

GCSE (9-1)

Drama

J316

OCR Report to Centres June 2018

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This report on the 2018 Summer assessments aims to highlight:

- areas where students were more successful
- main areas where students may need additional support and some reflection
- points of advice for future examinations

It is intended to be constructive and informative and to promote better understanding of the specification content, of the operation of the scheme of assessment and of the application of assessment criteria.

Reports should be read in conjunction with the published question papers and mark schemes for the examination.

The report also includes links and brief information on:

- A reminder of our **post-results services** including **reviews of results**
- Link to **grade boundaries**
- **Further support that you can expect from OCR**, such as our Active Results service and CPD programme

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J316/01-02 Devising Drama

General Comments

Centres responded well to the challenges presented by this new unit and are to be congratulated for navigating through the process. Inevitably, there were some issues, which hopefully centres will address before next year.

Administration

Most work was sent within the deadline, some centres, with a small cohort submitted work before the deadline. A small number of centres sent their moderation sample to the text in performance examiner.

Centres entered either for 01 or 02. Entry under the code J316/01 should have been made through the OCR Repository some centres did this; others sent their submission by post, which is the J316/02 entry code. Centres are advised to check which entry code has been used to ensure that they use the correct submission format.

Not all centres sent a group list of performances and some did not identify candidates just before the performance. It is essential to the process that candidates are identified clearly on the DVD so that their performance can be tracked accurately. Some centres ensure candidates hold a sign in front of them with their name and candidate number clearly visible.

A number of centres sent USB drives and these worked well. Some centres sent a DVD/USB per group, which is not necessary but helpful. Centres are reminded that the DVD/USB should be chaptered with each chapter clearly labelled in order to facilitate the moderation process. Some centres put candidates work in individual plastic wallets, hard back folders, large art books and hard back books. Simple A4 paper securely fastened is sufficient.

A very small number of centres did not complete the Centre Assessment Form for each candidate – all relevant forms are available on the OCR website.

There were a number of clerical errors – incorrect totalling of marks on the Centre Assessment Forms and transcription errors when completing the mark entry. Centres are advised to check the marks awarded carefully before submission.

Some centres chose to work within a consortium. Centres are reminded that there must be rigorous cross-centre moderation before submission of marks.

Stimuli

The most popular stimuli were Walt Disney, Battle of the Somme, Specchio Falso, Life of a Celebrity and Banksy. Themes that came out of all of these leaned towards mental health. It is not a requirement of this unit to identify a practitioner around whose theories the work is built. Some candidates spent a lot of time detailing the theories of practitioners, which was not

necessary. If candidates want to use the theories of a practitioner, they should only include details of how and why it is being used in relation to the development of the devised piece.

Centres are reminded that the content of this devised work should be suitable for performance in a school setting. Explicit depictions of sexual assault, abuse and extreme violence are not suitable content.

Most candidates produced performances, which were thoughtful, interesting and well performed with good character development.

The most successful candidates had used their research to inform their creative decisions.

Performances

Most performers created credible characters and characterisation was a strength across the unit. Candidates had experimented with different genres and styles leading to some very interesting and effective work. The most successful candidates had very clear dramatic intentions and they devised the work without losing sight of this. Knowing what one wants an audience to experience is crucial in creating good drama.

Designers

There were relatively few candidates who chose the design option those who did generally had satisfactory outcomes. However, there were issues with set designers not creating a scale model or ground plan and lighting and sound designers not submitting cue sheets. Costume designers tended to fare better with submitting costumes worn in performance.

Centres must ensure that candidates are fully prepared if they choose a design route and have the necessary skills to enable them to access the full mark range. Candidates must be made aware of the requirements for design choices.

Portfolios

The majority of portfolios were in prose and were typed. Some centres had not split them into two sections and it was, at times, difficult, to see where section one ended and section two began. Those that had, managed to explore the stimulus and vocalise their journey through the process.

Section 1 on the whole demonstrated a good response and research on the given stimulus. Some centres all focused on one stimulus. Some candidates submitted research on more than one stimuli this is not expected or required. A few candidates reported being given access to only one or two stimuli and had clearly not had access to the full booklet of stimuli. This unit is designed to allow candidates to explore different types of stimuli and then to choose one which they want to develop and explore further.

Some of the research submitted was notes taken from the internet and not referenced. Candidates should be linking their research to their initial ideas. Some centres were over generous in their marking of this section – moving rapidly to the top of the mark range for a

paragraph of research. The mark scheme for the top of the band refers to *'Highly developed and detailed research which links closely to the stimulus material.'*

Section 2 requires candidates to detail the devising process. Some candidates took a descriptive approach, which tended to be long and lacking in analysis. Successful candidates used this section to give details of decisions made, which were analysed and evaluated in terms of impact for the audience. Evaluation should be evident in both sections 1 and 2.

