

**National
Theatre**

**Dear
England**

Learning Guide

“I think about all the young kids who will be watching,... filling out their first wall charts. No matter what happens, I just hope that their parents, teachers and club managers will turn to them and say, “Look. That’s the way to represent your country. That’s what England is about. That is what’s possible.”

Gareth Southgate

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About

This learning guide supports the National Theatre's production of ***Dear England*** by **James Graham**, directed by **Rupert Goold**, which opened at the **National Theatre** on **20th June 2023**, before transferring to the **Prince Edward Theatre in London** on **9th October 2023**.

Here you'll find all the information you need to enable you to study the production and write about it in detail. This includes notes about all the key elements from performance style to design. You'll also find pointers for further research.

This resource pack was written by Susie Ferguson, Drama & English teacher and creative learning consultant.

Photography by Marc Brenner.

The Mohn Westlake Foundation supports nationwide Learning programmes for young people.

Nationwide learning is supported by Buffini Chao Foundation, Garfield Weston Foundation, Clore Duffield Foundation, Tim and Sarah Bunting, Behrens Foundation, Cleopatra Trust, The Andor Charitable Trust and Milton Grundy Foundation.

Background Information

Cast:

Bukayo Saka	Denzel Baidoo
Ensemble	Nick Barclay
Jordan Pickford	Josh Barrow
Ensemble	Tashinga Bepete
Gary Lineker	Gunnar Cauthery
Harry Kane	Will Close
Alex Scott	Crystal Condie
Gareth Southgate	Joseph Fiennes
Jordan Henderson	Will Fletcher
Ensemble	Kate Kelly Flood
Marcus Rashford	Darragh Hand
Ensemble	Will Harrison-Wallace
Ensemble	Miranda Heath
Greg Clarke	John Hodgkinson
Sam Allardyce	Lloyd Hutchinson
Pippa Grange	Dervla Kirwan
Jadon Sancho	Albert Magashi
Ensemble	Tom Mahy
Raheem Sterling	Kel Matsena
Dele Alli	Lewis Shepherd
Harry Maguire	Griffin Stevens

Background Information

Mike Webster Paul Thornley
Greg Dyke Tony Turner
Ensemble Tristan Waterson
Eric Dier Ryan Whittle

Creative Team:

Direction Rupert Goold
Set Designer Es Devlin
Costume Designer Evie Gurney
Lighting Designer Jon Clark
Co-Movement Directors Ellen Kane & Hannes Langolf
Co-Sound Designers Dan Balfour & Tom Gibbons
Video Designer Ash J Woodward
Additional Music Max Perryment
Casting Director Bryony Jarvis-Taylor
Dialect Coach Richard Ryder
Company Voice Work Cathleen McCarron
Associate Director Elin Schofield
Associate Set Designers Benjamin Lucraft & Will Brown
Associate Lighting Designer Ben Jacobs
Associate Sound Designer Alex Twiselton

Teaching Information

This production is particularly suitable for:

- GCSE and A Level Drama students who are working on their live production response components.
- GCSE and A Level PE students who are exploring sports psychology
- Teachers and students who are exploring themes including personal and national identity, politics, equality and gender in PHSE or in other areas of the curriculum.

In particular you might like to explore:

- The relationship between theatre and football.
- Why James Graham wanted to put this story onstage.
- How the creative team created the world of football onstage.
- How the actors use a range of skills, including voice and movement, to represent well-known, real-life characters.

Synopsis

The play begins with a prologue in which we see Gareth Southgate, who takes a shot during the sudden death penalty shoot-out against Germany in the Euro 96 semi-final. The German goalkeeper saves it, sending Germany into the final and ending England's dreams.

Twenty years later Sam Allardyce – England Manager – leaves the role after a *Daily Telegraph* undercover investigation highlights inappropriate comments and actions. He has only been in the role 67 days, and the team have only played one match under his leadership. Gareth Southgate arrives to speak to Greg Dyke (outgoing chairman) and incoming chairman Greg Clarke who ask him to step in as Caretaker Manager until a new replacement can be found. Brief reference is made to Southgate's failed penalty in '96.

“Doesn't it feel like we're stuck? Unable to move on, move forward? It's about more than just a series of setbacks. More than tactics, talent, technique. I think we all have a problem, with what it is to be England at the moment.”

A range of English fans react to the news of Southgate's appointment and we flashback to historical press conferences with previous England managers including Graham Taylor, Sven-Goran Erickson and Fabio Capello. The audience is also guided into the 2016 time frame by the appearance of Theresa May and her determination to deliver Brexit – a controversial referendum that sees the UK leave the European Union which causes the nation to question its individual national identity. Southgate is introduced to the senior coaching staff including Mike Webster (Team Analyst), Steve Holland (Assistant Coach) and Physio Phil. They discuss why the team has had such poor results over recent years, despite having elite players in the team. Gareth suggests bringing in a psychologist.

