure a conversation about your experience of theatre or dance. Operating through a series of questions or instructions it asks you to think and reflect on a performance you have just seen. You can have the conversation with yourself, with someone else, or with a group of people.

This is the Music and Sound Conversation, focusing on the sonic and audio elements of the performance as entry points to a conversation that should be shaped by the particular performance you are talking about.

Other booklets in this series are themed in order to structure different conversations – generic, narrative, experimental and scenographic.

# Let's Begin

You don't need an art background or any specific information in order to have this conversation – you just need to have seen a performance and be in the mood to talk about it.

There are no right or wrong answers, no incorrect conversations.

Each page contains a question or instruction.

If you like, you can use the blank pages to write down your responses.

# One

Did you like the performance? Why or why not?

There are ten questions in this conversation.  
Please move on to question two.

# Two

What kind of things did you hear?

Was there speech, song, music, sound effects, ambient noises etc...

If in pairs or a group, take turns listing the different things that you heard.



When you have finished, move onto question three.

## Three

If there was music, was it played by the performers on stage or did it come from off stage?

Was the music part of the story or was it incidental / atmospheric?

As soon as you are ready, move to question four.

# Four

Was music related to particular characters or particular moments in the performance?

What was the impact of this?

When you are done, please continue to question five.

# Five

Did the sound or music change during the performance?

What did this tell you about different moods in the performance?

When you've finished, turn to question six.

# Six

What non-musical sounds were there in the performance?  
How were these produced?



Please remember that there are no right or wrong responses  
in this conversation.

# Seven

Were these sounds realistic or symbolic?  
In what ways?

When you have finished, move to question eight.

# Eight

What did the sounds and music in the performance tell you about the setting of the performance, about when and where it was taking place?

Turn to question nine.

# Nine

If you had to select just one sound to represent the whole performance, what would it be and why?

When you are ready, turn to question ten.

# Ten

Think back on your answers to previous questions.

What have you discovered from thinking about this performance?

Has your opinion about it changed?

Have you learned anything about yourself or others?



Please turn over.  
There is one last thing before you have finished this conversation.

# Post-Conversation Question

What additional question would you like to ask yourself or other people about the performance?





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Talking *about* Theatre  
*The* **NARRATIVE** *Conversation*



# **Talking about Theatre**

## **The Narrative Conversation**

This booklet is designed to structure a conversation about your experience of theatre or dance. Operating through a series of questions or instructions it asks you to think and reflect on a performance you have just seen. You can have the conversation with yourself, with someone else, or with a group of people.

This is the Narrative Conversation, focusing on story, plot and narrative as the entry point to a conversation that should be shaped by the particular performance you are talking about.

Other booklets in this series are themed in order to structure different conversations – generic, experimental, scenographic, performers and music & sound.



# Let's Begin

You don't need an art background or any specific information in order to have this conversation – you just need to have seen a performance and be in the mood to talk about it.

There are no right or wrong answers, no incorrect conversations.

Each page contains a question or instruction.

If you like, you can use the blank pages to write down your responses.

# One

Did you like the performance? Why or why not?

There are ten questions in this conversation.  
Please move on to question two.

# Two

Did the performance have a narrative / story?

Could you summarise it in no more than six bullet points?

When you have finished, move onto question three.

# Three

What were the crucial turning points in the narrative?

As soon as you are ready, move to question four.

# Four

What was the structure of the narrative?

Was it linear or circular or repetitive?

Could you draw a line representing the shape of the narrative?

What was the impact of this structure on the narrative?



When you are done, please continue to question five.

# Five

How was the narrative communicated?

Was it primarily through speech, movement, action, objects?

Illustrate your answer with an example.

When you've finished, turn to question six.

# Six

Did anything you see happening in the story remind you of your own story – or of another story that you know?

Did you feel the story was true to life?

Please remember that there are no right or wrong responses  
in this conversation.

# Seven

Did the story have an underlying meaning (moral, message, theme)?  
What was this and how was it communicated?

When you have finished, move to question eight.

# Eight

If the performance had lasted longer, what else might have happened?

What would have happened next?

How would this have changed your experience of the performance?



Turn to question nine.

# Nine

Were there any subplots, loose ends or alternative narratives within the narrative as a whole?

Could you describe one of these and give it a title as if it were a story in its own right.

When you are ready, turn to question ten.

# Ten

Think back on your answers to previous questions.

What have you discovered from thinking about this performance?

Has your opinion about it changed?

Have you learned anything about your own life story or the stories of others?

Please turn over.  
There is one last thing before you have finished this conversation.

# Post-Conversation Question

What additional question would you like to ask yourself or other people about the narrative?