The majority of candidates were able to evaluate throughout their work and then the final performance. Candidates do not need to include peer evaluations. Some candidates included feedback from their final performance without analysis.

A requirement of this unit is to include a rehearsal schedule – this was missing from a number of candidates' work.

Final Comments

Completion of this unit by most centres was successful and candidates had been well prepared for this new unit. It was evident from the work seen that candidates enjoyed devising their own drama and supporting their ideas with written evidence.

J316/03 Presenting and Performing Texts

Administration

The introduction of a new specification is always a challenge for centres, and examiners reported how pleased they were with the way centres had been able to meet the variety of requirements. Useful feedback has been received, which will lead to some amendments in the type of paperwork required.

Most centres met the deadline of seven days for sending the examiner the required documentation. The items required are as follows.

- The concept pro-forma for each candidate as a hard copy. Electronic versions are not acceptable. The pro-forma must be signed by the candidate and centre confirming that the work is that of the individual candidate alone.
- The running order. This must have candidate names and candidate numbers and be organised in order of performances.
- Details of the centre such as location, availability of parking, and any ID required.
- The time the centre wishes the examination to start.

It is essential that the seven-day deadline is met to ensure parity for candidates and to give examiners sufficient time to mark the concept pro-formas and to prepare their paperwork for the marking of the performances.

Arrangements for the examiner were generally good. Most centres were able to provide a good-sized desk and a lamp, and ensured their audience was not overlooking the examiner. An examiner may ask a centre to move part of the audience if it is felt they are too close. Examiners will remain at their desk during the examination, but a room should be made available for their use if they need a break during the day and for lunchtime when they may write up notes.

It is a requirement that the centre provide an audience for performances. The specification gives details of the nature of audiences permitted. The majority of centres had audiences that were made up of the actual examination class, taking it in turns to perform and to watch their peers. Some centres also had other classes watching from younger years or future GCSE students. A few centres had invited candidates' parents and friends to watch. Peer audiences were very well-behaved and supportive, as were the invited audiences. One examiner said, 'They helped candidates to communicate effectively and probably also helped with the rapport between cast members when performing.'

A significant minority of centres asked for a twilight or evening performance to ensure a quiet environment, and to enable parents and relatives to attend. A small number also asked for a Saturday examination. These are permissible, but if a twilight, evening or weekend examination is requested, centres should make it clear when they complete and submit their VAF forms.

It is for the centre to decide how they wish the two showcase performances to be organised, although examiners are happy to give advice should it be required. A wide variety of ways of doing this were experienced this year. Some centres kept groupings the same for the two performances; others had candidates within the same group perform a duologue or monologue for their second performance; others had a complete mixture of groupings. There is no particular or preferred method required by the specification. However, the two extracts must

have a break between each of them in the candidates' showcase, even if the two run consecutively.

A requirement of the specification is for the performances to be filmed and then chaptered and placed on a DVD or memory stick. These should then be sent to the examiner as soon as possible. Most centres were able to do this within two or three days. The recording should be in a format that allows it to be played on a computer or DVD player and should be chaptered. Candidates must introduce themselves before each extract.

It is important that the camera is located so that it captures all of the area in which candidates are performing, whilst avoiding also filming the head and shoulders of the examiner. Almost all centres were able to use a performance space that was quiet and without interruption.

Concept pro-formas

This section of the examination requires candidates to have good knowledge of the whole of the play they have used for their showcase, with understanding informed by the original intention of the playwright; the context of when it was written; the challenges the text provides for a performer and/or designer and how they will be met; their own intention and how they want an audience to respond; and how they have developed their role with examples from their preparation.

Examiners reported, almost without exception, how well candidates had developed their understanding, and how the study required for the completion of the concept pro-forma informed and supported their showcase performances.

What did candidates do well?

Examiners reported many candidates wrote in good detail, the most successful addressing the elements asked for by each question. They also communicated a strong sense of personal involvement, engagement and ownership of the work and were generally clear about their artistic vision and were creative. Artistic vision was interpreted differently by candidates. The two common versions were firstly considering setting and design aspects and secondly, exploring a more overall directorial approach.

The best candidates were able to reference the first performance of the play within its social and/or political context; were able to discuss why it was written; describe briefly any subsequent significant interpretations; and then lead on to the text challenges and how their own intentions would meet those challenges.