The scene cuts to sports psychologist and culture coach Pippa Grange giving a talk on fear.

“As leaders, how do you cultivate an environment that isn’t stale. Where are you making real decisions, but also enable your team to take responsibility as well? To listen. Empower. Until we are empowered, our fear will always limit us, as organisations. And as ourselves.”

Gareth approaches Pippa, who is reluctant to take the role she is being offered. She insightfully identifies that the 1996 penalty still haunts Gareth. She agrees to consider his offer.

Gareth and Steve Holland appoint players. They include Harry Maguire (Leicester City), Dele Ali and Harry Kane (Tottenham Hotspur) and Bukayo Saka (England Under 19s). Gareth must also tell Wayne Rooney that he has not been selected, despite previously playing for England.

Pippa arrives at St George’s Park, the England training ground. The security guard assumes she is in the wrong place, and directs her to the women’s team facilities. Gareth is made permanent England Manager – he is no longer in the caretaker role – and he introduces Pippa to the rest of the team as Head of People and Team Development.

The team includes Jordan Pickford, Marcus Rashford, Raheem Sterling, Eric Dier, Jordan Henderson, Kieran Trippier as well as the players to whom we have already been introduced. Gareth addresses the team.

“We are going to write our own history. Our own story...We’re all storytellers now. And we’re going to take our time with it.”

Gareth reveals a countdown clock to the 2022 World Cup Final in Qatar. He breaks down the shorter term targets including Russia World Cup (2018), and Euro 2020. Some of the players express doubts as to the psychological approach.

Gareth and his team discuss penalties – a historical key area of weakness for the England squads. Pippa notices the speed at which players take them, and the way in which they walk away from the ball before they take them – like a gesture of avoidance because the penalty represents so much. Privately, Pippa reminds Gareth that he needs to confront his own issues about what missed penalties represent and Gareth talks to the team about his ’96 experience.



Photography by Marc Brenner.

Pippa asks the players to keep a journal and Gareth asks them to simply call him Gareth, rather than ‘boss’, ‘sir’ or ‘gaffer’ which he suggests makes it sound like they are all at school rather than being a team. In the canteen, Gareth insists that staff eat *with* the players, rather than after them. He is creating ‘One England’ which incorporates the women’s team and the Under 19 squad.

Penalties become the focus of a training session. Pippa and Gareth use the time to instil routines that will make the process more team-led, even though the penalty is taken by an individual. Whilst most of the players do not seem to be taking the journal task seriously, we see Marcus Rashford start to experience some moments of clarity as he writes in his journal. At the next session, Gareth explains how the current team is a continuum from the very first England team in 1873. We flashback to (in)famous England players include Michael Owen, Paul Gascoigne and John Barnes.

Roxanne asks Gareth to choose his outfit before they travel to Russia, and we see previous England managers display the style they’ve become associated with. Gareth chooses a waistcoat, despite the teasing from his colleagues. Raheem notes that he looks “like one of those old fashioned Gents. Refined and proper.”

Commentator Gary Lineker introduces us to the 2018 Russia World Cup. The Panama Manager is dismissive of the new “happy clappy, touchy feely” techniques that England are rumoured to be using. Playing against Columbia, the England team make it through to the quarter finals on penalties, to the disbelief of everyone.

Act two opens in England with reactions to England’s victory in that game. At the same time, Brexit is still being debated in the House of Commons.

Alex Scott interviews Harry Maguire. She has become a football pundit after retiring from playing for the England women’s team. The joy at entering the semi final is short lived as Croatia win 2-1. Even the vicar expresses his displeasure.

Gareth tells his team they’ve broken the penalties curse, and emphasises how proud he is of them. In a moment with Pippa, Marcus talks about superstition and expresses doubt that, on this occasion, he hasn’t looked up to the heavens towards his Nan. Pippa supports Marcus through his moments of doubt.

Mike expresses doubt about the approach the team is taking, suggesting that data should be driving their strategy, rather than an emphasis on culture. Elsewhere, Theresa May resigns in tears, a flashback to Gary Lineker noticing that Paul Gascoigne is going to cry (after being given a yellow card).

It’s now 2020 and the COVID-19 pandemic means the world is in lockdown. Gareth and Greg Clarke are in Wembley Stadium. England have been asked to host the postponed European championships, which once again stirs up the ’96 memories which saw Gareth miss a penalty at Wembley.

