

CCEA GCSE Drama
(Summer Series) 2013

Chief Examiner's and Principal Moderator's Report

drama

Foreword

This booklet contains the Chief Examiner's and Principal Moderator's Reports for CCEA's General Certificate of Secondary Education (GCSE) in Drama from the Summer Series 2013.

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 reports will be viewed as a helpful and constructive medium to further support teachers and the learning process.

This booklet 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

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GCSE DRAMA

Chief Examiner's Report

Assessment Unit 1 Understanding Drama

General Overview

Candidates responded well to this year's examination and it was evident that they had been well prepared to answer all questions. Responses showed a high level of engagement with the set texts in Section A and also with the chosen scripts in Section B. Again the most popular text was 'Blood Brothers'. 'Philadelphia Here I Come', 'The Crucible' and 'Juno and the Paycock' were also popular.

Candidates are still making the same spelling, punctuation and grammar mistakes.

Some candidates are not dividing their answer into 3a and 3b which is difficult for the examiner to mark.

Some candidates answered the questions in a different order which is of no advantage and indeed in some cases is penalising the best candidates who are not completing the paper and often losing marks on question 1 which they are leaving to the end.

Some candidates attempted to answer with more than 2 rehearsal ideas in question 2 and in question 3b some candidates answered on more than 1 role. In such responses all of the answer is marked and the best mark is given for what is required in the question and the rest of the answer is noted as 'RUBRIC'. Centres should be reminded that the chosen scripts (Q3) should give an opportunity for every candidate to play **one** substantial role in performance.

Comments on Individual Questions

Section A - Prescribed Set Text

- Q1** All candidates were able to answer this question well and there is a huge range in the quality and time spent on sketches but this is not a drawing test and the annotation of the sketches is more important than the sketch itself. In cases when the question was not answered well, candidates were often not clear of the context where specific aspects of the costume were required. This was apparent for example in Blood Brothers when Mrs Johnstone's costume was required 'at the end' of Act 2 or in The Crucible for the Reverend Hale 'at the end' of Act 1. Some candidates did not refer to the text and some referred to text but not within the context requested. Also some candidates had very limited justification and simply added description. Most candidates had a good feeling for the character's status but not all referred accurately to period, colour and materials and top band answers needed to be both perceptive and imaginative. Most candidates were able to gain marks in bands 3 and 4.
- Q2** All candidates were able to attempt this question. It carries half the marks and therefore candidates need to spend half of the examination time on this question. There were some excellent answers which were comprehensive, detailed and extremely logical and coherent. Where candidates did not reach their full potential it was usually on how the rehearsal work helped develop aspects of their performance. This is a

question on rehearsal work so a large part of the answer should rely on the development of their chosen improvisation and another rehearsal idea. There was an imbalance with some candidates' answers which had very brief rehearsal work and a very extended application of performance detail. Many candidates referred well to text for a chosen moment but then did not return to this text in the performance and indeed, in some cases, there was very little justification. Some candidates applied their performance style to the rehearsal work instead of the chosen moment and as a result described direction detail of the improvisation or rehearsal idea for an audience. Some improvisation work was lacking in originality and was very close to the actual text of the play. Some candidates were confused about improvisation work and referred to 'a hot-seating improvisation' or in some cases the improvisation became a soliloquy or continual thought tracking. A few candidates explored an issue rather than looking at 'a chosen moment in the play'.

Top band answers had perceptive and creative rehearsal work while demonstrating comprehensive, detailed and perceptive knowledge and understanding of the character. Justification was also clear and detailed and referred to development of the two different moments chosen with appropriate text reference.

Top band answers need to have two specifically chosen and contrasting moments, extended development of rehearsal work and clear and detailed application of the character's performance style.

Section B - Scripted Performance

Q3 (a) This question was well answered by all candidates and indeed responses reflected very good teaching in aspects of research, playwright, staging and style. Candidates should begin their answer with clear responses to 'title of play,' 'playwright' and 'role you played'. Top band answers were gained quite easily in this question with brief response to all aspects requested. Candidates who did not respond well often had spent too much time telling the story of the play and describing their character and omitted the other aspects. Candidates should be spending no more than 10 minutes on question 3a.

(b) All candidates attempted this question. A few candidates wrote about characters which they multi-rolled which disadvantaged them as the question clearly states, 'If you played more than one role, select your main character'.

This was a question on movement and not movement and gesture as some candidates suggested. Gesture is a separate question. Movement does not always require text support and indeed some movement is performed in silence or as a result of a line of text spoken by another actor. However in the full range of movement in a performance, text support is required and most candidates used text support well. Some candidates wrote about rehearsal work and some candidates simply described their movement in some detail without giving a reason for their choices and therefore did not refer to what the expected outcome of the movement was in their performance.

Readability of Questions

All questions were read correctly by candidates and there was no misinterpretation of questions. The language used was clear and concise.

Comments on Mark Schemes

The mark schemes were clear and easy to apply.