Candidates were usually very clear on the kind of audience reaction that they wanted and might get. Most higher achieving candidates were clear about the demands of their own role and the relationships with other characters, and such candidates provided some good comments on specific vocal and movement ideas, semiotics and emotional expression.

Question 4 was often answered well, with the information provided supporting answers given to the previous three questions.

The space provided for the answers is considered sufficient for an answer that could achieve full marks, and although there is no penalty for exceeding the suggested length, some of those candidates who did have long responses took the risk of being self-penalising through generalisations and repetitive information.

Most candidates word-processed their answers. When doing so the minimum font size to be used is 12.

What did candidates find a challenge?

Some candidates did not address what was asked for by each question and failed to understand the different aspects that were being asked for. This often led to repetition. There was also a tendency for some candidates to recount the plot or describe what they did in a generalised way. Many candidates did not address structure when responding to question 1 and a large number did not cover the specific demands of the text. It follows that some candidates provided answers that lacked focus and had attempted a scattergun approach.

Candidates are advised to address each question as precisely as possible and to avoid repetition. They should provide specific examples throughout of what they intend to actually do and why and ensure a balanced explanation of both extracts to be performed. As their showcase contains two performances, they should focus on some of the contrasting ideas within them – or if more appropriate, on the consistency and character development across the two.

Design candidates should reveal similar understanding of the text as performers but should ensure their focus is on the design issues that follow on from the intention of the playwright and the interpretation of their group. Design candidates need to ensure that there is a clear artistic vision from the group so that they can develop a brief that is based on requirements, rather than having a vague overview taken only from stage directions in the text.

Candidates who struggled to attain high marks had usually failed to be specific and answer the question. Such candidates would often give a lengthy, florid description of the play and its characters, failing to reference the original writing of it or the playwright and original intention. This made it harder for them to develop their own intention apart from some bland generalities.

The rubric makes it clear that both performances in their showcase should be referenced, so if examples are given from just one, answers will be limited. Some candidates spent a lot of their answer discussing other characters, failing to explore their own role and its development across both performances, whether that was as the same character or as a different character.

Many candidates did not address structure in answers to question 1 and a large number did not cover the demands. Examiners suggest that candidates address each area/question as precisely as possible; avoid repetition; write in detail; provide specific examples throughout of what they intend to actually do and why; provide a balanced explanation of both extracts to be performed; and focus on some of the contrasting ideas of the latter – or if more appropriate – on the consistency and character development.

All examiners said how important it was for candidates to consider the process, not just the end product.

Texts

The selection of texts was varied and overall suited the candidates' age and level of maturity. Centres should remember that although the text management service may approve a text, that does not mean it is approving the performance of extract material. A few centres selected extracts that were contrary to the requirements described on page 47 of the specification. Such centres seem to have confused what is allowed to be studied, with what cannot be included in a performance.

A good example is Sarah Kane's *4.48 Psychosis*, with its dark suicidal content and in sections very explicit expletives. Examiners saw some examples where the extracts chosen were full of expletives and this is not appropriate; other examiners saw very sensitively chosen extracts that had just the occasional expletive, where candidates had been able to bring out the full power of the text and made good use of ensemble movement and choral speech. Centres are urged to read page 47 in the specification to ensure that appropriate extracts are chosen.

It would not be appropriate to suggest plays to centres. A number of examiners noted that some of the best work they saw was from classic plays, one stating that perhaps that is not surprising as classic plays offer you more. Several Shakespeare texts were mentioned as being very successful, as well as *Journey's End* and *Streetcar Named Desire*. More up to date plays that were successful included *Blue Remembered Hills*, *Girls Like That*, *Lord of the Flies*, *My Mother Said*, *Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night Time* and *DNA* although this latter play was also cited as having some of the poorest performances.

John Godber plays were popular, but some candidates drifted into poor stereotypes lacking depth and pace in their interpretation. On the other hand, some really outstanding performances were seen where fast-paced dialogue and incisively observed characterisations made for very entertaining outcomes that allowed candidates to demonstrate a range of skills. The comments below are from examiners and are there to show the variety of texts used. A list giving examples of plays used by centres this session is given at the end of this report.

Comments from examiners include:

'Daisy Pulls it Off was an extremely slick, professional and energetic performance from a very able group of girls.'

'A Midsummer Night's Dream included some very imaginative and creative ideas, for both able candidates and also those with English as a second language and candidates with special needs to be properly and fully involved.'

'DNA - a beautiful set of naturalistic performances made the text come to life for me for the first time. The quality of the vocal work was impeccable, such clarity of diction, which was a joy and is a bit of a rarity.'