Gareth places an England flag on the floor, and the team discuss what it means. They discuss identity, and what ‘Your England’ means. The team discuss inherited symbols, and the suggestions by some fans about who is entitled to wear the England shirt.

“I hear a lot that, from some people, that I’m meant to associate bad things with that flag...it is a thing. To know that some of the people waving it don’t think you should be wearing the shirt. I’m just saying that out loud, that that’s all in the mix”.

The players all turn to social media to tell parts of their story. Marcus Rashford sets up a foundation to tackle food poverty. Gareth notes that rather than hooligans, footballers are now role models. However, he is reluctant to engage with social media himself. Pippa suggests that he writes an open letter to the fans.

“Maybe you could speak to them, directly. Where’s your voice in all this? Write to them. I dunno, a letter to everyone. Old School. ‘Dear England’.”

COVID 19 means that the Euros will be televised but there will be no live crowds. A TV sound technician explains that he is going to use recorded sound effects to create atmosphere for the audience at home. Gareth ditches his iconic waistcoat – he doesn’t want to be seen as the figurehead of the team.

Jordan Henderson speaks privately to Gareth, about being the only player to miss a penalty in a particular game. Gareth encourages him, telling him that he’s “going to get so many other opportunities to shine.” Pippa is honest with Dele, who is concerned about not being on form. She admits “I have to work all the time, on being ok”. Dele is dropped from the team, as is Eric Dier.

Pippa and Gareth begin to see the future of the team differently – Pippa feels that Gareth is focussing on learning to win, rather than being a team. Pippa is frustrated that Gareth is still ‘stuck’ in that penalty spot in ’96. She steps away from her involvement with the team.

Harry Kane asks Gareth why he picked him to be Captain of England. Gareth tells him “you’re carrying something with you. Like ‘inside’ you” and encourages him to avoid trying to be like other captains who have gone before him, but instead to be himself.

Raheem Stirling experiences racist abuse on the pitch, and he stands defiant as his team members surround him. In the dressing room, Gareth and the team suggest how to combat the ongoing racism from football fans.

“For me, it’s like, this stuff happens and we talk about it, and everyone feels good about it, but nothing chanino. No this happens at home too....Just like the pandemic, there is a disease...that we want to find a solution to and stop it.”

It's the Euro 2020 tournament (played in 2021 due to COVID). The team decide to take the knee before matches, in a clear rejection of racism. Gareth writes his open letter. Matt Le Tissier is dismissive of Gareth, accusing him of being woke instead of being strong. He says, "real men don't kneel".

"The reality is that the result is just a small part. It's about how we conduct ourselves. How we bring people together. That lasts beyond the summer. That lasts forever..."

As Captain, Harry Kane shows the team footage of the 1966 World Cup – the last one that England won. In the present day, the team defeat Germany, Ukraine and Denmark, and find themselves in a final against Italy, which once again goes to penalties. England are defeated. Gareth tells Pippa that he fears he has let the team down.

Bukayo Saka addresses fans on social media about his penalty shot that was saved. He addresses the extreme racism that he, Marcus and Jadon (Sancho) have experienced following the final, saying that "love always wins". Meanwhile, Greg Clarke stands down after using inappropriate language to discuss race. Boris Johnson and Liz Truss both stand down after their respective times as Prime Minister.

In 2022, the England Lionesses win the Women's Euro final against Germany – the first English victory in a major international championship since 1966. The team is managed by former Netherlands Manager, Sarina Wiegman who reminds Gareth that the clock is still ticking for Qatar 2022.

The tournament begins, and the FA objects to political statements being made. Harry Kane wants to wear a 'One Love' armband in support of LGBTQ+ communities. Same sex relationships are criminalised in Qatar. Gareth and the team are threatened with an immediate yellow card by FIFA should anyone be wearing the armbands. Whilst the team do not wear the armband during the match, Alex Scott does in her role as TV commentator.

Harry Kane takes a penalty shot that flies over the cross bar and England are once again defeated. However, the mood is optimistic. The team, and the fans, begin to look forward to Germany 2024...

Directing the Play

In this interview, Associate Director Elin Schofield talks about her experience of bringing *Dear England* to the stage.

This is a play in which actors are playing real, and well known, people. How do you, and the actors, ensure that the performances are accurate rather than simply creating impressions or parody?

The first time we rehearsed this show, we only had six weeks of rehearsal time. Much of the dramaturgy was being developed during it and there were lots of changes. Therefore, a lot of the research and preparation for this aspect of the performances was left to the actors themselves. This included the specificity of the penalty kicks, the celebrations that each individual player does, even down Gareth Southgate's gestures and facial expressions.

