

# Technical Theatre: Use of Properties

Subject: VAPA-Drama

Level: Form Three



**Help Students!**

I'm lost! I'm in

the Drama Room at your school and it's 7.55am! I have to be on stage for assembly in 2 minutes! I'm going to 'improv' a piece but I NEED A PROP!

Does the Drama Room in your school have any props? I was thinking of a shirt. Would a shirt be considered a prop? AHHHHHHH!

**Let us define 'What is a Prop?':**

A Prop is anything that an actor handles, carries or manipulates. The word 'prop' is short for 'properties'. Props are highly visible and contribute to storytelling.

**There are two (2) types of Props.**

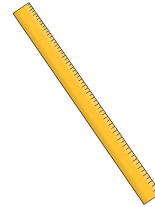
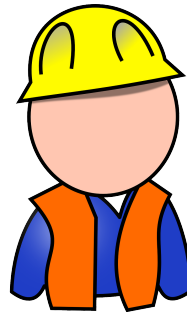
<b>Set Props</b>	<b>Hand Props</b>
<b>Furniture</b>	<b>Bible, pencil, baton</b>
<b>Large-scale items</b>	<b>Personal: wallets, combs that belong to and enhance a character</b>

### **Steps in working with Properties**

1. Read the play
2. Make a Properties List for each scene and for each character.
3. Conduct research
4. Talk to various other designers
5. Source the Props: borrow, purchase, alter OR reinforce
6. Prepare a Prop Table
7. Maintain: wash, mend, reset props after rehearsals
8. If you are an actor, complete the action that is necessary for use of the prop; for example, if the Judge has to bang the gavel, make sure to bang it. It is the only way to ensure that the prop will give the effect that you wish. Use the prop in a way that communicates information about its characteristics: its weight, its age, its importance.

## ACTIVITY

Match the character and the most commonly associated Prop by drawing a line or writing the name of the character and the object next to it.



### Remember!

- ★ It is also acceptable to mime a prop, depending upon the style of theatre being created.
- ★ You may also be creative and choose a simple prop which can represent many things.

## The Prop Table

Props will be set out, cleaned, maintained and stored during a production by the backstage crew and are found on a 'Prop Table' for quick access by actors. A Prop Table would be found backstage in a safe area, and with blocks marked off by tape. Each prop would be put into a block. The name of the prop would be CLEARLY WRITTEN so that actors could read it in the dark. Big items may be placed under the table. Any item that was used must be washed, especially after COVID-19!

Look at this picture of a Prop Table below:



Retrieved from: <https://setdesignandtech.wordpress.com/2016/10/29/props-and-the-prop-table/>

Lastly, do you think working in 'Properties' is a real job? Click here to find out: [Props Manager in Theatre](#)

## Assignment

Make a list of five characters.

List five traditional props that each character would normally have.

Then list five personal props that you WANT them to have based on their personality and say why this prop is important to that character.



END OF LESSON  
KEEP WORKING

Prepared by:

S. Dhanoo

Curriculum Planning and Development Division

Ministry of Education

Trinidad & Tobago, WI

*References:*

Images via Free Clip Art