'A stunning Lady Macbeth in duologue with Macbeth. The understanding and intellect was remarkable; the performance aspect just took care of itself.'

'Journey's End - a very convincing performance, impressive in terms of how candidates had worked with the context so accurately in a situation far removed from their own experience.'

'An extract from the first act of 'The Wasp' by Morgan Lloyd Malcolm was performed with such skill and assurance.'

'The Crucible - demonstrating the candidates' abilities in dealing with Miller's language in an impressive fashion.'

'Two candidates brought alive Rosencrantz and Guildenstern in Stoppard's classic, showing real understanding of the text and communicating the humour in a fast-paced, engaging extract.'

Performance - acting

Most centres ensured their candidates had kept to the time requirement and very few produced over-long or very short performances in their showcase. Those who did were self-penalising, either by not having enough time to develop a role and demonstrate a range of skills; or by being unable to sustain a role and provide contrast. Pieces that are too long do place an extra burden on candidates when they are preparing and rehearsing.

What did candidates do well?

There was often a strong sense of candidates' understanding of the whole play from which the extracts had originated. Candidates often demonstrated a good sense of rapport between cast members and communication of meaning to the audience. Many candidates had a good sense of their awareness of the demands of their chosen genre, and how that would have an impact and influence the way they presented their extract. Most worked hard to create mood and atmosphere. There were few examples of poor performance memory and candidates were well rehearsed and knew their lines. When lines were forgotten it was usually as a result of freezing rather than lack of preparation. Characterisation was quite strong, and they generally communicated relationship and emotion effectively. Overall, there was good physical and vocal control.

Many examiners commented on the effective use of physicality to bring a text alive or reimagine the traditional way of interpreting a piece. It was also said that candidates who chose a more traditional approach, also produced effective outcomes where they understood fully the demands of the extract. One senior examiner commented, *'The use of style, chorus and movement was particularly strong. I saw some lovely ensemble movement to communicate themes and issues to the audience along with a polished use of chorus.'*

What did candidates find a challenge?

When lines were forgotten, going into a state of panic rather than finding a way out or being helped by other characters. For some candidates the gabbling of lines, rushing through their piece almost with a sense of wanting to get it over, prevented a piece from being successful. Nerves also caused some candidates to be very static, or the opposite with constantly moving and shuffling feet.

Some candidates struggled with the idea of two extracts giving the opportunity to demonstrate a breadth of skills and ended up showing the journey of the same character in both extracts with no evidence of development.

All examiners commented on the importance of selecting the right text for the candidates so there was a good fit with their interests and skills, so that they could develop a sense of ownership of it. There was no difference between naturalistic and non- naturalistic outcomes as both done well will attract credit. Some examiners commented that candidates might focus a little more on their use of voice and consider contrast. Lots of shouting often prevents a more sympathetic response and provides a stereotypical interpretation.

Performance – Design

Overall the quality of the work presented for design was much weaker than acting. It is really important for centres and candidates to understand that there must be parity between the demand actor candidates and design candidates.

Some examiners commented that without supporting documentation it was hard to make accurate assessments of what had been produced. Where candidates had produced planning documents it greatly aided understanding of what had been done. One examiner made the following observations.

'Where candidates were taking the design option because they were really interested in that area, they were very good and there was a strong sense of commitment to the work, involvement in the group and use of creative and precise skill – in addition to taking strong control of that element from the very beginning when setting up in preparation for the work. However, with some candidates there was not a lot of a sense of individual, independent and autonomous work.'

There should be an audit trail from the point where discussion starts on an extract and the style the group wants, through to a brief for the designer and frequent communication with group members as to how the response to the brief is working. There should be evidence of planning and for lighting and sound, good evidence of the way the brief will be interpreted. There is no set format for this, and it will be driven by the accepted protocols for the design option chosen. There are no marks for supporting documentation – it enables the examiner to recognise how what they are seeing has developed and the challenges that have been overcome for the final outcome.

The best candidates were able to demonstrate the original ideas, the way that such ideas then developed into a brief, research into possible ways of meeting the brief, consideration of what worked and what didn't, the final practical challenges and how they were overcome. In the same way that the actors show a journey through the presentation of their character(s) in their two extracts, learn their lines, plot their moves, interact with other characters and their set, so the designer must show the journey they have undertaken to arrive at a final outcome.

Some candidates struggled because their extract did not have enough variation or challenge within it to enable them to produce a design where the requirements could be considered equitable to the actors' roles. It is not a good idea to choose a design skill for assessment where there is little change or demand on the designer, and so an inability to demonstrate high quality skills.

