

CCEA GCSE Drama  
(Summer Series) 2012

# Chief Examiner's and Principal Moderator's Report

drama



## Foreword

This booklet contains the Chief Examiner's/Principal Moderator's Reports for CCEA's General Certificate of Secondary Education (GCSE) in Drama from the Summer Series 2012.

CCEA's examining teams produce these detailed reports outlining the performance of candidates in all aspects of the qualification in this series. These reports allow the examining team an opportunity to promote best practice and offer helpful hints whilst also presenting a forum to highlight any areas for improvement.

CCEA hopes that the Chief Examiner's/Principal Moderator's Reports will be viewed as a helpful and constructive medium to further support teachers and the learning process.

This report forms part of the suite of support materials for the specification. Further materials are available from the specification's microsite on our website at [www.ccea.org.uk](http://www.ccea.org.uk)



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## GCSE DRAMA

### Chief Examiner's Report

#### Assessment Unit 1      Understanding Drama

##### General Overview

This is the second year of the new specification and candidates responded well to questions in this year's examination. They were well prepared by very secure and informed teaching. The support which was provided this year by CCEA, the standardisation meeting and the on-line guidance and sample answers, have all helped to build teachers' confidence in delivering this specification. Responses reflected a high level of engagement with the set text and the script which they had performed. Candidates are now using their texts during the examination more effectively and also managing their time efficiently with the vast majority of candidates being able to attempt all questions within the allotted time.

There is still some difficulty in some centres where candidates do not clearly state where question 3(a) finishes and 3(b) begins. Reference to 3(a) and 3(b) needs to be clearly written in the margin.

##### Comments on Individual Questions

**Q1** All candidates were able to answer this question and it was mainly answered well with most candidates gaining marks in the top two bands. Well annotated, simple sketches were able to achieve over half the marks. Candidates need to refer to period, status, colour and materials within the drawing. The written response which should be 'no longer than 100 words', should only therefore be justification. The candidate should be able to give their reasons for the costume choices in this paragraph. Some candidates repeated their descriptions of the costume in this paragraph which is not rewarded and some included justification within the annotation. Top band marks are only awarded to candidates who have also added a quotation and referred to the text and context of the relevant section of the play which was requested.

**Q2** All candidates were able to attempt this question. It carries the most marks on the paper and requires 45 minutes to complete. There was a very wide range of answers this year and some candidates are putting too much wasted emphasis on some aspects of the question. In some centres, more than two and as many as six different rehearsal ideas were developed. All would be marked but only the marks for the best two rehearsal ideas would be taken. Some candidates are spending too long on the detail of the character, the description of character's involvement, the challenge, the rehearsal work itself and one centre spent most of the answer on the application of a very brief rehearsal idea. Also some candidates are under the impression that improvisation is simply about performing lines from the text. A balanced answer is required. There were some exceptionally good answers which were perceptive and detailed with appropriate text reference. Candidates that only marginally failed to receive full marks in this question gave weaker responses on how the rehearsal work helped develop aspects of their performance. This was often very general and lacking in specific detail and understanding. Answers must clearly and effectively link the rehearsal work with the performance. Some candidates became a little confused and

developed the performance of the rehearsal work rather than applying the work back to the 'chosen moment' identified as a challenge in the text. The best improvisation work often detailed the improvisation and included samples of script. There was a full range of second choice rehearsal work with hot seating being the most popular but some very imaginative mime, music and voice work was included as well as a full range of drama strategies.

- Q3**
- (a)** This question was generally well answered and provided evidence of good teaching. In the best answers, candidates shared a personal approach to their performance. This answer can gain top band marks by being precise and specific. In some cases the answers were rote learnt and managed to obtain a good mark. The question asks for the play, playwright and character played as well as background, reference to staging and the style of the play as well as some detail about the character which they played. Candidates are expected to give brief detail about their actual production. A 'stylised' performance does not give any detail about the style but 'a realistic play set in contemporary Belfast using colloquial language and domestic setting' does suggest how it was staged and the style employed in the performance.
- (b)** Answers to this question were generally of a very good standard. Some answers had become very formulaic and listed a number of quotations, described the facial expression and a basic reason for using it. These answers were often repetitive with the same descriptions and reasons being used. The best answers looked at a full range of different facial expressions in response to a carefully selected range of quotations. These quotations were often in response to other characters and sometimes included responding effectively during a silence. Many candidates referred to audience response in their answer as a desired or actual outcome. It was clear that the most effective answers were from candidates who had clearly enjoyed acting the role and had totally engaged with imaginative and perceptive aspects of their role with a lot of specific detail. Unfortunately some candidates had chosen a number of roles and in such circumstances only the role receiving the most marks can be rewarded. Teachers may have to review their choice of plays in order to achieve to best outcome for this question and avoid texts requiring candidates to multi-role.