It's easy to forget that you're not seeing the real Gareth Southgate when you're watching Joseph Fiennes! It's quite amazing, really. His posture is so different, The gestures mannerisms, the facial expressions, the leaning back – they're all Gareth's! That's all come from Joseph's own research and a strong commitment to creating and embodying that character.

It's really testament to the actors that we work with, that they've gone and done a lot of this work independently. There's a very fine line between making it very clear who each character is so that someone that would recognise them and falling into a performance that's lacking any nuance. One of the challenges is that much of the time we see the players in post-match videos, and they might be really subdued for example. We would all probably be like that if we were interviewed on video after a day of work where we've experienced one of our biggest failures! We can all imagine that: it would be horrible! For our actors, then, it's a balancing act between making the performances theatrical and engaging without being overblown or pastiche.

Rupert is a MASSIVE football fan! He's a season ticket holder and goes once or twice a week, so he'll quite often pick up on tiny details like specific celebrations for particular players. There are a lot of layers there, but people are very quick to pull us up on it if it's not right.

Can you tell us more about the feedback that you get?

I remember when we first did the production. Marcus Rashford's celebration was a finger to the temple. But when we depicted that, it wasn't the right time period that we were presenting in the play's timeline. Someone that had seen the production shots and told us that it wasn't quite right! It's great to get so much feedback and engagement.

Did all of the actors and production team have a lot of football knowledge at the beginning of the rehearsal process?

No, it was very varied, but we used it to our advantage!

At the beginning of the rehearsal process we split our room into As, Bs and Cs. As are the top football fanatics, Bs, know what's going on, recognise the players, know what the league table looks like, plus the Premier League Championship League, but don't watch it. Then the Cs who don't necessarily have a big interest. The Cs played a really important part in the dramaturgical process: we were asking 'Does this make sense to you because you don't know the football context like the back of your hand?' That's a really useful tool in wanting to make a show that feels accessible to everybody, whether they're a football fan or not.

Can you tell us about a few elements in the play that you think are particularly significant?

One aspect which you will find interesting and impressive is how Dervla (Kerwan) has created Pippa Grange's accent! Unlike a lot of the other characters, many people wouldn't necessarily know what Pippa sounds like but because she came into rehearsals to speak to us, we've got a real sense of her and what she's like.

Pippa was brought up in Harrogate in North Yorkshire but her accent is a hybrid of North Yorkshire and Australia because she worked in Australia for so long. Dervla has been working very hard with the dialect coach Richard Ryder to not only not just emulate Pippa's accent, but to give us a sense of its intricacy without it feeling jarring or sounding inconsistent. Dervla's keen to develop that and to give it authenticity.

The second element is something we did in preparation for the first run of *Dear England*, but which is still very present in what we're doing now is the movement that's informed by real football practice. Lee Dixon, the ex -Arsenal player, helped us to workshop a lot of the movements for the play. That was incredible, because it really enabled us to achieve the specificity of movement from a football vocabulary rather than a dancer's vocabulary. It also helped hugely with injury prevention. Not only did it help preparing the actors for what they had to do during their working day, but also made them feel more like footballers. They're athletic in a way that maybe as actors they've never had to challenge themselves to be before.

Lee came on board early on and worked with the movement directors (Ellen Kane and Hannes Langolf), myself, Rupert, and ten dancers as part of the workshopping process before rehearsals began. That meant we had a structure of certain training drills and football movements that you'll see throughout the piece.

Did Lee's involvement help with other aspects of rehearsal?

Everyday, we used what he taught us as a warm-up, just to get everybody physically ready and mentally prepared for what was to come. The players have a more dynamic and more intense version of that to prepare them for the particular challenges in the play, but the whole company get involved with bits of it in the warm-ups.

Did the actors have to improve their football skills?!

We very rarely, if ever, used balls during exercises and rehearsals. It was more things like miming a ball, 'passing' it to each other, keeping that focus on what body parts and muscles we were moving, then

we'd go for headers, and how you work with that person to give the feeling of a ball and give the essence of a ball for an audience's perspective. That was a real turning point in terms of the physical vocabulary.

There are some challenging themes in the play. How did you create that safe environment in which to explore them?

It's all about making that space feel really collaborative. We had to make our rehearsal room one where people could speak to James (Graham), Rupert (Goold), me or anybody. Everyone's very, very open to that collaboration. It's always felt really open and incredibly generous. Not everyone has the same experience of some of the issues and when initially reading the script it can be quite intimidating to think how you can create that level of collaboration and trust.

How can directors develop the sense of working as a team during the rehearsal process?

Games are a really good tool. We didn't tend to play many on this particular show, just because I think we were so time-poor as we were making a three-hour show, but they are often a great way to start creating a team. Check-ins at the beginning of every day are also important, asking how everybody's doing. I will often deliberately make myself a little bit vulnerable. For example, at the beginning of rehearsals for this new run I admitted I was very nervous about the process and there were actually lots of us feeling nervous on that first day!