Time Allowance

The time allowed seemed sufficient to allow all candidates to complete all questions. The guidance on timings for each question was regarded as very useful to candidates.

Principal Moderator's Report

Assessment Unit 2 Drama Performance

The team of moderators would like to offer their congratulations to this year's pupils and teachers who once again successfully undertook GCSE Drama. This was the third cohort of this specification and it was clear from the centre visits that pupils and teachers had engaged very effectively with the requirements of the specification.

Overall standards at moderation were good and there was evidence of thorough preparation, performance and appraisal; assessment criteria were applied appropriately for the most part.

The range of texts explored in the Scripted Unit was again extensive with a wide range of new texts on offer. These new choices lead to some very creative and enjoyable presentations with the work of several candidates being described as "truly accomplished".

Assessment

In general the assessment criteria for AO2 and AO3 are being applied accurately at most centres. It was noted, however, in a small but significant minority of centres that marking tended to be lenient. In a very small minority of centres marking on the day was in line with the moderator but was much more generously applied at internal standardisation. This meant that marks recorded by centres on TAC 1 were not in keeping with those applied on the day of moderation. This practice has been noted on the relevant centres' TAC 6 report.

Where lenient or severe marking occurred on the day of moderation the appropriate adjustments were made at the post moderation meeting. This notification of adjustment is indicated in the TAC 6 report and centres should take note of issues identified. It is the expectation of the team that these issues will be addressed by the centre for next year's moderation.

Administration

Administration was completed accurately in nearly all centres which enabled the process of moderation to run smoothly. The initial contact with the moderators by telephone proved beneficial and the team commented on the prompt response by teachers to this initial communication.

Paperwork was completed to a good standard and in a few centres the level of detail proved to be exemplary.

Generally the venues for the performances were suited to the process of moderation. There were, however, a number of large spaces used for moderation which can sometimes overwhelm performers in small groups. Several centres chose to conduct their appraisals in these large spaces with audiences still present. Moderators feel that appraisals are best conducted in smaller spaces with no other students present.

The use of photographs of candidates in costume continues to be popular for identification purposes and this is very much appreciated by the team, particularly with multi-role presentations.

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. There were, however, more issues than usual for this series. Several centres had incomplete sets of notebooks and a few centres presented notebooks which were unfinished. These centres were requested to forward missing notebooks to CCEA for inspection by the senior team. There was also, for a small number of centres, a tendency to include information which was not related to the exploration of the performance units, making the reading of the notebooks difficult on the day of moderation.

Some centres chose to set out notebooks in an adjoining room for the moderator to peruse before or after the performance. This worked well and allowed time for the notebooks to be considered.

Research of period and style are compulsory aspects of preparation for both practical units and candidates are expected to show evidence of this research in their notebook.

Standard of Presentations

Once again the drama performances this year were generally of a good standard with some very good, excellent and accomplished work in evidence. The **scripted performance** was the only unit offered for moderation this year.

Be My Baby, The Exam, Hard to Swallow and The Government Inspector were the most popular texts this year. There were over seventy texts offered in performance with just under thirty new texts presented.

Most of the texts proved suitable with some new texts presenting interesting challenges for able candidates. There was a tendency this year to present screenplays downloaded from the internet; centres are to be reminded that the play text should be of a published nature.

Audiences added to the sense of occasion whilst moderators stated that the absence of an audience seemed to place candidates at a disadvantage.

The candidates in general seemed to be well engaged but once again a very small number of centres chose to present 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.*** Other candidates were disadvantaged when the presentations were over long.

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 bottom candidates. If the bottom candidate is to be unavailable for moderation the moderator should be given advance notice.

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. It is the Council's expectation that teachers undertaking this specification are in attendance at the annual agreement trial.

Appraisal

The moderators continue to be impressed by the standard of appraisal and some of the candidates' responses were described as insightful and articulate. Detailed preparation (AO1) is also apparent from what candidates are stating in the appraisal session. The pupils were engaged, enthusiastic and knowledgeable about their texts and in general the atmosphere was relaxed and responses were very natural. There was effective correlation between the work contained in the candidate notebooks and ideas expressed in the appraisal sessions. However, a very small minority of candidates lacked understanding and knowledge of the process, using only basic descriptive vocabulary to express meaning.

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 to the hard work and dedication of the teachers involved in the delivery of the specification. Centres should however note the following:

- Candidates must engage in background research as part of the preparation process and be prepared to talk about this at appraisal.
- Marking on the day should reflect internal standardisation.
- The length of the presentation must reflect the specification requirements.
- Venues should be suitable and the process of moderation should be uninterrupted.

Well done to all who participated so successfully in this year's GCSE Drama.

Contact details

The following information provides contact details for key staff members:

- Specification Support Officer: Nola McLarnon
(telephone: (028) 9026 1200, extension 2235, email: nmclarnon@ccea.org.uk)
- Officer with Subject Responsibility: Esther Martin
(telephone: (028) 9026 1200, extension 2415, email: emartin@ccea.org.uk)