

CCEA GCSE - Drama
(Summer Series) 2014

Chief Examiner's and Principal Moderator's Report

drama

Foreword

This booklet outlines the performance of candidates in all aspects of CCEA's General Certificate of Secondary Education (GCSE) in Drama for this series.

CCEA hopes that the Chief Examiner's and/or Principal Moderator's report(s) 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

Contents

Paper 1: Understanding Drama	3
Paper 2: Drama Performance	4
Contact details	8

GCSE DRAMA

Chief Examiner's Report

Paper 1 Understanding Drama

Candidates responded well to this year's examination and it was evident from the marking team that they had been well prepared to answer all the questions on the paper. Responses showed a high level of engagement with the set texts and with the script which they had performed. The most popular text continues to be *Blood Brothers*.

Comments on Individual Questions

- Q1** All candidates answered this question and in the main it was answered very well with most scoring in the top bands. The context is key to gaining top band marks and should be clearly noted by the candidate. The sketch should include details of colour, shape and materials as well as period and social status. The paragraph of 'no more than 100 words' should only be justification and not description. Candidates are not penalised for writing over the limit but it can be self-penalising with regard to time as the guidance for this question is 20 minutes, including reading time. It is very important that candidates refer to text which is appropriate to the given context in the question and 'with detailed comment' to gain top marks.
- Q2** All candidates were able to attempt this question. In previous years the emphasis was on developing the rehearsal ideas and candidates were encouraged to develop application of 'chosen moment' in more detail. Some centres have now over-developed the application and the improvisation and other ideas have become very brief and unbalance the answer. The focus of this answer continues to be rehearsal work. Candidates should clearly state what they have chosen as the two challenges for the character. Some responses are extremely vague or general. The 'chosen moment' should include an extract of text (preferably not one or two words), for the chosen character (not another character). The candidates should then develop the rehearsal ideas in some detail. A phone call or a monologue is not an improvisation. Hot seating or thought tracking should have a number of comparable questions or thoughts etc. The chosen moment, with text, should then be re-visited and clearly develop 'how each rehearsal idea would help to develop different aspects of your character's performance style'. This should suggest how the performance could improve as a result of the rehearsal work. Some candidates are following up with the next line of text also which is good but many candidates are not returning to the chosen moment of text and some candidates are referring to other moments of text in different parts of the play which is not appropriate. Also, some candidates are developing performance of the rehearsal idea in some detail rather than performance of the chosen moment with text.
- Q3** (a) This question was generally well answered. The answers to Part (a) and (b) should be clearly defined. Answers should be quite short and to the point with candidates spending no more than ten minutes writing their response. Some candidates are still spending too much time telling the story of the play. They should be encouraged to write about their specific production. Information about playwrights should be brief. Candidates should be

encouraged to use their own words to describe the style of their play and not refer to a 'Brechtian' or 'Stanislawski' style. 'Stylised' is not a style. Staging should refer to such things as 'end-on', 'proscenium arch' or 'in-the-round' and set should refer to tables, chairs, rostra etc. Multi-role plays should be discouraged and texts should be appropriate to the strengths of the candidates.

- (b) This question was generally well structured and some were short due to pressure of time. Top band answers kept the character detail to a minimum, used a range of quotations, gave detailed vocal information and were able to refer clearly to the intention and success of the vocal direction. Some candidates made very vague and general comments such as 'proud voice', 'sarcastic tone' etc. rather than write about specific aspects of modulation such as pitch, pace, volume, pause, emphasis or inflexion. Candidates need to refer to a range of text to gain top band marks.

Readability of Paper

The level of language used in the examination was appropriate for all candidates.

Mark Schemes

The mark schemes seem to be straightforward and easy to follow with clear differentiation between the bands. Question 2 is worth half the total marks for the paper and is perhaps quite broad but the mark scheme is quite detailed. Attention should be drawn to the detail in the use of text for Question 1.

Time Allowance

The time allowed seems sufficient to allow all candidates to complete all questions but it has been noted that candidates are writing at greater length each year as they become more proficient with the responses required for each question. Many candidates are simply writing in too much detail and should be more succinct. Some candidates who answered in a different order were seriously disadvantaged. One candidate wrote 12 pages on Question 2 and nothing for Question 1. Candidates are advised to answer the questions in the order in which the examination is written.

Principal Moderator's Report

Paper 2 Drama Performance

The team of moderators were generally very pleased with the moderation process this year and would like to offer their congratulations to this year's pupils and teachers.

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, although there were more centre adjustments this year than in any previous year of this current specification with four centres adjusted as a result of lenient marking.

