

EDUCATION PACK

THE TERRIFYING ORIGINAL
JOHN WATERS DANIEL MACPHERSON

SUSAN HILL'S

THE WOMAN
IN BLACK

ADAPTED BY
STEPHEN MALLATRATT

INTRODUCTION TO THE EDUCATION PACK

Designed with students of English and Drama in mind, this education pack provides clear and practical exercises and activities based on Susan Hill's original novel, Stephen Mallatratt's stage adaptation of the novel, and the performance of the play itself. The activities offer considerable scope for flexibility and adaptation by classroom teachers of both English and Drama and can be tailored to suit different key stages and different intended outcomes, depending on your scheme of study.

One section also directs you to interactive resources available on The Woman in Black website that are designed to assist students in writing about and evaluating live performance.

Teachers should bear in mind that whilst some activities can be used pre-production, several do make clear some of the key plot details.

www.thewomaninblack.com.au

INTRODUCTION TO THE TEXT AND PRODUCTION

Written in 1983, Susan Hill's *A Woman in Black* has become one of the most successful gothic novels in the English canon. A perfect example of horror and gothic writing, readers are transported to the eerie setting of Eel Marsh House in the small market town of Crythin Gifford in the north of England.

The story is told through the first person narration of Arthur Kipps, who begins the novel too distressed to share a ghost story with his family, and then recounts how as a young solicitor he was sent to oversee the funeral of a Mrs Alice Drablow, a client of his law firm. Along the way he encounters many who seem unwilling or unable to share the secrets of Eel Marsh House and its inhabitants, until he himself encounters the Woman in Black, and begins to unravel the mystery of the haunted past and eerie spectre he sees.

Performed in the West End of London since 1989, the stage adaptation was written by Stephen Mallatratt in 1987 for the Scarborough Theatre's Christmas season. Mallatratt adds the framing device of a play-within-a-play as Arthur Kipps becomes an actor himself to try and 'tell his story' in order to purge himself of the associated emotions and to finally attempt to convey the truth of the matter to his family, in order to put the events to rest and move on. Not a natural performer, Arthur Kipps finds himself struggling to recount the story with any theatricality and an actor assumes the role of 'Kipps' for the retelling and Arthur must represent all the other male characters in the story who 'Kipps' meets as he tries to solve the mystery of the ghostly figure who appears to haunt Eel Marsh House.

Written for two actors, who convey the entire tale through the use of simple set items and props, the appearance of the Woman in Black herself makes this one of the most terrifying pieces of theatre you are ever likely to see. The chilling effects of the production are enhanced by the clever use of sound and lighting to create a sinister atmosphere and keep the audience on edge until the final horror of the legacy of the Woman in Black is revealed.

Housed at the Fortune Theatre from August 1989 to March 2023, the play is one of the West End's longest ever running shows.

IMPORTANT NOTE: In Mallatratt's stage adaptation Arthur Kipps is referred to as the Actor and the performer assisting him is termed 'Kipps'. The same categorisation has been used in this pack in activities related to the stage adaptation and performance.

CHARACTER QUICK START ACTIVITIES:

RESOURCE A – ARTHUR KIPPS (BEST USED POST-READING/PERFORMANCE):

- o **Banned words** – in small groups/pairs ask students to create a brainstorm or list of the character traits and personality of Arthur Kipps but without using any of the following: scared, frightened, nervous, or fearful.
- o **Prove it!** – get students into pairs or small groups and allocate each member a key moment for Arthur Kipps that they will have to prove is his most important moment in the novel/play- each then has one minute to work out their case and then the group/pair can debate.
- o **Sculptor and clay** – in pairs or as a whole class allocate one student the role of sculptor and one the role of clay and they pick a key moment (or are allocated one) which they then have to ‘sculpt’ the ‘clay’ into for the rest of the class to guess – if working in pairs and you have access to an iPad, photograph the best examples and display for whole class to discuss.



'KIPPS' (BEST USED POST PERFORMANCE):

- o **Switch!** – whole class moving around the space as ‘the actor’ and upon teacher’s command (clap/whistle/beep) all must switch into role as ‘Kipps’. It is worth discussing afterwards the difficulties/things to be aware of as an actor when switching in terms of concentration, physical control, vocal skills.
- o **Props** – ‘Kipps’ is keen on using suggestive props. In small groups or as a whole class see how many objects/activities can be created from a box, a tube, a large sheet of card in mini mimes e.g. tube as a walking stick, box as a suitcase. It is worth discussing afterwards what needs to be added to the improvisation to make the most successful examples – facial expression, convincing use of gesture and the body.

GENERAL CHARACTER WARM-UP:

- o **Comic book faces** – place students in pairs and label A/B, call out an emotion for A and another for B, students must pull their most exaggerated facial expression for that emotion – start as a still image, then can be turned into mime, then improvisation as desired.

CHARACTER:

TEXT BASED TASKS ON 'THE WOMAN IN BLACK' SUSAN HILL

ARTHUR KIPPS:

- **Research Task** – Ask students to produce a character profile for the young Arthur Kipps (Chapter two onwards) using these questions as a guide.
 - How does Arthur Kipps describe himself?
 - Background knowledge – what does he say about his past/personality/thoughts/feelings?
 - What is relevant about his profession?
 - What is Arthur's relationship with Mr Bentley?
- **Changing Responses** – Students should look carefully at how Arthur Kipps is changed by the events of the novel. Using these questions and, if desired, the grid (**RESOURCE B**) ask students to look at specific sections and chart Arthur's responses. You may wish to do this as you read-along or as a reflective task once the whole novel is read and/or the production seen.
 - *What are his initial thoughts about Crythin Gifford and the people he meets?*
 - *How does Arthur respond when he first visits Eel Marsh House? What does this tell us about his personality?*
 - *How does Arthur try and cope with the task he feels he must complete at Eel Marsh House?*
 - *How does Arthur behave towards Mr Jerome and Mr Daily?*
 - *How is Arthur affected by the sounds that he hears at Eel Marsh House?*
 - *How are we reminded of Arthur's life outside of Crythin Gifford and why is this important?*
 - *What effect does Spider have on Arthur?*
 - *What does Arthur tell himself about what he encounters at Eel Marsh House and how does this change?*
- **Emotions** – Arthur Kipps experiences a huge range of emotions as the events of the novel unfold. It is useful to try and track some of these emotions and what they are felt in relation to.
 - Allocate each pair/group a chapter (some chapters may need to be split and given to more than one group) and ask them to scan for and highlight any emotions that are listed. Identify what triggers that particular emotion. Share your findings and then discuss whether any responses are unexpected and/or surprising as well as those that are more understandable. For example, Arthur states that in the nursery he is no longer scared only puzzled.
 - First person narration – ask students to consider the impact of hearing the most emotive moments of the story in the first person. Individually ask them to choose one example and rewrite in the third person and compare the effect and how the narrative position changes the impact on the reader. Which do they consider more effective and why? If they compare several examples with other students, does this vary?