The best candidates had detailed lighting/sound plots, rigging plans, cue sheets with commentary where needed, drawings, set designs, costume design drawings with development sketches, all linked to what they had to say in their concept pro-forma and the final showcase.

One senior examiner advises candidates to develop the research and use the documentation to show the journey and involvement with the group, including the artistic visions and intentions.

General

The list that follows provides examples of the texts used by centres. Providing this list is in no way recommending any of these plays, but rather is an indication of the breadth of selection.

Name of text	Playwright
<i>Blackout</i>	<i>Davey Anderson</i>
<i>Playhouse Creatures</i>	<i>April de Angelis</i>
<i>Metamorphosis</i>	<i>Steven Berkoff</i>
<i>Greek</i>	<i>Steven Berkoff</i>
<i>Things I Know To Be True</i>	<i>Andrew Bovell</i>
<i>Boy in the Striped Pyjamas</i>	<i>John Boyne</i>
<i>The Caucasian Chalk Circle</i>	<i>Bertolt Brecht</i>
<i>Two</i>	<i>Jim Cartwright</i>
<i>Top Girls</i>	<i>Caryl Churchill</i>
<i>The Insect Play</i>	<i>The Brothers Copek</i>
<i>Daisy Pulls it Off</i>	<i>Denise Deegan</i>
<i>Circles</i>	<i>Rachel De-Lahay</i>
<i>A Taste of Honey</i>	<i>Shelagh Delaney</i>
<i>Gut Girls</i>	<i>Sarah Daniels</i>
<i>Mudlarks</i>	<i>Vickie Donaghue</i>
<i>Grimm Tales</i>	<i>Carol Anne Duffy/Tim Supple</i>
<i>Mind Games</i>	<i>Paul Elliott</i>
<i>Neville's Island</i>	<i>Tim Firth</i>
<i>Bouncers</i>	<i>John Godber</i>
<i>Shakers</i>	<i>John Godber</i>
<i>The Woman Who Cooked Her Husband</i>	<i>Debbie Isitt</i>
<i>4.48 Psychosis</i>	<i>Sarah Kane</i>
<i>My Mother Said I Never Should</i>	<i>Charlotte Keatley</i>
<i>DNA</i>	<i>Dennis Kelly</i>
<i>Believers</i>	<i>Bryony Lavery</i>
<i>Two Marias</i>	<i>Bryony Lavery</i>
<i>Beautiful Breakdown</i>	<i>Bryony Lavery</i>
<i>Blood Wedding</i>	<i>Frederico Lorca</i>
<i>Yerma</i>	<i>Frederico Lorca</i>
<i>The Woman in Black</i>	<i>Stephen Mallatratt/Susan Hill</i>
<i>Child's Play</i>	<i>Don Mancini</i>
<i>The Crucible</i>	<i>Arthur Miller</i>
<i>100</i>	<i>Monaghan/Heimann/Petterie</i>
<i>The Secret Garden</i>	<i>Marsha Norman/Lucy Simon</i>
<i>Girls Like That</i>	<i>Evan Placey</i>

Name of text	Playwright
<i>Blue Remembered Hills</i>	<i>Dennis Potter</i>
<i>An Inspector Calls</i>	<i>JB Priestley</i>
<i>Equus</i>	<i>Peter Shaffer</i>
<i>Macbeth</i>	<i>Shakespeare</i>
<i>Midsummer's Night Dream</i>	<i>Shakespeare</i>
<i>Othello</i>	<i>Shakespeare</i>
<i>Pink Mist</i>	<i>Owen Sheers</i>
<i>Journey's End</i>	<i>R C Sherriff</i>
<i>Antigone</i>	<i>Sophocles</i>
<i>Tusk Tusk</i>	<i>Polly Stenham</i>
<i>That Face</i>	<i>Polly Stenham</i>
<i>The Curious Incident of the Dog.....</i>	<i>Simon Stephens</i>
<i>Five Kinds of Silence</i>	<i>Shelagh Stevenson</i>
<i>The Long Road</i>	<i>Shelagh Stevenson</i>
<i>Real Inspector Hound</i>	<i>Tom Stoppard</i>
<i>Rosencrantz and Guildenstern are Dead</i>	<i>Tom Stoppard</i>
<i>The Roses of Eyam</i>	<i>Don Taylor</i>
<i>Bronte</i>	<i>Polly Teale</i>
<i>The Twits</i>	<i>Enda Walsh</i>
<i>Too Much Punch For Judy</i>	<i>Mark Wheeler</i>
<i>I Love You Mum, I Promise I Won't Die</i>	<i>Mark Wheeler</i>
<i>Hard To Swallow</i>	<i>Mark Wheeler</i>
<i>Private Lives</i>	<i>Noel Coward</i>
<i>Chatroom</i>	<i>Enda Walsh</i>
<i>Brighton Beach Memoirs</i>	<i>Neil Simon</i>
<i>The Wasp</i>	<i>Morgan Lloyd Malcolm</i>
<i>Someone Who'll Watch Over Me</i>	<i>Frank McGuinness</i>
<i>Dancing At Lughnasa</i>	<i>Brian Friel</i>
<i>Welcome Home</i>	<i>Tony Merchant</i>
<i>Mugged</i>	<i>Andrew Payne</i>
<i>Be My Baby</i>	<i>Amanda Whittington</i>
<i>Lord of the Flies</i>	<i>Williams/Golding</i>
<i>A Streetcar Named Desire</i>	<i>Tennessee Williams</i>

