

# STUDENT WORKSHEET 14

## SET DESIGN

There are multiple settings in **BaCK TO THE FUTURE: The Musical** in two different time periods. Production Designer Tim Hatley, who was responsible for designing all the costumes, props and set, faced a huge challenge. However, this is something which he says he loved most about working in the production - the challenges and problem-solving involved to create such a ground-breaking theatrical experience!

One location or setting which you saw multiple times throughout the production was Doc's Workshop. This featured in the opening scene, in 1985. Then in Act 1, when Marty goes back in time, we see Doc's workshop in 1955.



### AN 'IN ONE' SCENE

Doc's workshop is positioned downstage (near to the audience). There are a few reasons for this. Firstly, the audience can see the detail in the set, with all the props and items, which tell us so much about Doc as a character and whether it's set in 1985 or 1955. Tim Hatley explains why this detail is so important:

"That's why we've crammed it with all those props and things, and a lot of those things are influenced by the film and the choices. And they're all real things, and we found them, and I think it's quite important that things feel real. When you're zooming in like that on something that's right at the front of the stage, I think it's really important to get the detail in."

However, Tim Hatley highlights a much more practical reason why it needs to be downstage:

“It became quite clear to me that it needed to be what we would call an ‘in one’ scene, where it comes in at the front, so therefore, we can be changing and preparing a following scene behind it.”

### TASK 1

Look closely at the following image of Doc’s Workshop in 1955. Annotate both of the images with ideas for how the set and props convey:

1. Setting and time period - how do we know the scene is set in 1955?
2. Character & Personality - what does this setting tell us about the character of Doc Brown?
3. Mood and Atmosphere - what is the mood and / or atmosphere communicated through the set design?



### MINI-PROJECT - CREATE A SUSTAINABLE DESIGN

“I’VE ALWAYS MADE THINGS OUT OF OLD BITS OF CARDBOARD, AND I STILL DO. FOR ME, THAT’S NEVER CHANGED. THAT’S ALWAYS THE WAY I’VE BUILT A SET.”

#### TIM HATLEY

A key feature of Doc’s Workshop is all the found and re-purposed objects. He keeps and re-uses everything!

## TASK 2

Read the following definition of 'sustainable design' and discuss why you feel it is important when designing set, props, and costumes.

### WHAT IS SUSTAINABLE DESIGN?

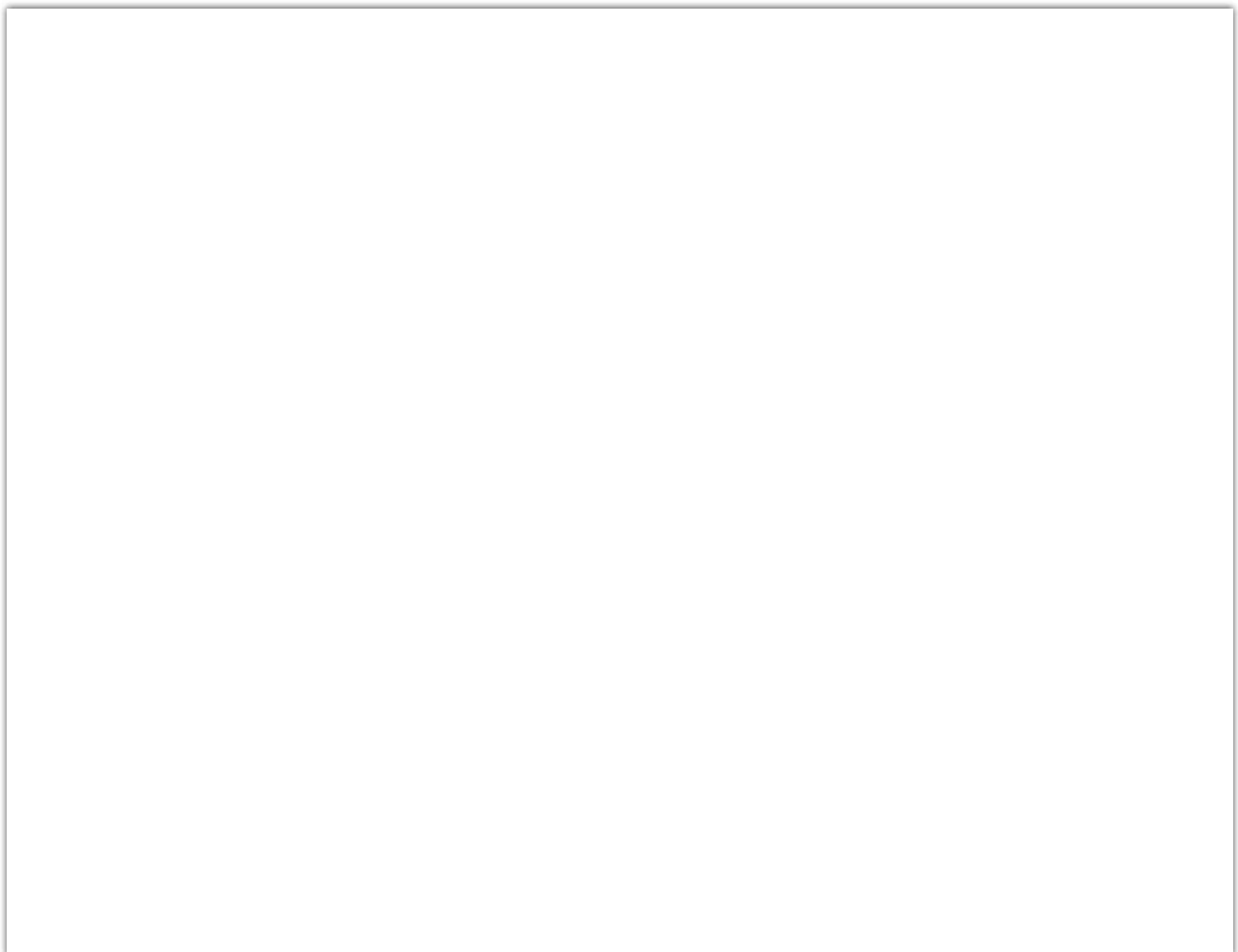
Within the context of theatre, this means focusing on sets, costumes, and props with a minimal carbon footprint, which may include using objects and materials which have been recycled or re-purposed.

## TASK 3

Now, you've explored the amazing set design from **BACK TO THE FUTURE: The Musical** you are going to create your own set model or costume. However, it must be 'sustainable'.

Create a set design for one of the scenes in the show or design a costume for a futuristic Doc Brown.

Possible Resources: A shoebox, cereal boxes, toilet roll tubes, off-cuts of material, old garments, newspaper, found objects, foil.



## TASK 4

Share your design creatively through a costume parade or a set model-box presentation.