Our exercise of putting people in groups A, B and C also helped so they could all chat together. The groups immediately bonded, they instantly had something to talk about, *and* with relevance to the themes of the play. It's always really nice to ask how we can split the room up so people can chat about the play. If there's a task and you're speaking about something specific, it feels a little bit more natural, you can jump in both barrels and get to know people.

The main things are a high level of honesty and openness and asking people what they need in order to do their best work. It's also important to remember that nobody knows all the answers. And that's really refreshing.

Can you tell us more about the scene in which Gareth and the team discuss the England flag and their own identity?

This scene was one of the things that changed the most though rehearsals. We spoke about it at length, and James went away and took everyone's ideas and thoughts on how it could move forward. Gareth spearheads a culture change, which of course he did, but in our scene, we're trying to show that he's a man on a mission, that Pippa is always there with him, but their paths are starting to diverge.

We have got all the themes of nationhood in this scene, and these are really important discussions about who the players are, who they can and should be, which is themselves and an *authentic version* of themselves. It conveys the importance of going out to represent the nation as themselves rather than trying to be someone else.



Photography by Marc Brenner.

What are the key intentions for this production?

For me, it's the theme of mental health, and communicating the importance of talking to people rather than bottling things up. If you have people that you can confide in, and who build you up, don't be afraid to lean on those people. Don't be afraid to ask for their help.

We can all find ways to support people, if you see them going through things that are tricky. It's especially relevant as you see the boys go through that in the play, and they're only in their late teens and early twenties.

Because of the mental health crisis in this country, particularly with men of that age, it does feel very poignant. That's the thing that I'm always struck by when I watch the play, especially that final scene with Harry Kane. Pippa says, "you need to learn how to lose". That final scene is the perfect manifestation of learning how to lose and channelling that negative emotion into something wholly positive. I think everyone should see that moment, especially young men. I think it just feels really touching, and certainly something that I've never really seen on stage before.

Can you explain how the movement was created for the show?

First, we worked really specifically on formations – all of those that we would see in games of football. Then we focussed on the moves between those formation. It would feel odd sometimes, that something that seemed small like jogging on the spot, would feel underwhelming until we put the whole thing together it was far greater than the sum of its parts.

Then we did some of the very specific drills that I mentioned before that we developed with Lee. Some of our warm-up is seen in the performance, but with more focus on rhythm and timing and a dynamic variation. A lot of the movement comes from a world of fitness: agility, HIIT training, tuck jumps, mountain climbers, on the spot stretches and so on. Much of the movement was created in the workshops with the dancers, so we could teach it directly to the actors during rehearsal rather than continuing to devise it from scratch. The transitions were created with the actors in rehearsal, though, for example, the sequence with the chairs being brought on and put down just before Raheem Stirling's press conference.

How was this production cast?

First and foremost, we were looking for strong actors, and they were cast because of either a physical likeness to those players, a vocal likeness and ability to do those accents, and an ability to move, (although much of that comes via the work of the movement team in rehearsals).

One thing we asked actors to do as part of the audition process was not only to learn and deliver parts of James's script, but also to learn a post-match interview, for the player they were auditioning for. That was fun, because we got so much variation. Quite often in the scenes in the play it's quite difficult to get a sense of a character unless it's someone like Harry Kane or Marcus Rashford because they have longer scenes and speeches. With the post-match interview however, you could get a solid sense of the actor as that person. After that, we created a shortlist and then did a movement call in order to complete the casting process.

What are the similarities and differences between theatre and football audiences?

There's loads of crossover! It's one of the things that I was really excited by when I first interviewed for the job. I remember telling Rupert that I come from a dance background so the movement aspect excites me hugely, but also I'm interested in the fact that everyone assumes you're a football fan, or you're a theatre fan, or you don't care about either. I know so many people for whom that's not the case.

Footballers and actors share the immense amount of rehearsal or training that they put in, as well as the enormous amount of team development and getting to know each other, the kind of trust you have to place in others subconsciously, or consciously. Both careers demand dedication and a willingness to change your lifestyle to do that career which feels like you're sacrificing a lot.

The audience/spectator investment that you get a football match is like nothing I've ever experienced in the theatre. I just think it's wonderful. It's often emotional. That feeling of hearts beating in time feels applicable across both spaces.

There's a stereotype of theatre audiences having very strict rules about behaviour, and the idea that it's only for a particular type of person whereas football feels much more accessible, especially now with like the women's teams being so successful. Theatre is trying to follow suit, but it is at a slower pace. I hope that both can continually expand in accessibility terms, at a similar rate to each other. It's really exciting, and it's the way that it should be going.