• **Final Thoughts** – We have three main points of reflection: the end of the penultimate chapter as Arthur recovers, the final chapter and by returning to the first chapter once we have the full knowledge of the story. Students should look back at each of these moments and analyse what Arthur says and how he feels about what has happened. Here are some alternative ways of approaching the task:

- Identify a key quotation from each of the three moments of closure listed – justify why you feel these are significant in explaining how Arthur feels after all he has experienced.
- Write a short diary entry for each of these moments – try and use your own words rather than those of Arthur Kipps in the novel – how does he feel? Is there anything he cannot say aloud that he might say in a diary?
- Alternative titles – can you give each of the titles (Christmas Eve, A Packet of Letters, The Woman in Black) a different title that focuses more on Arthur Kipps’ state of mind and/or feelings at this point?
- Production based task – if students have seen the production then it is well worth considering how Arthur Kipps would feel and respond to the final revelation of the play and the sense that it is not all over.

THE WOMAN IN BLACK:

- In both the novel and the production, the woman in black appears on only a few occasions and fleetingly. However, we do get a fairly clear sense of both her physical appearance, her demeanour and the atmosphere that surrounds her.
 - Ask students to scan the novel/playscript and identify all of the woman in blacks appearances (they may include her brief appearance in Kipps’ dream) and extract all the information we learn about her presence.
- Late in the novel we discover who the woman in black actually is.
 - Ask students to write a short summary called The Life of Jennet Humfrye using facts from the text.
- Use **RESOURCE C** to consider when the woman in black/Jennet Humfrye is at her most terrifying and why?

ALICE DRABLOW:

- We never see the character of Alice Drablow but her life, house and past is pivotal to understanding the narrative.
 - Divide students into groups and ask them to identify what we learn about Alice Drablow at different stages of the novel/stage adaptation – from the initial meeting with Mr Bentley through the discovery in the letters and the information provided by other characters.
 - Ask students to make a list of other information that can be inferred even if it isn't stated by a character or the narrator such as Alice Drablow's wealth, personality etc.

MINOR CHARACTERS:

- Whilst trying to complete his task at Eel Marsh House, Kipps meets several other characters who all have different responses to Alice Drablow, Eel Marsh House and the woman in black. Use **RESOURCE D** to identify what each of these characters adds to the story.
- Using **RESOURCE E** give each small group/pair three statements to respond to – they should first identify who says the line, what the line tells us or suggests and how Kipps responds.



CHARACTER: PRACTICAL TASKS

DEVELOPING CHARACTER – ‘KIPPS’:

- Performing the bulk of the lines in the performance of the story, whilst also maintaining a role as a kind of director/stage manager, means that the performer playing ‘Kipps’ is extremely busy in the production. It is imperative that the performer is able to create both a believable ‘Kipps’ and a believable, helpful, theatre actor.

- Ask students to look at either Key Moment 2 or 3 provided later in the pack. Working either alone or in pairs ask students to work on developing the characterisation of the performer who will become ‘Kipps’.

You may wish to give them some prompts:

- How would he move to suggest his familiarity with the space and props, and his understanding of the theatre?
- How would he engage with the real Arthur Kipps (Actor)?
- How would he stand to suggest that he is used to performance and keen to start on the project?
- How would he show through facial expressions his concerns about the real Arthur Kipps’ (Actor) opening speeches?

- In order to heighten the audiences’ own sense of fear we must be convinced by the emotions of ‘Kipps’.

- Ask students to look at either Key Moment 6, 7 or 8. In pairs, with one student working as a performer and one as director ask them to workshop the scene focusing on creating a convincing display of the relevant emotion through their vocal and physical skills. With an advanced group you may wish to link this to wider practical tasks linked to realism such as emotion memory.

- You may wish to add in a staged approach where students produce a first version as a mime, forcing the students to focus on physical skills and facial expression and then a second version in which vocal skills are added. Alternatively, half the class could work solely on one skill set and then swap. It may be useful to then discuss which method was easier to relay the emotion, which was more prone to exaggeration, which was the most effective.

EXPLORING CHARACTERISATION:

- The novel and stage adaptation are very focused on telling the ghost story but to improve characterisation it may be useful to explore other moments that do not feature.
 - Ask students to create a list of ‘deleted scenes’, moments that might be of interest or use in developing the character of Arthur Kipps.
 - Examples might be: meeting Stella, spending time with his family, dealing with other matters at work, trying to recover from the time at Eel Marsh house.
 - In small groups divide up the list of ‘deleted scenes’ which can then either be scripted and performed or improvised using evidence from the text as a guide.
 - The focus of plenary discussion should be on what this scene adds to our understanding of the character of Arthur Kipps and is it consistent with the information given in the novel/ stage adaptation.

PERFORMING AS A GHOST - THE WOMAN IN BLACK:

- **Performing as a Spectre** – Start by brainstorming some of the words you might use to describe the movement of a ghost. Divide the class in half and ask half to stand still in space and the other half to move around the space trying to convey the sense of a spectre/ghost. What helps make their movement effective? (likely answers – slower pace, gliding steps, light foot, point of focus).
- **Enhancing Atmosphere** – Repeat the task (possibly reversing the groups) with the addition of spotlights and music if you have the facilities. (YouTube has plentiful examples of scary or sinister music – alternatively reduced light, silence or simple sound effects can have the same effect).
- **Concentration** – The appearance of the woman in black's face is described in detail and so even though she only appears for moments at a time the level of concentration needed and the conviction of the facial expression is important. In pairs, position students on opposite sides of the room and ask them to walk slowly towards each other maintaining both eye contact but also an appropriate facial expression – ask beforehand what this should convey (likely answers – grief, anger, sorrow, malice).

(Further exploration tasks are suggested in the introductions to Key Moments later in the pack)



SETTING

QUICK START ACTIVITIES:

- **RESOURCE F** – ‘SETTING’ NOUNS (can be used pre-reading/performance)
 - o Adjectives - In small groups/pairs/whole class, student picks a ‘Noun card’ and facilitate brainstorm of adjectives from other students
 - o ‘Articulate’ – student picks a ‘noun card’ and has to explain the noun using other nouns and adjectives but not saying the word on their card for others to guess
 - o Gothic setting – student picks a ‘noun card’ and have to describe the setting of the noun in the most gothic terms and other students award a point for each gothic feature used
- **RESOURCE G** – EEL MARSH HOUSE (can be used pre-reading/performance)
 - o Estate agent – display or distribute the description of Eel Marsh House - one student per small groups tries to ‘market’ the house to the rest of the group in the most convincing way possible using persuasive techniques. Other students may ask the estate agent questions as if possible buyers.



