

What a set designer does

All of the **scenery**, **furniture** and **props** the audience sees at a production of a play, make up the set design. The set designer's job is to design these physical surroundings in which the action will take place. The **overall** look of the set also gives the audience information about the director's concept of the production.

The set should:

- suggest the style and tone of the whole production
- create mood and atmosphere
- give **clues** as to the specific time and place of the action
- offer creative possibilities for the movement and grouping of the actors.

The set may also need to be designed so that the backstage areas used by the actors and stage

crew are kept out of **sight** from the audience.

This will depend on the effect the director wants to create with the staging and on the type of stage the production uses.

All of the things appearing on the stage, different from the scenery, are called stage properties, or props. Set props like furniture, **draperies** and decorations are the types of things that complete the set and they need to be part of the set design. The set designer will normally read the **script** many times, both to get a feel for the flavour and spirit of the script and to list its specific requirements for scenery, furnishings and props. The time of day, location, season, historical period and any set changes required in the script are noted. The set designer's focus here is on understanding everything that may be needed based on the dialogue in the script.



Set designers at work

clue: some information which helps us to understand


drapery: cloth hanging or arranged in loose folds

overall: general

sight: the ability to see

script: the words of a play

1  Read the text above and underline the technical keywords.

2  Use some of the words you underlined in the text to give a short report on the features of the job described.

3 Listen to the recording and fill in the blanks of the following dialogue using these words:

card • creativity • design • mind • samples • show • skills • visual

- A.** What are the most important **1.** a set designer should have?
- B.** To be curious, have an attitude toward learning, seeking, and engaging in **2.**
Our imagination is highly **3.** Whether outside or inside, colorful trees or concerts, star lit skies or the architecture of a great building, scenic **4.** is a process of discovery.
- A.** How do you generate creative ideas?
- B.** By opening your **5.** to new possibilities but also by searching and studying what others did in the past.
- A.** How can you find a job as a set designer if you don't know people working in **6.** business?
- B.** It's not who you know, it's who knows you. Put together **7.**, a variety of things. Then politely stick it in front of anyone you can, leave a resume and a business **8.** Call them from time to time to remind them. People in this industry have very short memories.

4 Take turns in asking and answering what being a set designer involves.



Set designers at work