Task

As part of the audition process, actors were asked to find a post-match interview for one of the footballers, and learn it in order to perform it. This included matching the gestures, mannerisms, vocal tics, facial expression, posture, eye contact and body language of the player. Choose one of the players in the production and explore their post-match interviews online. How well can you recreate one of them?

Exploring Sound Design

There are 340 sound cues in this production. There are 38 radio mics, most of which are worn either in the actor's hair, their wig or over their ear. For some of the lead characters, they wear two mics, as back up in case one fails. There are also four handheld microphones that are used by presenters and during other moments in the show. There is an additional commentator's microphone that has a wireless transmitter.

One of the key aspects of sound design in this production is the music soundtrack. It includes:

- Three Lions (It's Coming Home) – David Baddiel, Frank Skinner and The Lightning Seeds. (1996)
- National Anthem (God Save the Queen/King)
- The Grandstand theme tune
- Land of Hope and Glory
- Sweet Caroline (Neil Diamond)
- Crown (Stormzy)

Music plays an important role in this production in helping the audience follow the movement through time. It also creates a strong sense of memory and nostalgia for many in the audience who will remember their own experiences of these historical events.

Explore the time periods in the production using platforms such as YouTube and Spotify. These include: 1996, 2016, 2020, 2021 and 2022.

As well as using music with connections to a specific year, there are also songs that have links to English history and heritage.



Photography by Marc Brenner.

Using your research, create a playlist for a year or decade to reflect its culture and the historical events that were taking place. The first three years of the 2020s, for example, have highly emotive moments which include the COVID pandemic, the Olympics, and more regional events that you could explore in relation to your own home town.

Exploring Movement and Choreography

Movement is key in this production in making performers into believable footballers and bringing the game of football to life onstage.

Even if you don't feel particularly knowledgeable about football, you can still create some effective movement sequences that are inspired by the game.

Watch a game of football on TV or video. You may choose to watch a ten-minute section rather than a whole game, and watch that clip several times. Watching a filmed version (rather than live at a football ground) is helpful because you'll see from a range of different angles.



Photography by Marc Brenner.

As you watch, note:

- Formations of lines
- Moments of closeness or contact between two players
- Examples of a connection between two players even though they might not be physically close to each other (look at moments where a ball is passed from one player to another)
- Changes in pace, including before the game starts, preparation for penalty kicks, waiting for confirmation of a referee decision etc.
- Moments of conflict – between players or aimed at a referee’s decision
- Moments of celebration

Once you have made your observations, use at least three of the bullet points above to create a short movement sequence of about eight moves. You do not have to recreate what you have seen, but instead be inspired by what you’ve noticed.

Practise your eight moves until your group is happy with the quality of it. Then apply some or all of the following:

- Slow motion
- Music
- Audio commentary
- Canon
- Unison
- Change from using the entire performance space to using a smaller section of the stage. You might decide to have each performer standing in a small area of their own and reducing their moves to a more pedestrian version as they perform their movement on the spot.

Now consider how you can interact with pieces of set to make your movement sequence even more engaging. For example, how can you use chairs, different levels, more static pieces of set etc.

Devising

In her work, Dr Pippa Grange discusses ‘Ghosts in the Wall’, considering what has gone before and how that might be affecting current performance. In *Dear England* it is clear that external pressure, previous failure and guilt and a need for change are all powerful influences and barriers to success.

This idea of the past affecting our present is a fantastic starting point for devising. Rather than immediately thinking of how you might create a fantasy-based piece, how might you take this idea of ghosts in the wall to be more metaphorical? You might consider:

- A story or myth that has been told through repeated generations of family that affect or haunt someone and how they live their lives
- The idea of ‘what might have been’ and how one small change in someone’s action might mean that the rest of the story could have been very different (also known as a ‘sliding doors’ moment)
- The influence of regret
- The theme of guilt
- The impact of global history on one family or group of friends

Performing

You'll notice that most of the characters in this play are based on real people. As well as the use of wigs and costume, the actors, director and movement directors need to strike a careful balance between making each character instantly recognisable and avoiding pastiche and parody.

Choose a prominent public figure. This could be a politician, sports person, actor, social media influencer, news reader etc. (Avoid using people you know in real life and ensure that your work is based on accuracy and observation, rather than trying to create comedy.)

- Find three clips of this person moving and talking.
- For each clip, watch it at least three times. The first time you should just watch, the second pay close attention to speech and the third to movement, gesture and mannerism. Do the same for the subsequent clips.
- Make a few brief notes about what you notice. Now try and perform each short clip alongside the real one. Perhaps mute the sound so that you can try and time the speech. Ask a peer to observe you, or film yourself doing this on a phone or tablet.