J316/04 Performance and Response

General comments

As stated in other reports on this exam, the introduction of a new specification is always a challenge for centres. This is even more so with this unit, it being the first time many centres had prepared candidates for a written Drama GCSE exam. It was pleasing to see how well informed candidates were and examiners reported how encouraged they were with the way centres prepared candidates to be able to meet the variety of requirements in this paper. It was noted that most centres have coped very well with the requirements of this new examination and had, in general, prepared candidates well for most aspects of the paper. It was also evident that the majority of candidates knew the texts well.

Centres and candidates are to be congratulated on their approach to the examination. Examiners commented very favourably on the quality of the work presented for examination in all 9 questions. Most candidates were organised and had prepared well for the examination. Examiners reported that it was evident that most candidates were enthusiastic and often detailed in their responses and it was clear that many centres had engaged in much excellent preparation and exploratory work in the exploration period which informed the work of candidates.

In general, it was evident that many candidates have performed effectively. It is pleasing to see that candidates have risen to the challenges of the unit, especially in relation to planning and preparing for this new exam. It was also pleasing that all seven set texts had been utilised by centres in the exam in varying degrees of popularity.

Section A

This section of the examination requires candidates to study and explore one chosen text from a list of seven identified within the specification. There are 8 questions, each requiring a different response to a variety of skills needed to explore, develop and perform their chosen text. Candidates need to develop a good knowledge of the whole of the play from a Director, Actor and Designer perspective with understanding informed by the original intentions of the playwright; the context of when it was written in relation to the social, cultural and political context; the creative challenges of the text for the Director, Actor and Designers and how they could be met; the impact of the text on an audience and the potential responses to key moments; the role and impact of characters within the piece and how characterisation can be explored, developed and presented in performance.

Examiners reported on how well candidates had developed their understanding in most areas of their chosen text, and how the candidate responses within the exam were often well informed and creative, with many candidates often successfully giving full and developed answers to most questions.

Comments on Individual Questions:

Question 1

This question was answered well by most candidates. Candidates often offered clear understanding of what constitutes a dramatic moment and how this could affect and impact on an audience in performance.

What did candidates do well?

Examiners reported many candidates structured their response in good detail, the most successful addressing the question in a way which allowed them to clearly state the moment and be able to explain the dramatic impact.

The best responses were often where candidates were usually very clear on the kind of audience reaction that they might get for each moment chosen.

What did candidates find a challenge?

Some candidates did not address what was asked for by the question in relation to the dramatic impact and failed to offer this aspect, rather describing and often justifying at length why their chosen moments were relevant but with no reference or discussion of what impact this has on an audience.

It was noted by examiners that some candidates spent too long and wrote in too much detail on this question for the marks available as they appeared to have less time to answer the later questions in the same detail. Centres are advised to discuss with candidates the length of the space allocated for each response as this is a good indication of the expected time to spend on the question. As mentioned, a number of candidates wrote in excess of this and it appeared as a consequence that some candidates did not leave enough time to complete more detailed questions.

Question 2

This question was answered well by some candidates. Most Candidates clearly identified a specific instance when a relationship changed, but many could not say how it moved the action forward and described the next sequences that followed their chosen moments rather than showing an understanding of what impact the change had on moving the action forward.

What did candidates do well?

Some candidates structured their response in good detail, the most successful addressing the question in a way which allowed them to clearly state the moment and be able to explain how this moment was relevant in moving the action forward. Examiners noted that there was some strong answers as to how the instances of the change in relationship did move the action forward, with a good understanding of dramatic action.

The best responses were often where candidates clearly justified how and why the moment chosen successfully moved the action forward.

What did candidates find a challenge?