The range of texts explored in the Scripted Unit was again extensive with a broad time span of theatre represented in the creative choices of centres. The range included texts from the Greek

classics to more contemporary choices with a considerable number of new texts on offer this year. Centres are to be reminded that texts must be of a published nature which means that unsourced internet material and screenplays are not acceptable.

The most popular choices this year were Shakers, Be My Baby, A Memory of Lizzie and Hard to Swallow. Some of the more challenging texts, however, did not always prove advantageous to candidates. There was also some evidence of centres compiling performance groups of a larger number than stipulated in the specification. This practice disadvantages candidates and does not assist the smooth running of the moderation session.

Assessment

In general, the assessment criteria for AO2 and AO3 are being applied accurately at the majority of centres. It was noted, however, in a significant minority of centres that marking tended to be lenient. When marking beyond tolerance occurred on the day of moderation, the appropriate adjustments were made at the post moderation meeting. This beyond tolerance marking mostly applied to the top range of marks and were awarded to performances or appraisals which were not of this standard. It should be noted that marking in this range should be awarded as a result of the evidence of **accomplished** work.

Marking on the day of external moderation must reflect the marks awarded at internal moderation. Adjustments may be considered if this is not the case.

The notification of adjustment is indicated in the TAC6 report and centres should take note of issues identified. It is the expectation of the team that these issues will be addressed by the relevant centres for next year's moderation.

Administration

Administration was completed accurately in nearly all centres which enabled the process of moderation to run smoothly. 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, however, a number of large spaces were used for performances and a few centres chose to conduct their appraisals in these large spaces with audiences still present. Moderators felt that appraisals were best conducted in smaller spaces with no audience present.

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.***

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

Notebooks in general continue to reach an acceptable standard, however, there is a very varied approach to their completion. Some notebooks have become very basic and centres are reminded that this document validates the work completed for the internally assessed unit. There were less issues this year with missing notebooks, however, there were still problems in a small number of centres. These centres were requested to forward missing notebooks to CCEA for inspection by the senior team at post moderation.

Candidates are expected to show evidence in their notebook of their research in terms of the style and period of their performances. It is also a requirement to include a discrete section for each of the two units of coursework.

Standard of Presentations

Once again the drama performances were generally of a good standard with some very good, excellent and accomplished work in evidence. One centre presented a **devised unit** of work this year whilst the remainder once again presented **scripted performance**. There were seventy two texts in total offered in performance with just over twenty new texts presented for moderation.

Most of the texts proved suitable and some new texts presented interesting challenges for able candidates. Some of the more classic texts, however, proved to be just a little too challenging for the less confident members of groups. 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 were well engaged and there was less evidence of underprepared performances. There were no issues identified this year in terms of work which was too short but there were several centres who presented overlong work. The guidelines suggest *thirty minutes for a maximum group of nine* and it was noted that candidates were disadvantaged when the presentations were overly long.

In most centres the full range of marks was in evidence but there were several instances this year where the bottom candidates were not seen on the day of moderation. If for some reason the bottom candidate is not available for moderation then the visiting moderator should be informed prior to the visit in order that the matter can be given full consideration. In the majority of centres, internal moderation had been effectively carried out but this was not always the case and centres are to be reminded that adjustments are applied to all students and not just one teaching group. It was still apparent that some teachers are not attending the Agreement Trial; it should be noted that it is the council's expectation that teachers undertaking this specification attend this autumn event.

Appraisal

The moderators continue to be impressed by the standard of appraisal and some of the candidates' responses were described as "knowledgeable", "enthusiastic" or "sophisticated." In the main, pupils were very engaged in this process and it was also apparent that teachers are now very skilled at leading these sessions. Effective links were made to information contained in the candidate notebooks and ideas expressed in appraisal generally conveyed understanding. Teachers in the main are now questioning candidates on research and their rehearsal process; these are compulsory aspects of assessment in AO3.

There were, however, a number of candidates awarded top marks by teachers on the day of moderation who did not express their ideas with insight or convey aspects of analytical thinking. It was apparent during this year's series that AO3 had been over marked at a significant number of centres.

Centres must ensure that appraisals take place in a quiet space to enable students, teachers and moderators to focus on this important process.

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.
- Groups should be comprised of the required number of candidates.

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 Fitzsimons
(telephone: (028) 9026 1200, extension 2235, email: nfitzsimons@ccea.org.uk)
- Officer with Subject Responsibility: Teresa Livingstone
(telephone: (028) 9026 1200, extension 2296, email: tlivingstone@ccea.org.uk)