SETTING: TEXT BASED TASKS

EEL MARSH HOUSE:

- o Compare the descriptions of the house given in the novel and the staging of the moment in the stage adaptation (**RESOURCE G AND I**).
 - Why do students think that they are so different in their approach even though they contain the same information?
 - What is the effect on the reader of the description of the journey towards the house in the novel?

- o Ask students to scan through the chapters set at Eel Marsh House and extract details of the interior and particularly pages 80-82.
 - What is the effect of Hill's description?
 - Do students think that the interior of the house is more or less important than the exterior?
 - Is the interior description surprising?
 - Can they identify any clues that suggest the eerie developments that follow?



THE CAUSEWAY:

- o Divide the students into small groups and allocate each a section where the causeway/marsh is described. Ask each to consider the following.
 - What adjectives are used to describe the causeway/marsh and what is the effect on the reader?
 - How is this enhanced or changed by the descriptions of the weather?
 - What is the significance of the causeway? What does it add to the story beyond the incident of the past?

- o If students have seen the performance it may be useful to discuss how the production makes the causeway believable and significant.

SETTING: PRACTICAL TASKS

- **Creating a Setting** - With quite a basic set how are the multiple locations brought to life through narrative speeches? The Actor makes clear that in the theatre anything is possible and uses his own voice and gestures to bring the locations to life. Divide students into pairs and label A and B and give them the setting description on **RESOURCE H**. Student A must first try and bring the setting to life through vocal skills – their intonation, emphasis and pause – whilst Student B has their eyes closed. Student B should then try and bring the setting to life through movement skills – mime, gesture, use of stage space – whilst Student A watches. Having discussed which elements of each are effective they should then merge their efforts, either together or with one student taking the role of the Actor playing Kipps. The same activity can be completed with **RESOURCE I**.

- **Mime and Movement** - Effective setting is best achieved onstage when the performers are working effectively with elements of set and props. One of the main sequences in the production is the use of the large storage basket to suggest, at different times, a desk, a trunk, a seat on a train and perhaps most memorably the horse and trap.

- o Divide the class in half and ask half to mime/improvise being on a train/tube without the use of any props. The other class should watch. Feedback what is effective and what needs attention – it is likely to need greater work in unison and less exaggeration.

- o Ask the class to continue the activity on the train/tube and still as a mime, explaining that you (or a confident student) is going to act as if a controller of the level of believability with the levels going from 1-8. 1 is barely registering any believable movement and 8 would be very exaggerated movements and mime.



ACTIVITIES FOR CLOSE EXPLORATION OF THE TEXT

FIRST IMPRESSIONS:

- o Ask students to look at the first appearance of Arthur Kipps in the novel and/or in the production. What sort of man does he appear to be? How would you describe him to someone else? What elements of his appearance or personality would you focus on and why?
- o At what point, if any, in the novel and/or in the production do your first impressions change? Is there more to Arthur Kipps than initially thought? What changes your impression?

CREATING TENSION:

- o Hill and Mallatratt expertly manipulate their audiences to create and maintain tension throughout the story. Using **RESOURCE J** students can complete several possible tasks:
 - Plotting a tension graph for the whole text
 - Plotting a tension graph for a key sequence/chapter – this is usually a more effective task as students have to look more closely at language and style rather than just events
 - Rating the moments out of ten and discussing disputes/differences with their partner – this could extend into a persuasive writing task where students have to argue that their moment is the most tense in the novel/performance
 - Close analysis of one of the moments from the list to identify the ‘tension techniques’ used (these are listed on **RESOURCE K** and students may have others they wish to add)
 - Comparing how the tension was realised when the moment is
 - a) Read aloud
 - b) When seen in performance
 - c) When seen in the film version

TELLING THE STORY:

- o In both the novel and in the performance there is a clear focus on storytelling and the need to tell a story well. If ghost stories/gothic stories are being studied more widely then you may wish to share some Edgar Allen Poe or 'Nocturnes' by John Connelly or other ghost stories by Susan Hill. If time permits then audio versions or clips from audio versions can have be more effective than silent reading.
- o Once the key features of a gothic tale and good story have been established (through brainstorming following reading) then students can compile their own stories but with a gothic checklist or recipe. You may decide to give out four/ five gothic features per student so that each has a different focus.



- o Rather than continually steering students away from modern urban myths/ ghost stories it may be useful to create a chart of the differences and similarities. There are many cross-overs and modern stories are still heavily influenced by the genre but students may be able to identify the increasing role of technology or corrupted technology as a feature, more diverse and varied settings that are not always isolated and multiple, simultaneous victims rather than sequential hauntings are just some of the differences. This can be a very productive way of getting students to focus on what exactly is frightening about the elements of a gothic novel that means they are so oft repeated – for example, isolated house = lack of help, fear of unknown, age, decay, strange noises etc.
- o You may wish to revisit the tasks on setting and first/third person to remind students of what can be effective.

WRITING ABOUT PERFORMANCE

Writing about live performance is a skill that needs to be taught as it demands a different focus from either a theatre review or a textual analysis essay, whilst drawing on similar skills used in both of those tasks. Writing about performance analytically rather than as a review is often a more productive assignment for English students too.

It should never be necessary to write notes during a performance – ensure that students are concentrating on active watching and that they take note soon after – on the journey home or in the next lesson. Pre-performance work which reminds them of key moments to look out for and reminds them of the kind of questions they might be asked is always helpful.

Here are some key points to remember that you may wish to share with students directly or use to inform your own task setting:

- **Detail** – You are NOT expected to remember or recount the whole performance but you should be able to focus your writing onto several particular moments in the production that were memorable and engaging. You are then expected to respond to these in detail, making reference to key lines but primarily how the performer conveyed something to the audience. You should be sufficiently detailed that you are really bringing the performance to life – allowing your examiner or teacher to imagine it in their minds. It is not necessary or useful to provide a line-by-line recount but your response should clearly convey the performance in that moment.
- **Performer/character** – The main difference between English and Drama essays is that in English you are focusing on the character and the text and in Drama you should be focusing on the performer and HOW they are bringing the text to life through their vocal and physical skills, or HOW an effect is being achieved using technical terminology by the lighting, sound or set designer. Try and use active verbs as this will ensure that you are writing about what the performer is doing rather than simply what happened in the plot.
- **Enthusiasm** – It is far easier to write about something that you felt was successful and that in some way provoked a reaction in you. Whilst not every production is perfect, your question is likely to want you to focus on what the production was achieving and doing well, rather than directing you towards a ‘review’ style response.
- **Personal** – You were a member of the audience and it is important to respond to the performance with that in mind. It is expected that you will make some comment in the first person, for example: I found the scene extremely disturbing. This can take some getting used to and the focus should remain on the production and your direct responses to it. Do not get distracted into giving a recount of the entire evening or your friend’s responses.
- **Performer/Audience** – It is important that your audience is seen as active when you are writing about their responses. Try and focus on what the audience were made to either think, feel or understand from a moment of performance rather than writing about what they saw or were shown (see example paragraphs in **RESOURCE L**).