## Time Allowance

The time allowed of 1½ hours appeared sufficient, allowing all candidates time to complete all questions. Some candidates did answer the questions in a different order; this seemed to give no advantage but rather penalised candidates as they were not fully answering the last question.

## Principal Moderator's Report

### Assessment Unit 2      Drama Performance

The team of drama moderators would like to congratulate this year's pupils and teachers once again on a successful moderation overall. It was clear from the centre visits that pupils and teachers had once again engaged very effectively with the specification.



Overall standards were good and there was evidence of some very thorough preparation, performance and appraisal. The marking criteria were applied successfully in the majority of centres.

The range of texts explored in the scripted unit was again extensive with several new challenging texts being seen for the first time.

The standard of work necessary to achieve marks was also apparent with the agreement of the standard at the majority of centres. It was noted, however, in a very small number of centres that marking tended to be generous. Where this was evident, the appropriate adjustments were made at the post moderation meeting. This notification of adjustment is indicated on the TAC 6 report and centres should carefully note comments on this document as any issue experienced at the centre will be identified. Centres should also note that once an issue has been identified on the TAC 6 then it is the responsibility of the teacher in charge of Drama to deal with the issue for the next moderation period.

## Administration

Administration was completed accurately in nearly all centres which enabled the process of moderation to run smoothly.

All centres created a friendly, pleasant and welcoming atmosphere which helped the process for the pupils, teachers and moderators. Paperwork was completed to a high standard and there were no reported problems in relation to centres' administration of the process.

Generally the venues for the performances were well suited to the performance and appraisals. In quite a few centres, moderators were directed to a quiet space to complete their marking which was very much appreciated. The use of photographs for identification of candidates continues to be popular which also greatly assists the moderation process.

## Candidate Notebooks

Evidence of engagement in units of coursework is contained in the candidate notebooks and these are ***required to be completed for all candidates and for all units.***

Notebooks in general continue to be of an acceptable standard.

The notebooks of some very strong candidates were impressive with detailed background research information included for both units. Research of period and style are compulsory aspects of preparation for both practical units and candidates are expected to have a sound knowledge which should be evidenced in their notebook.

## Standard of Presentations

Once again the drama performances this year were generally of a good standard with some very good and excellent work in evidence. The **scripted performance** proved once again to be the most popular unit choice for moderation.

**Joyriders, Be My Baby, Cagebirds, Steel Magnolias** and **Hard to Swallow** were the most popular texts this year, with over fifty texts offered in performance (slightly less than last year). Most of the texts proved suitable, with some new texts providing appropriate material for able candidates. There were several incidences this year of teachers and students including script "write-ons". This should be avoided as it does not reflect the requirements of the scripted unit.

The moderators commented that the audiences added to the sense of occasion, whereas the absence of an audience seemed to place candidates at a disadvantage. Appraisal, however, should be completed without an audience.

A very small number of centres presented work which was too short. The guidelines suggest a ***minimum of fifteen minutes for a group of three*** and up to ***thirty minutes for a maximum group of nine***.

If presentations prove too short for the moderator to make a judgement, then a second visit will be requested.

In the larger centres, it was generally apparent that the full range of marks was in evidence, however, it is important that the full range is seen and this includes ***top and bottom*** candidates. If the bottom candidate is not available for moderation due to unforeseen circumstances, this must be discussed with the moderator during the initial contact.

In the majority of centres, internal moderation had been effectively carried out but it was still apparent that some teachers are not attending the agreement trial. CCEA strongly recommends that at least one teacher from each centre attends the trial.

## Appraisal

The moderators continue to be very impressed by the standard of appraisal. The pupils were well prepared and enthusiastic about the preparation and performance of their drama texts. One moderator described the appraisal of candidates at one centre as “articulate and insightful”. It was noted, however, that the use of drama specific vocabulary was not always in evidence. Candidates should apply the right terminology to their evaluations in order to achieve the upper range of marks, although moderators reported that over-complicated appraisal explorations are not always appropriate.

Teachers are to be reminded that questions which relate to research of the play texts must be addressed to the candidates to cover this compulsory aspect of assessment.

## Problem Areas

Difficulties experienced this year were, again, relatively few and this was due once again to the hard work and dedication of the teachers involved in the delivery of the specification. Centres should, however, note the following:

- Appropriate time should be spent on the preparation for the practical units;
- Marking on the day should reflect previous awards;
- The text chosen is appropriate for the group;
- The length of the presentation is in line with requirements and should be at least 15 minutes duration;
- All groups should be internally moderated;
- The full mark range should be presented; and
- Centres should ensure a representative attends the Agreement Trial.

Well done to all who participated so successfully in this year’s moderation process.

## Contact details

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