

Proscenium arch stage

The audience sits in front of the stage, usually in straight rows. When staging the play on a proscenium stage, it is like looking at the action through a picture frame. The audience all sits facing the same way, and often the people at the back do not have such a good view of the action as the people at the front. In professional theatres this problem is usually overcome by having the audience at the rear sitting higher than the people in front of them. This is called a raked auditorium.

The most important point to remember about a proscenium stage is that the actors must spend as much time as possible near the front of the stage. The further back they are the more difficult it is to see and hear them.

Arena stage

The stage sticks out at an angle into the audience. The audience sits facing the stage but at an oblique angle. An arena stage is either gently curved or angled so that the audience sit around it. This means that depending on where you are sitting, you get a different view of the action from other members of the audience.

Thrust stage

A thrust stage is rectangular and the audience surrounds the stage on three sides. The audience directly faces the stage from each of the three sides. This type of staging is not often seen in professional theatres but it would have been very common in Shakespeare's time. This type of staging was the type found in the Elizabethan theatres and can be seen today in the *Globe Theatre* in London. This type of staging presents some problems for actors as the audience is facing in three different directions. However, it is a very involving type of staging and allows the actors to connect very closely with the audience. Scenery can be used but can only be located upstage.

Traverse stage

A traverse stage can be built in any clear space. The main features of a traverse stage are:

- The acting area is down the middle of the space.
- The audience sits facing the acting area from two sides.
- The audience on one side faces the audience on the other side.
- The acting area is longer than its width.

Staging in the round

Staging in the round is a very simple idea. The audience sits in a circle and the acting takes place in the middle. There can be one, two, three, four or more entrances/exits. The challenge for the director/actors is to ensure that every member of the audience sees a balance of the action. The things that need to be considered are:

- How do the actors enter and leave the acting space?
- How big does the circle need to be?