ACTIVITIES FOR WRITING ABOUT PERFORMANCE

- Display the key performance skills and technical skills that students should explicitly write about around your teaching space – for example: pitch, pace, tone, gesture, posture etc.
- In early stages of learning how to write about performance, students can use a different colour pen when using a performance skill word so that they can clearly see when they look back over work if they are focusing
- Encourage short writing tasks throughout the year in response to peer work or work seen in school – a good task is to then use ‘teacher-in-role’ to act out their responses as they read them aloud, as this can highlight missing elements
- Encourage the use of adverbs when responding to peer work orally – *“I liked when you quickly spun around from the argument”* rather than *“I liked the argument”*
- Similarly, give credit in peer responses when students are able to link vocal and physical skills as this helps stop written responses becoming too clunky when students separate the two – *“I liked when you quickly spun around from the argument and shouted back”*
- Use clips from filmed theatre to allow students to practise the skill of watching – noting-recording. Reminding them that they are not producing a step-by-step line-by-line recount, but a detailed response to the performance moment. See also the Interactive resource section

WRITING ABOUT TECHNICAL SKILLS: LIGHTING, SOUND AND SET

The production uses technical elements very cleverly for a range of purposes and provides wonderful opportunities for students to respond to how this elements create specific effects.

o Ask students to list the functions of the technical elements:

- Sense of place/specific locations
- Entrances/exits
- Movement
- Shadows to create suspense
- Change in the weather
- Time of day
- Distinction between rehearsal and 'performance' of ghost story
- Transport
- Other people
- Offstage action/locations
- Items or objects – clock/rocking chair/bell/trap

o Explain to students that they should only write about technical aspects if they are able to respond in the same level of detail and with the accurate use of technical terminology as used when writing about performance skills. As an example, the elements of lighting and sound expected to be commented on would include some of the following:

- Choice of lantern/sound equipment
- Intensity of light/level of sound
- Direction of light/sound
- Gels and colours
- Special effects – echo, fades, gobos
- Use of gauze
- Use of focus
- Use of houselights
- Angles
- Timing of cues/changes
- Shadow/silhouette
- Pitch/volume/rhythm



o Similarly, any discussion of set should be in the same level of specific detail as performance and so should comment on:

- Stage configuration and shape
 - Any use of a rake/the stage floor/backdrop
 - Use of wings
 - Use of auditorium
 - Use of levels/steps/ramps/trapdoors
 - Use of materials/colours/textures
 - Any use of screens/projections
 - Set dressing such as drapes/furniture
- Students can and should practise about writing about technical skills using the same kind of activities listed for performance skills. They should also consult specific exam board requirements but most particularly past paper mark schemes to see the level of detail expected in the most proficient answers.



WORKING WITH THE INTERACTIVE RESOURCES

Use the following questions to focus students on analysing the interactive resource:

- What is the Director's aim for the scene?
- How is this communicated to the performers?
- Look closely at vocal skills – how are these developed between the different clips?
- Look closely at physical skills – how are these developed between the different clips?
- What does the staging of the scene add to its effect?
- How might the audience respond to the scene?

PERFORMING:

- Repeat the task in three stages using any of the key moments printed below
- Appoint one student as the Director in order to keep the scene focused on achieving a specific aim
- Even if you don't have access to lighting and sound effects brainstorm and discuss what 'effects' you could add and what you would hope they would achieve
- Repeat the task but with a different key moment and rotating the cast roles and role of Director

RESPONDING:

- Both the interactive resource and the students own performances can be used for writing about live performance practice.

ESSAY QUESTIONS

These questions should be adapted to suit the demands of your key stage and the intended outcome for the unit.

- o How does Hill engage and sustain our interest in the character of Arthur Kipps?
- o What makes Arthur Kipps an interesting character?
- o How does Hill/the production make the audience feel unnerved and uncomfortable?
- o How does Hill/the production create and sustain tension?
- o 'The Woman in Black is at times terrifying' Identify and analyse moments in the novel/production that support this quotation.
- o How is the mystery surrounding the woman in black created and maintained in either the novel or the production?
- o 'The setting is so vivid it is like a character itself' Focusing on key moments from the text/production analyse and explore this quotation.
- o Analyse the role of two/three minor characters in the novel/production. What does their presence add to our overall understanding of the novel/production?
- o Analyse the effectiveness of two/three gothic techniques in the novel/production.
- o To what extent does the reader/audience sympathise with Jennet Humphyre?
- o Write about a production you have seen where the performer demonstrated a range of believable emotions.
- o Write about a production you have seen where one or more performers worked together to tell a story.
- o Write about a production you have seen exploring how one or more performers worked with the set to engage the audience.
- o Write about a production you have seen where the lighting and/or sound created a specific atmosphere.
- o Write about a production you have seen where the lighting and/or sound worked together to create specific effects.

KEY MOMENTS: FOR USE IN TEXT ANALYSIS AND PRACTICAL TASKS

1. KEY MOMENT - 'KIPPS' CHANGING EMOTIONS/RESPONSES

This is quite a long section but in performance it is a good example of seeing Kipps initially quite relaxed after his long journey north, and somewhat relieved that the Gifford Arms is rather pleasant. We then see him in a slightly more business-like attitude before realising that he is being treated with some suspicion and unease, and that the business surrounding Alice Drablow is perhaps rather sinister.

- **Practical Work** – This is a good scene to stage as a larger group, bringing to life the ‘murmur of voices from the public bar’. This makes the transition to the atmosphere of unease more tangible and is a good reminder of the effect in performance. The performer playing Kipps may also find it easier to show unease and discomfort when surrounded by actual bodies rather than just the sounds.

.....
There is a murmur of voices from the public bar. Kipps looks around approvingly, settles in an armchair and holds his hands to the fire.

KIPPS My spirits rose and I began to feel more like a man on holiday than one come to attend a funeral.
(He takes out a writing case and pen and begins to write) My dearest Stella –

But at this the Landlord enters to interrupt him

LANDLORD Are you a friend of Mr Daily's, then, sir?

KIPPS No, no.

LANDLORD Ah. Not meaning to pry, only I saw you arrive in his car.

KIPPS I met him on the train. He was kind enough to bring me from the station.

LANDLORD I see. He's a large landowner is Mr Daily. Buying up half the county.

KIPPS In that case I may be doing business with him myself before the year is out. I am a solicitor, looking after the affairs of Mrs Alice Drablow of Eel Marsh House.

The pub chatter fades rapidly

 Perhaps you knew of her?

LANDLORD I knew of her.

KIPPS It's quite possible that her estate will come up for sale in due course.

LANDLORD I doubt whether even Samuel Daily would go so far.

KIPPS I don't think I fully understand you. I gather there is a farm a few miles out of the town.

continued...

LANDLORD (dismissively) Hoggetts! Fifty acres and half of it under flood for the best part of the year. Hoggetts is nothing.