Some candidates did not address what was asked for by the question in relation to moving the action forward and failed to offer this aspect, again rather describing other moments in the plot where relationships had changes with little justification to their own chosen moments. Also, several candidates wrote the same responses to questions 1 and 2, and again this is something centres need to address with candidates for future exams.

Question 3

This question was answered well by most candidates. Most candidates clearly identified a specific aspect of character and were able to offer some very sound practical ways of how this may be communicated in performance.

What did candidates do well?

Some candidates used the table to good effect and were concise in their responses, listing the aspect clearly and how they would communicate it, in a precise manner. Strong answers often revealed that the candidate knew the character concerned well and had good suggestions as to how they might use gesture and expression and movement to convey this.

The best responses were often where candidates had clearly explored characterisation in a practical way and could successfully demonstrate the elements they had used to develop the character.

What did candidates find a challenge?

This question was problematic for candidates who did not read the question carefully. The question is an acting question and is looking for a response to do with voice movement gesture and expression etc. Some candidates failed to respond to this question from an 'actor' perspective. There were many responses which focused on how costume, staging and lighting could be used to communicate meaning rather than how the actor would achieve this.

Question 4

This question was answered with good knowledge and understanding by most candidates. Candidates clearly identified the character and were able to offer very practical ways of how they would deliver lines in performance, with very sound justification.

What did candidates do well?

Although not a requirement, many candidates used example lines from the text to good effect and were able to clearly discuss how they would deliver them, in a precise manner. Strong answers from candidates also identified a specific moment when a line or a series of lines surrounding the events of a section of the play could be delivered and the way this could be delivered by a character using their performance skills. Candidates also justified their choices with pertinent answers from the plot or characterisation.

The best responses were often where candidates had discussed the chosen character in a practical way and then suggested clear ways on how lines could be delivered with clear justification demonstrating a sound knowledge and understanding of the character.

What did candidates find a challenge?

A few candidates did not read the question fully and had used the character listed in question 3. Some candidates also discussed in detail how they would use different practical aspects to convey a line but failed to explain or to justify how and why lines would be delivered in a certain way.

Question 5

This question was answered well by some candidates, with good knowledge and understanding and use of appropriate language. Candidates had clearly identified their chosen moment and were able to offer practical ways of how they would position characters in performance in relation to use of set, with very sound justification.

What did candidates do well?

Many candidates produced simple, functional floor plans that were accurately annotated to good effect. The best responses were often where candidates had given 3 full justifications for positioning of characters and choice of set, often discussing how they had explored the moment in rehearsal and reflecting the practical work they had produced. Strong responses often revealed that candidates were able to use technical vocabulary well.

What did candidates find a challenge?

Candidates' not answering the question was an issue. A few candidates had several scenes in the one sketch and some attempted to cover the entire play in a form of storyboard. Some candidates did not state the moment or scene taking place and there was a tendency for justifying the chosen moment, why it is dramatic, rather than a justification for positioning of characters or use of set. Centres should also encourage candidates to annotate rather than label their sketches, as the majority of candidates labelled the characters, and occasionally better answers gave information on the set. Many candidates also spent great time in producing a highly elaborate and 'artistic' sketch which was not required for this question. A simple, annotated sketch was perfectly acceptable.

Question 6

The responses to this question were varied. Some candidates answered with good knowledge and understanding of how an actor can create mood, clearly identifying 2 moments where they would do this, to very good effect. Many candidates misinterpreted this question. As with question three, the question is asking for a response that outlines how an actor might create mood and atmosphere through the use of performance skills. There were a large number of candidates who responded with information which would come under the auspices of design. A significant number of candidates produced a very detailed and highly creative response in relation to how lighting, sound and set can create mood, but with no reference to the role of the actor within this.

What did candidates do well?

Many candidates focused on the skills that an actor can employ to create mood and atmosphere and clearly linked this to 2 chosen moments. The best responses were often where candidates had again discussed how they had explored the moments in rehearsal and reflected the practical work they had produced. Good responses often focused on character and discussed how the candidate would employ a variety of performance skills to create mood.

What did candidates find a challenge?

As discussed, some candidates' responded to this question from a technical and designer perspective, rather than how an actor can create mood. Some candidates only referred to 1 moment, not the 2 the question required. Also, there were a large number of candidates who responded in great detail to the first moment and then provided much less specific, pertinent detail about the second. Both moments need to be covered with a sense of the actor's intention to create mood and atmosphere in equal measure.

There was a tendency from some candidates to explain why a particular scene already had atmosphere without explaining how an actor can add to this and often included lighting, sound, costume and special effects which were not from the perspective of an actor.