What are the challenges and opportunities in doing this exercise? What did you find the most difficult aspect to recreate? Ask for peer feedback: how could you make this more accurate? Consider:

- **Facial expression:** eye contact and direction, muscle tension/relaxation, use of teeth and jaw, use of eyebrows, even blinking!
- **Vocal skills:** pitch, pace, pause, projection, accent, diction, volume, projection
- **Physical skills:** gesture, mannerism, gait, posture, body language, proximity to other characters

Exploring Set Design

In the space below, draw a sketch of the stage that you see at the beginning of the production. Make sure you label your sketch, and consider colour and scale as well as any physical structures that you see.





Photography by Marc Brenner.

Look closely at the floor of the stage. The patterns marked on the stage are not just random markings! They are an accurate copy of the pass map of the England vs. France game during the Qatar World Cup 2022. Why do you think the designer (Es Devlin) has made the decision to show this on the floor of the stage?

The penalty spot in the centre of the stage is a frequent focus for the characters and the audience. It is exactly the size of a penalty spot on a football pitch: 22cm in diameter.

The stage directions at the beginning of the play state, *“The play takes place between June 2016 – December 2022, although it will jump back to past moments over 60 years of football. It takes place in multiple locations that don’t have to be literally realised, the majority of these being the **St George’s Park** training ground, the **FA offices** and the **dressing rooms** and **pitches** of stadiums around the world.”*

Sport and PE

Dear England includes a range of issues related to sports psychology that you will encounter in GCSE and A Level PE.

- [Listen to Dr Pippa Grange talking about fear:](#)
- [Read this Guardian article about the England approach and how we might apply it to our own lives](#)
- [Listen to Dr Pippa Grange on 'How To Win Deep'](#)

Once you have watched the play, complete this mindmap to make connections between *Dear England* and the content you have covered in your own course.



Photography by Marc Brenner.

Performance goals and
outcome goals

The characteristics
of good leaders

Sportsmanship

Intrinsic and extrinsic
motivation

SMART targets

Stress
management

Personality
types, introverts
and extroverts

Ethics

Sports Psychology

Spectator
violence in sport

Sexism

Etiquette

Arousal level and
performance level

Role
models

Stereotyping

Need to achieve (NACH) vs
need to avoid failure (NAF)

The positive and negative
effect of media

PSHE

Following in the footsteps of others

It can be difficult to find a balance between trying to emulate what other successful people might do in a particular situation, and doing it your own way.

Gareth tells Harry Kane, “Don’t be Jordan, don’t be Wayne. Don’t be like Beckham, or Lineker or Gerrard, be you. Use your voice”.

Consider your own role model(s). Make a list of things you admire about them. Then, ask a trusted friend or relative to do the same about *you*. What do you have in common with your own role model? Is there anything that you consider you’re *better* at than your role model?



Photography by Marc Brenner.



Photography by Marc Brenner.

Football and Politics

During the story of *Dear England*, there are a number of moments where politics and football inevitably collide. This includes the taking of the knee, wearing armbands affiliated with specific causes, national identity, poverty, racism and discrimination.

Discuss the following statements with your class:

- Footballers should remain neutral and not comment on any other issue than the game of football.
- Sport is not an appropriate arena in which to discuss politics.
- Athletes should be allowed to express their own personal opinions, even if they are not the same as those of the club or team they represent.
- Sports is the perfect way in which to engage communities in social and/or political debate, particularly those who have previously been under-represented.
- Criticism is an inevitable part of being a celebrity.
- All elite athletes should do charitable work as part of their contract.

National Identity

“Like with our own memories of watching England, everyone has a different idea of what it actually means to be English. What pride means.”

“For many of that younger generation, your notion of Englishness is quite different from my own. I understand that, too.”

Gareth admits that the notion of Englishness can differ between different people and different generations. In groups of 3 or 4 mindmap what it means to be English for you. You might consider:

- Politics
- Equality and inequality
- Important historical events
- Key figures in sport, politics, music, art, popular culture, literature, music, law & order
- Things to be proud of
- Things that we might be less proud of

Look at the different versions of Englishness that we see in the production. For example, Morris Dancers, a vicar, and St George. Who else would you include? Do you think the figures that have been chosen are an accurate representation of the country? Discuss the reasons for your answer.

Equality and Gender

Dear England transfers to the West End shortly after the England Women’s team made it to the final of the World Cup. Although we were defeated by Spain, the match marked a significant moment in women’s football.

- How is language used to discuss men and women’s football? How does it differ? This might make a great investigation for English Language A Level!