KIPPS There's also Eel Marsh House and all the land surrounding it – would that be practicable for farming?

LANDLORD No, sir.

KIPPS Well, might not Mr Daily simply want to add a little more to his empire? You imply he is that kind of man.

LANDLORD Maybe he is. But let me tell you that you won't find anybody, not even Mr Sam Daily having to do with any of it. I'll wish you good-night, sir. We can serve breakfast at any time in the morning, to your convenience.

The Landlord abruptly leaves Kipps. A moment, then Kipps resumes his letter.

KIPPS There seems to be a propensity for leaving conversations to hang in the air whenever Mrs Drablow's name is mentioned. People close up, change the subject or leave the room. I suppose it's inevitable: these small, out of the way communities have only themselves to look to for whatever drama and mystery they can extract out of life. And I would think it not unfair to say that country people, particularly those who inhabit the remoter corners of our island, are rather more superstitious, more gullible, more slow-witted perhaps – certainly more unsophisticated – than those of us who encounter the “metropolitan experience” every day. Doubtless in such a place as this, with its eerie marshes, sudden fogs, moaning winds and lonely houses, any poor old woman might be looked at askance;



2. KEY MOMENT – ‘KIPPS’ AND ACTOR WORKING TOGETHER

This example is a very useful section for getting students to write about how the performers are working together to help the audience understand how they are very different in personality at the beginning of the piece. The Actor appears reticent and unsure of the whole project and conveys this through his movement, stature and tone of voice. In contrast, ‘Kipps’ is eager and enthusiastic and very keen to get started. He also clearly believes in the power of theatre, not only to create the necessary range of settings and locations but also to restore the Actor and ‘cure’ him of his suffering.

- **Practical Work** – This is the perfect section for pairs (or threes with a director) to experiment with movement and stillness, and interaction. Ask students to look at the section each with a different instruction – in some Kipps must stay still whilst the Actor moves around the stage, and vice versa. Or with Kipps speaking quickly and the Actor slowly, and vice versa.

.....

KIPPS Good-morning!
ACTOR Good-morning.
KIPPS I trust you slept well?
ACTOR Thank you, yes.
KIPPS No nightmares?
ACTOR Not too bad, I thank you.
KIPPS Ah. So we are not clear of it yet?
ACTOR I fear I never will be.
KIPPS We'll have you playful as a lamb again, you mark my words. Did you study as I asked you?
ACTOR Study? Oh, as best I can – you must excuse me, it is not my... forte.
KIPPS We'll make an Irving of you yet.
ACTOR (irritably) I have no wish to be an Irving.
KIPPS No, but for the sake of our audience, let us at least try.
ACTOR This audience you speak of – it is to be just my family and friends?
 You don't intend to make a public spectacle –
KIPPS Good heavens, no. Your family, your friends. Perhaps the odd theatre manager, but...

*Now then – scene: London. Interior of the offices of solicitors Bentley, Haigh, Sweetman & Bentley.
And I have a little surprise for you.*

ACTOR What's that?
KIPPS Thank you, Mr Bunce! *(He clicks his fingers to the back of the theatre)*
*Instantly come the sound effects of a London street: cars, horses, shouts from street vendors etc.
The Actor is momentarily amazed. He listens for a while, then...*

ACTOR Recorded sound!
KIPPS Precisely. A remarkable invention, is it not?
ACTOR Extraordinarily true to life! I could swear I was in a London street, attempting to negotiate the
 thundering traffic!
KIPPS And so, Mr Kipps, will our audience. No need to speak of cars and trams and horses, smoke and
 grime. No need in fact, for words. Just let the recorded sound be heard and they are there.
 Transported.
ACTOR But the scene is to be in an office, is it not? Why do we have London's traffic flowing
 through an office?
KIPPS Why indeed? Mr Bunce! *(He clicks his fingers again)*

3. KEY MOMENT – ‘KIPPS’ AND ACTOR WORKING TOGETHER WITH SET

This light-hearted section early in the play can be used to explore how the performers work with the set to create meaning for the audience. It is a good example of Kipps’ enthusiasm for the “production” as he tries to convince a less certain Actor about what theatre is capable of.

- **Practical Work** – This section can be read-through and staged as part of the study of setting listed in the activities section of the education pack using a medium stage block.

.....

Kipps clicks his fingers for the lights. He looks towards the Actor

KIPPS And you still feel unsure whether to go through with this?
ACTOR Oh certainly.
KIPPS In spite of having just performed as you have done?
ACTOR There are so many things we cannot represent. How do we represent the dog, the sea, the causeway?
 How the pony and trap?
KIPPS With imagination, Mr Kipps. Ours, and our audience’s.
ACTOR I would be obliged if you would inform me how imagination will create a pony and trap upon
 this stage.

Kipps, with alacrity, swings the skip into a position square on to the audience

KIPPS Here, trap! *(Indicating the space in front of it)* Here, pony! What could be clearer?

A pause as the Actor surveys it dubiously

ACTOR It doesn’t instantly say ‘trap’ to me.
KIPPS But you ride it, don’t you? And with a whip! And with recorded sound of a pony’s hooves,
 I promise, nothing in the world could say it clearer.
ACTOR Except a pony and trap.
KIPPS Let us not be finicky, Mr Kipps.
ACTOR *(collecting his hat and broly)* I have to own, the recorded sound is splendid.
 It was a great surprise to me.
KIPPS And it does not stop now. There shall be more, much more. Tomorrow we are on the train. With more
 surprises. So now, homework. You will study these, overnight. I have divided up the lines again. And
 you will see I have cut much of the descriptive images.
ACTOR But –
KIPPS Recorded sound, Mr Kipps, Recorded sound!

4. KEY MOMENT – ACTOR AS BENTLEY

This section early in the play is the perfect example of the Actor growing in confidence and assuming the different roles he must play with greater confidence and conviction. As the stage direction states he must ‘gradually’ adopt the character and does so in performance using a change of voice, gesture, posture and also the use of the glasses and the movement away from the paper copy of the script.

- **Practical Work** – Working in threes (Kipps, Actor and a director) ask students to experiment with the ‘gradual’ adopting of the character – using different lines as transition points, experimenting with different gestures, voices.

.....

Over the next dozen or so lines, the Actor will gradually be seen to adopt the character of Bentley, as he begins to hear Bentley’s voice in his head, and recall some of his mannerisms. He might put on Bentley glasses, and polish them at some point in the scene. Initially, he is very nervous and totally script-bound but as his confidence increases, he finds he hardly needs to refer to the script at all.

BENTLEY Sit ye down Arthur, sit ye down.

Kipps sits

I don’t think I ever told you about the extraordinary Mrs Drablow.

Kipps shakes his head

Mrs Drablow. *(He takes out her will and shakes it at Kipps)* Mrs Alice Drablow of Eel Marsh House. Dead, don’t you know.