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Talking *about* Theatre  
*The* **PERFORMERS** *Conversation*



# **Talking about Theatre**

## **The Performers Conversation**

This booklet is designed to structure a conversation about your experience of theatre or dance. Operating through a series of questions or instructions it asks you to think and reflect on a performance you have just seen. You can have the conversation with yourself, with someone else, or with a group of people.

This is the Performers Conversation, which focuses on the actors, dancers, performance and the characters they presented to open a conversation that should be shaped by the particular performance you are talking about.

Other booklets in this series are themed in order to structure different conversations – generic, narrative, experimental, scenographic and sound & music.

# Let's Begin

You don't need an art background or any specific information in order to have this conversation – you just need to have seen a performance and be in the mood to talk about it.

There are no right or wrong answers, no incorrect conversations.

Each page contains a question or instruction.

If you like, you can use the blank pages to write down your responses.

# One

Did you like the performance? Why or why not?

There are ten questions in this conversation.  
Please move on to question two.

# Two

How many performers did you see?

What did they look like?

What were they wearing?

If you like, draw a picture of one of them.



When you have finished, move onto question three.

# Three

Were the performers being themselves or playing characters / roles?

How did you know?

As soon as you are ready, move to question four.

# Four

Was there any one performer or character that you particularly identified with? Why was this?

If you could ask this performer or character a question, what would it be?

When you are done, please continue to question five.

# Five

In what particular ways did the performers move or gesture?  
Can you describe how they walked, or smiled, or laughed?  
What affect did this have on you?

When you've finished, turn to question six.

# Six

Did the performers speak?  
How would you describe their voices?



Please remember that there are no right or wrong responses  
in this conversation.

# Seven

Did the performers make any noises (beyond speech) with their mouths or bodies?

What was the impact of this?

When you have finished, move to question eight.

# Eight

Were there any non-human performers or characters (such as puppets, animals, dolls or machines)?  
How did they operate?

Turn to question nine.

# Nine

If one of the performers or characters had message for you, what do you think it would be?

When you are ready, turn to question ten.

# Ten

Think back on your answers to previous questions.

What have you discovered from thinking about this performance?

Has your opinion about it changed?

Have you learned anything about yourself or others?



Please turn over.  
There is one last thing before you have finished this conversation.

# Post-Conversation Question

What additional question would you like to ask yourself or other people about the performance?





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*The* **SCENOGRAPHIC** *Conversation*



# Talking about Theatre

## The Scenographic Conversation

This booklet is designed to structure a conversation about your experience of theatre or dance. Operating through a series of questions or instructions it asks you to think and reflect on a performance you have just seen. You can have the conversation with yourself, with someone else, or with a group of people.

This is the Scenographic Conversation, focusing on aspects of the staging such as set, lighting, props and costume as an entry point to a conversation that should be shaped by the particular performance you are talking about.

Other booklets in this series are themed in order to structure different conversations – generic, narrative, experimental, performers and sound & music.



# Let's Begin

You don't need an art background or any specific information in order to have this conversation – you just need to have seen a performance and be in the mood to talk about it.

There are no right or wrong answers, no incorrect conversations.

Each page contains a question or instruction.

If you like, you can use the blank pages to write down your responses.

# One

Did you like the performance? Why or why not?

There are ten questions in this conversation.  
Please move on to question two.

## Two

Did the performance take place in a specific place / world?  
If so where was this?

When you have finished, move onto question three.

# Three

What kinds of materials, colours, shapes, objects were used in the performance?

As soon as you are ready, move to question four.

# Four

How was the performance lit?

Was it bright, dark, spotlit, coloured, everyday or special?

What was the impact on this?



When you are done, please continue to question five.

# Five

What were the performers wearing?

Were these costumes or everyday clothes?

What colours, textures, shapes were there in the costumes?

When you've finished, turn to question six.

# Six

How did the lighting, set and costumes relate to each other?

Did anything look odd or out of place?

If so, what was the impact of this?

Please remember that there are no right or wrong responses  
in this conversation.

# Seven

Did the staging, costumes, lighting impact on how the performers moved or talked? In what ways?

When you have finished, move to question eight.

# **Eight**

Did the staging look like anything from real life or from your own life?  
Was the staging contemporary or historical or fantastical?



Turn to question nine.

# Nine

Did the set, lighting or costume change during the performance or remain the same?

If there was a change, why did this happen?

When you are ready, turn to question ten.

# Ten

Think back on your answers to previous questions.

What have you discovered from thinking about this performance?

Has your opinion about it changed?

Have you learned anything about how scenography impact on your experience of the performance?

Please turn over.  
There is one last thing before you have finished this conversation.

# Post-Conversation Question

What additional question would you like to ask yourself or other people about the scenography?





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