Photography by Marc Brenner.

- The increasing interest in women's football means that female players now increasingly commentate on men's sports fixtures. Explore media coverage of the issue, and the suggestion that women's inclusion is tokenistic, a 'breath of fresh air' or simply a non-issue.
- Research the pay gap between men and women's football. What can sports brands, broadcasting corporations and teams do to speed up achieving equality in this area? Do you think this will happen in your lifetime?
- Read [this](#) article by Dr Pippa Grange about women in men's sport. Discuss its message and whether you think anything has changed since it was written.

Charity

“Our players are role models. And, beyond the confines of the pitch, we must recognise the impact they can have on society. We must give them the confidence to stand up for their teammates and the things that matter to them as people.”

Harry Kane’s mental health charity, the Harry Kane Foundation has released [this](#) video on resilience’

Marcus Rashford earned an MBE as a result of [his work](#) fighting food insecurity. The Child Food Poverty Task Force website shows the range of supporters and charity supporters. Are there any other organisations you think should be involved?

Read this [Guardian article](#) in which he defends his charity work against accusations that he benefits from off-field partnerships. Rashford asks “Why can’t we just do the right thing?”. With a partner, or in a small group, discuss your opinions and create a charity campaign for a sports person of your choice. This could be someone who already has strong affiliations with a particular charity or cause, or it could be one that you think is a good match. You are encouraged to choose a wide range of athletes from a diverse field of sports.

You could:

- Write a letter from that athlete to the Prime Minister, explaining the issue being tackled
- Design a website or social media presence to explain the work
- Create a hashtag
- Research and create a poster showing where else to get support about your chosen issue
- Write a press release about an (fictional or real) event run by your sportsperson as part of the charitable work



Photography by Marc Brenner.

The importance and theatricality of football

“You remember where you were watching England games. And who you were watching with. And who you were at the time.”

Reflection: Can you remember your first football match? What about your first theatre visit? What do you remember? As well as the play or the match itself, what else do you remember? Think about the different senses (sight, touch, taste, sound, and smell.) Are there any that stand out particularly in this memory?

Analysis: At first glance, football and theatre might seem to be polar opposites. However, on closer reflection, they might have more in common than you thought.

	Similarities	Differences
The team behind the scenes	A director might be considered like the Team Manager, deciding on the direction a particular project will go in. They work with a wider team of creative experts as well as their 'team' of performers	
Celebrity		
Success vs Failure		
The Audience		
Accessibility (mobility access, cost, availability of seats, proximity to home town)		

	Similarities	Differences
Reviews and criticism	Opinions on a player's performance comes from every direction. Immediate commentary on a televised match, social media, press conferences, back in the training ground etc.	
Skills required		Performers need to be able to play a diverse range of characters and be able to perform in different styles and genres. To work in a company, good levels of communication, honesty, openness to discussion and feedback, and reliability are vital.
Training required		
Longevity of careers		
Gender equality		

	Similarities	Differences
Public exposure/ scrutiny		
The importance of getting a lucky break		

Live Production Checklist

Use these traffic light statements to help you develop your confidence in writing about the production.

Performance

	Red	Green	Amber
I can explain and evaluate the skills that the actor used to play Gareth Southgate in at least two scenes in the play	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I can describe and evaluate the way in which multi-roling was used in two scenes in the play	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I can describe and evaluate at least two moments where two actors created a clear relationship between their characters	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I can discuss how actors used physical skills to communicate character, mood and/or atmosphere in at least three different points in the play	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Set Design

I can describe the set for the dressing room scenes	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I can explain and evaluate how set was used to create a variety of different locations during the play	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Red Green Amber

I can describe and evaluate how space was used to create rapid transitions between a range of scenes

--	--	--

Lighting Design

I can explain how lighting was used to create mood and atmosphere in the dressing room scenes

--	--	--

I can describe the use of lighting during more intimate moments between two characters

--	--	--

I can use technical terminology to describe the different types of lighting effects that were created in at least three scenes

--	--	--

I can discuss how video projection and lighting worked together to convey narrative, mood and atmosphere in at least three different moments during the plays

--	--	--

Costume Design

I can describe and evaluate the costume choices for Gareth Southgate and how they communicate his character and their relevance to the narrative

--	--	--

Red Green Amber

I can describe how costume and wigs helped the actors play more than one role

I can describe and evaluate how space was used to create rapid transitions between a range of scenes

Sound Design

I can describe how underscoring was used to create tension during at least two moments in the play

I can discuss how music was used to create a sense of period and setting, and evaluate its effectiveness in both act one and act two

I can describe how recorded and live sound effects were used to evoke and communicate emotion in at least three moments during the plays

**National
Theatre**

Thank you