KIPPS Ah. *(producing a pair of half-moon glasses from his pocket)* Try these.

The Actor cautiously puts them on, He maybe has a little “Bentley” practice. The glasses certainly do help.

BENTLEY Sit ye down Arthur, sit ye down.

Kipps sits

I don’t think I ever told you about the extraordinary Mrs Drablow.

Kipps shakes his head

Mrs Drablow. *(He takes out her will and shakes it at Kipps)* Mrs Alice Drablow of Eel Marsh House. Dead, don’t you know.

KIPPS Ah.

BENTLEY Yes. I inherited Mrs Drablow from my father. The family has had their business with this firm for... oh... *(He waves his hand, signifying ages)*

KIPPS Oh yes?

BENTLEY A good age. Eighty-seven.

KIPPS And it’s her will you have there I take it?

BENTLEY Mrs Drablow was, as they say, a rum ‘um. Have you ever heard of the Nine Lives Causeway?

KIPPS No never.

BENTLEY Nor of Eel Marsh

5. KEY MOMENT – ACTOR AS JEROME

This section from the first act is one of the most useful key moments for when responding to the performer playing the Actor. Here, in character as Mr Jerome, he is initially unsure and then demonstrates extreme terror before attempting to regain his composure. The transitions between the emotions give excellent scope for students to write about how the performer conveys the different states and what the audience understand from the sequence. For text based students it provides an opportunity to consider closely the strength of Jerome’s reaction and what this tells us about the mystery surrounding the funeral and the house.

- **Practical Work** – Start by identifying the three main states (initial confusion, terror, regaining composure) and the lines they relate to. Recall how the performer demonstrated this in performance and in threes use notes to direct each other to try and recreate the sequence with the focus clearly on Actor/Jerome.
- From the practical task the students should then be able to write down in detail how this moment was realised in performance.

.....
At length, Kipps crosses himself and steps back from the grave

KIPPS A very poignant ceremony.

Jerome is silent. Kipps turns to look where the woman had last appeared. He drifts in that direction

Tell me, that woman... I hope she can find her own way home... she looked so dreadfully unwell.
Who was she?

JEROME Hmm?

KIPPS The young woman with the wasted face, behind you in the church and then in the graveyard here, a few yards from us.

Jerome looks at him

JEROMEA young woman?

KIPPS Yes, yes, with the skin stretched over her bones, I could scarcely bear to look at her...she was tall, she wore a bonnet type of hat... I suppose to try and conceal as much as she could of her face, poor thing.

Jerome looks frozen, pale, his throat moving as if he were unable to utter

Is there anything the matter? You look unwell.

JEROME I did not see a young woman.

KIPPS But surely...

The Woman in Black appears in an area in which she hasn’t previously been seen

KIPPS (pointing) Look there she is again... ought we not to –

JEROME No!

continued...

Jerome grabs his wrist, evidently in an extreme of terror. He avoids looking where Kipps is pointing. Kipps looks at him in astonishment. Jerome seems to be on the point of collapse.

KIPPS Mr Jerome...if you can walk a few steps, back to the church you can rest and recover while I go for help...a car...

JEROME *(almost shrieking)* No!

KIPPS But my dear man!

JEROME No I apologise... *(He takes deep breaths)* I am so sorry. It was nothing... a passing faintness... it will be best if you would just walk back with me towards my offices in Penn Street, off the square.

KIPPS If you are sure –

JEROME Quite sure. Come... *(he leads the way)*



6. KEY MOMENT – KIPPS, ACTOR AND SOUND/SPECIAL FX

This section is an excellent example of the performers working with sound and special fx to convey both the setting of the foggy marsh and causeway, but also Kipps' fear and the efforts of the performer to convey his 'blindness' in the fog. Students may also wish to compare this section with the description of the fog and mist over the causeway in Hill's novel and consider its effect on the reader, compared with the effect created in performance.

- It is also a very good example of where the two performers work together to suggest that dynamic and desperate atmosphere.

.....

KIPPS A thick, damp, sea-mist. Damp, clinging, cobwebby, fine and impenetrable. The sea-fret Mr Daily talked of.

ACTOR He must turn, retrace his steps to the house, and wait till Keckwick comes for him.

Kipps turns, and starts laboriously walking back. The lights have dimmed still more

KIPPS The mist was salty, light and pale and moving in front of my eyes all the time. I felt confused, teased by it, as though it were made up of millions of live fingers that crept over me, hung on to me and then shifted away again.

ACTOR Step by slow step he goes, baffled by the moving, shifting mist, praying to reach the house.
A nightmare walk, until...

Fade up sound of a pony and trap. Kipps halts, turns in evident relief, as the sound fades down, changes its apparent direction, swirls and fades as if carried on the mist

KIPPS Keckwick!

The sound grows near, then recedes. Kipps is baffled by it, at one moment seems to locate it in the fog, at the next is utterly disorientated. At length, as the trap appears to get nearer, we also hear the shrill neighing and whinnying of a horse in panic, together with voices, the driver struggling to control the pony, a woman's voice in panic, and a terrified young child. Kipps struggles blindly forward a few steps



7. KEY MOMENT – KIPPS HEARS THE ROCKING CHAIR

This short moment is a good section to use to develop skills of writing about performance as the focus is very much on how the performer conveys his initial fear and terror whilst moving carefully towards the door. The focus is primarily on non-verbal skills with movement and facial expression conveying the most meaning but with short lines allowing some comment on voice – tone, pitch, volume etc.

- Given that there is very little dialogue here, students may wish to compare this section with the same section in Hill’s novel and consider how the effect created in each is different.

.....

The lights fade to blackout... gradually returning, via a shaft of moonlight. At length, Kipps wakes with a sudden start

What is it Spider? What is it? (He listens intently) It’s nothing, go to sleep now.

Silence. Then, from the depths of the house, comes a sound like an intermittent bump or rumble. Kipps listens, frozen. At length, it stops. Kipps settles down again. Again the rumble. Slowly, he climbs out of bed, terrified. He decides to investigate

(Whispering) Good girl, good girl... (He moves away from the bed)

Kipps moves cautiously through the house, and up the stairs. As he does, the moonlight appears and disappears through the many windows. Gradually, the sound gets louder as Kipps gets nearer, until, inevitably, he’s drawn to the closed door. The sound is at its loudest now. He moves to the door. Then, from out on the marshes, comes the sound of a child’s scream. Kipps swings round to listen.

8. KEY MOMENT – KIPPS IN THE NURSERY/AUDIENCE FEAR

This is the perfect section for exploring and writing about how the performer is able to convey tension and create a sense of anticipation and fear in the audience.

- The section also works well as an example of how the performer is working in conjunction with technical elements such as lighting and sound – but this requires a lot of practise as there are several elements contributing at once.
- Students may again wish to compare this with the same section in the novel. The level of detail is quite similar but is the same impression and effect created?
- **Practical Work** – It also works well as a section for movement work as Kipps has to creep and show ‘extreme caution’

.....

Kipps moves inside. The corridor and the door at its end are illuminated. As Kipps approaches the door, it opens of its own accord. The interior is unlit. Kipps enters with extreme caution, then shines his torch inside. By the light of the torch, we see that the rocking chair is in motion – rocking backwards and forwards apparently of its own volition – and it is this that we have heard, echoing on the floorboards. The lights come up in the room. He rushes to the chair and stops it rocking.

But no-one had been there! No-one! There was no way out of the room except by the door I had come through, and no-one had passed me!!

Pause

During the following, Kipps moves about the room, picking up occasional objects as they are mentioned

ACTOR It is a child’s nursery. A bed in one corner, made up and all complete with pillows, sheets and counterpane. Beside it, on the table, a tiny wooden horse and a nightlight. In the chest of drawers are clothes, underclothes, day clothes, formal clothes, play clothes, clothes for a small boy of six or seven. Beautiful, well-made clothes in the style of sixty years or more ago. And toys, most neatly and meticulously ordered and cared for. Lead soldiers, arranged in regiments. A farm, set out with barns and fences. A model ship, complete with masts and sails of linen. A whip. A spinning top. Ludo. Halma. Draughts and chess. A monkey made of leather. A cat of wool. A furry bear. A bald doll with a china head and a sailor suit. Pens and brushes, inks and dice, a miniature trumpet, a painted musical box from Switzerland and a Black Doll made of felt with raggedy arms and legs.

Kipps opens the musical box, which plays for a short while. Then...

KIPPS They must have been here half a century, yet they might have been played with this afternoon. There was nothing here to frighten or harm me, there was only emptiness, a curious air of sadness, of something lost, missing, so that I myself felt a desolation, a grief in my own heart.

Kipps replaces everything as he found it, and comes back through the door to sit in the big chair. The wind, which has been rising steadily, is now roaring round the house.

continued...

How can I explain? I cannot. But I remember it as I felt it.

A huge blast of wind hits the house and the lights go out. At the same time, from the darkness outside, comes the child's cry of desperation and anguish.

The Woman in Black appears behind him in his torchlight – Kipps swings round in terror and drops the torch. He begins to grope about in panic.

The torch – God help me – the torch, Spider. Where is it, girl?



9. KEY MOMENT – KIPPS AND ACTOR WORKING TOGETHER TO CREATE A SPECIFIC EFFECT

This scene works as an example of how the two performers must work together in terms of vocal and physical skills to create a believable sense of Kipps' nightmare but also an atmosphere of chaos, fear and terror as all the strands of the story come together to reveal the truth of the woman in black.

- It is also an effective moment for writing about Kipps' in performance as he believably conveys his dreamlike terror.
- **Practical Work** – It is also an excellent section to use to create imaginative group work. Set small groups the task to stage the section in as creative and shocking a way as possible, experimenting with movement and soundscapes, and if you have the facilities lighting and sound.

.....
As Kipps falls, Sam Daily catches him, puts him gently in a chair which is the overture to Kipps' delirium. In this sequence, snatches of dialogue return to haunt him, in the form of voice-overs. The words are distorted, blurred, accompanied by sounds of the pony and trap.

There are momentary glimpses of the Woman in Black

It's a whirling nightmare, in which, at its climax, Kipps screams

KIPPS	And now it's your turn. I have no story.	KIPPS	A woman in black with a wasted face
BENTLEY	Dead don't you know.	DAILY	You're whistling in the dark Mr Kipps
KIPPS	A foul day Tomes.	KIPPS	Such things one must face
BENTLEY	Have you ever heard of the Nine Lives Causeway?	BENTLEY	Dead, don't you know
KIPPS	Is there a family grave?	KIPPS	Stella
VICAR	Behold, I show you a mystery	JENNET	He is mine
JEROME	A young woman	KIPPS	Spider
KIPPS	Stella!	JENNET	I think my heart will break
BENTLEY	Dead, don't you know	KIPPS	Spider, come back...
KIPPS	A woman	JENNET	He can never be yours
JEROME	Keckwick will come for you	DAILY	A child
KIPPS	How did you get out?	KIPPS	Stella
KECKWICK	I wouldn't have left you over the night	JENNET	Never
KIPPS	Stella, Stella	DAILY	A child
JEROME	You will find no-one suitable	JENNET	He can never, never, never be yours...
KIPPS	A woman	KIPPS	(live) Stella!!!
JEROME	So I said once...		

A substantial blackout

PHOTOCOPIABLE RESOURCES

RESOURCE A - ARTHUR KIPPS KEY MOMENTS

Christmas Eve

Meeting with Mr Bentley

Train journey

Arrival at Crythin Gifford

Alice Drablow's funeral

Arrival at Eel Marsh House

Seeing the Woman in Black again

Meeting with Mr Jerome

Overnight at Eel Marsh House

Nearly losing Spider in marshes

Rescued by Mr Daily

Recovery / ending



RESOURCE B - ARTHUR KIPPS' CHANGING REACTIONS GRID

	<i>KEY LINES</i>	<i>KIPPS' REACTION/EMOTIONS</i>
Meeting with Mr Bentley		
Arrival at Crythin Gifford		
Alice Drablow's funeral		
Arrival at Eel Marsh House / graveyard		
Mist on the marshes / hearing the pony and trap		
Meeting with Mr Jerome		
Discovering the nursery		
Overnight at Eel Marsh House		
Spider on the marshes		
Rescued by Mr Daily / recovery		
Recounting the fair / ending		

RESOURCE C - JENNET HUMFRYE

- Read-through/perform/reflect on this scene. Is this first appearance the most terrifying? If so why? Are other appearances of the woman more terrifying? Are we more or less frightened as the novel/ stage adaptation goes on and we learn who the woman in black is?

PRIEST'S VOICE

I know that my Redeemer liveth, and that he shall stand at the latter day upon the earth. And though after my skin worms destroy this body, yet in my flesh shall I see God; whom I shall see for myself, and mine eyes shall behold, and not another.

We hear the echoing tread of the undertaker's men bearing the coffin down the aisle

Behold, I show you a mystery. We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump (for the trumpet shall sound) and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed.

As the voice-over continues, Kipps looks back into the audience.

Across the centre aisle, and quite close behind Kipps and Jerome, stands the Woman in Black. Her clothes are black and old-fashioned. She wears a black bonnet that mostly obscures her face, though, from what remains of it to be seen, it appears she suffers from some terrible wasting disease. She is extremely pale, the thinnest layer of flesh is tautly stretched across her bones, and her eyes seem sunken back into her head.

Kipps is clearly momentarily shocked to see her, then steadies himself. The Actor does not look back at her, and we can believe he does not see her, nor knows she's there.

For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal shall have put on immortality. So when this corruptible shall have put on incorruption, and this mortal shall have put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in victory. O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory?

Kipps pulls his eyes away from her. As he does so, she leaves the stage

RESOURCE D - MINOR CHARACTERS' FUNCTIONS

	<i>CHARACTER FUNCTION</i>
Stella	
Mr Bentley	
Mr Daily	
Mr Jerome	
Keckwick	
Spider	
Landlord of Gifford Arms	

RESOURCE E - STATEMENTS FROM MINOR CHARACTERS

(teacher copy – delete left hand column for use with students)

Mr Bentley p.28	<i>“Children... According to everything we’ve been told about Mrs Drablow... no, there were no children”</i>
Mr Daily p.37	<i>“Bound for the funeral?... You’ll be about the only one that is.”</i>
Mr Daily p.118	<i>“You’re a fool if you go on with it”</i>
Mr Daily p.120	<i>“You shouldn’t go there”</i>
Mr Jerome p.59	<i>No I shall not go there”</i>
Mr Jerome p.107	<i>“There are stories... tales. There’s all that nonsense”</i>
Keckwick p.94	<i>“Awkward place. You’ll be finding that out soon enough”</i>
Keckwick p.94	<i>“Wouldn’t have left you over the night... wouldn’t have done that to you.”</i>
Landlord of Gifford Arms p.44	<i>“I knew of her”</i>
Landlord of Gifford Arms p.44	<i>“She could hardly do otherwise, living there”</i>
Man in the Inn p.64	<i>“But let me tell you, that you won’t find anybody, not even Sam Daily, having to do with any of it”</i>

RESOURCE F - GOTHIC NOUNS

FOG	CAUSEWAY	INN	TRAIN
EEL MARSH HOUSE	CHURCHYARD	MIST	GRAVESTONES
CARRIAGE	NURSERY	CORRIDOR	STAIRCASE
LOCKED DOOR	NIGHT	MARSHES	MOONLIGHT

“

Then I looked up ahead, and saw as if rising out of the water itself, a tall, gaunt house of grey stone with a slate roof. It stood like some lighthouse or beacon or Martello tower, the most astonishingly situated house I had ever seen or could ever conceivably have imagined – isolated, uncompromising, but also, I thought, handsome. For a moment or two, I simply sat looking about me in amazement. I felt a strange sensation, an excitement mingled with alarm.”

“

KIPPS
(reading)

It was nine-thirty on Christmas Eve. As I opened my front door and stepped outside I smelled at once, and with a lightening heart, that there had been a change in the weather. All the previous week we had had thin chilling rain and a mist that lay low about the house and over the countryside. My spirits have for many years been excessively affected by the weather. But now the dampness and fogs had stolen away like thieves into the night, the sky was pricked over with stars and the full moon rimmed with a halo of frost. Upstairs, three children slept with stockings tied to their bedposts. There was something in the air that night. That my peace of mind was about to be disturbed, and memories awakened that I had thought for ever dead, I had, naturally, no idea. That I should ever again renew my acquaintance with mortal dread and terror of spirit, would have seemed at that moment impossible. I took a last look at the frosty darkness, sighed contentedly, and went in, to the happy company of my family. At the far end of the room stood the tree, candlelit and bedecked, and beneath it were the presents. There were vases of white chrysanthemums, and in the centre of the room a pyramid of gilded fruit and a bowl of oranges stuck all about with cloves, their spicy scent filling the air and mingling with the wood-smoke to be the very aroma of Christmas. I became aware that I had interrupted the others in a lively conversation. “We are telling ghost stories – just the thing for Christmas Eve!” And so they were – vying with each other to tell the horridest, most spine-chilling tale.

“

ACTOR

And so, imagine if you would, this stage an island, this aisle a causeway, running like a ribbon from the salt marsh through the sea, the only link between the gaunt, grey house and land. Imagine Arthur Kipps alone there now, a tiny figure, lost in the immensity and wideness of marsh and sky, dwarfed by the house, alone amid the mysterious shimmering beauty. He feels the key in his pocket, but does not go inside. Instead, he walks away from the house towards the fragmentary ruins of some old church or chapel. To the west, the sun is already beginning to slip down in a great, wintry, golden-red ball; to the east, sea and sky have darkened slightly to a uniform, leaden grey.

A sudden harsh cry of a bird startles him. We hear its loudly beating wings and the echo of its cry amid the ruins. Kipps follows it through the gauze, where the lights reveal the shrouded furniture

Imagine now, a burial ground. Imagine fifty gravestones, most of them leaning or completely fallen, covered in lichens, mosses, scoured pale by the salt wind, stained by years of driving rain. Names and dates are now barely decipherable. Imagine him grown conscious of the cold, the bleakness and eeriness of the spot, decide to leave, to go back to the house, to switch on a good many lights, to light a fire. Now see him turn...

RESOURCE J - MOMENTS OF TENSION

- Drablow's funeral
- First visit to Eel Marsh House
- Overnight at Eel Marsh House
- Seeing the Woman in Black by the gravestones at Eel Marsh House
- The fog on the causeway and hearing the first child's scream
- The nursery
- The ending / recounting the fair



RESOURCE K - TENSION TECHNIQUES

- Silence
- Isolated setting
- Pauses and hesitations
/ slow build up
- False endings
- Sudden starts
- Recurring unknown sounds
- Confusion
- Opportunities for surprise
– closed doors, covered mirrors
- Strange settings
- Unclear line of sight / vision
- Shadows and reflections
- Darkness and nightmare
- Mentions of death



RESOURCE L – WRITING ABOUT PERFORMANCE

Performance paragraph in need of improvement:

“The moment when Kipps was having his nightmare was really effective. He was lying asleep on the trunk as a bed and then suddenly woke up, looked around and got up. He went towards the door and reached out as if he was about to open it. He paused a bit and the audience could see that he was worried. This was effective as we knew that Kipps was scared and was unsure whether to open the door”

What does this paragraph do well?

- It identifies a particular moment that was successful
- Attempts some personal response and audience reaction but too broad

What needs improvement?

- There is not enough performance detail – HOW did Kipps wake up and look around? HOW did he go towards the door?
- More specific comment needed on exactly what was effective and how the audience responded – think/feel/understand

Performance Paragraph Improved

“The moment when Kipps was having his nightmare was really effective in creating a sense of anticipation and a sudden shock. He was lying as if asleep on the trunk as a bed stage right and then suddenly woke up sitting up instantly with a gasp and wide-eyes. He looked around quickly with a look of fear on his face and heavily breathing. He carefully got up as if scared to make a sound and crept carefully towards the door with a concerned face and a quivering arm as he reached out as if about to open it. He paused, frozen on the spot and gulped, and the audience understood that he was worried and scared. This was highly effective as the audience knew that Kipps was scared and I was tense with concern about what might happen if he opened the door.”

What does this paragraph do well?

- There is clear performance detail
- There is clearer evaluation of how and why the moment was effective
- There is a clearer personal response