Question 7

The responses to this question were varied. Many candidates answered with good knowledge and understanding of how a director can explore and develop character relationships using the stage, both in rehearsal and performance and identified a variety of moments within the text where they would do this to very good effect. Many candidates focused solely on proxemics and negated to discuss how or why this aspect helps to establish relationships.

What did candidates do well?

Many candidates clearly discussed positioning of characters on stage at key moments within the play and fully justified the impact this would have on character relationships, from a both an actor and audience perspective. The best responses were often where candidates had highlighted stage areas, levels and positioning and had discussed this in relation to several characters, with clear justification of how and why a director would use this in order to develop relationships for sound practical reasoning and impact.

What did candidates find a challenge?

Some candidates' purely focused on proxemics, often in relation to 1 character only. There was little discussion of how relationships could be explored and developed with little reference to the role of the director within this. There was a tendency from some candidates to explain why a particular character was important in a scene and not discuss potential staging and the importance of this in developing relationships from the perspective of a director. Some candidate's responses were very general, focussing on moving characters apart or together with little thought about how character relationships and audience impact are affected by this. A significant number of candidates responded by suggesting the best approach would be to use proxemics and little use was made of technical vocabulary which could have effectively supported this answer. Some candidates also responded to this question in relation to the social

historical and cultural elements of the text, and this led to a number of candidates providing information about the events of the time, and how the set design could convey elements of the background to the play.

Question 8

It was acceptable for candidates to respond to this question either in relation to the period it was written, period it was set, or a combination of both. Several of the set texts were written in one particular period, but set in another. Candidates were not penalised for discussing one, or a variety of periods. Many candidates answered with very detailed knowledge and understanding in relation to period and discussed the historical, social, cultural and political context of the text, linking this clearly to the designs they would employ to exemplify and demonstrate this. There were a number of very strong responses to this question that included a good amount of detail on the culture and society of the play and often incorporated pertinent ideas that reflect society at the time the play was written or set.

What did candidates do well?

Candidates clearly discussed design in relation to the period of their chosen text and fully justified the impact this would have on design aspects. The best responses were often where candidates had highlighted key moments from the text and discussed their potential designs with the influences of period and time clearly highlighted.

There were very good responses from candidates who decided to focus on 1 design element throughout as well as those who chose to discuss a variety of design aspects. Strong responses were often given by candidates who were able to use the information provided in the stage directions of the text to make a number of good suggestions about how design aspects could be applied and the most effective answers were able to convey a coherent, logical and effective design idea, with clear justification.

What did candidates find a challenge?

Many candidates responded to this question by detailing the amount of knowledge they had for the period in which the play was written or set. They negated to link this to potential design elements and often offered no practical response to this at all. Some candidates' understanding of the historical, social and political context of the text was lacking which made it very difficult for candidates to do this question justice. There appeared to be a general understanding of some elements, but many candidates' confused dates, times and in general, the understanding of what society was like to in the period that the play was written or set. There was often no discussion of practical ideas in relation to their knowledge of the play or context and many candidates provided ideas that were not practical or design based at all. Candidates who struggled to attain higher marks for this question had usually failed to be specific and answer the question in relation to the design aspect.

Section B

Question 9

This section of the examination requires candidates to evaluate, study and analyse the impact of one actor in a piece of live theatre chosen by the centre.

The question is asking the candidate to analyse the impact one actor has on them as an audience member.

It was noted by examiners that many candidates had analysed from a personal perspective whilst demonstrating that they had a clear understanding of many key aspects of a live theatrical performance. Many candidate responses were insightful and balanced often revealing the candidate's understanding of how drama and theatre are developed and performed and offering concise and thoughtful evaluation of the actor in performance.

It was pleasing to note that only a handful of candidates answered this question referring to the same performance text to the one they had studied for Section A and also that only a minority of candidates failed to write the name, venue and date (month and year) of the live performance they have seen at the start of their response.

The variety and style of live performances offered was immense, ranging from Physical Comedy to Opera. It would not be appropriate to suggest plays to centres, but a number of examiners noted that some of the more difficult responses to mark were those where candidates had chosen to discuss a Puppet as the main character.

This tended to severely limit the potential response offered, especially as the candidate referred to this as the main character, rather than the actor. However, many examiners noted that most candidates seemed to have engaged with the productions seen, and often responded well as members of the audience. There were very good examples of where candidates had selected and used specific examples from the productions to display a very sound knowledge and understanding of the chosen actors impact, and it was clear that many candidates were well prepared for this question. It was also noted that there were a few 'prepared' theatre reviews where candidates had failed to focus on the specifics of the question, rather offering an overall review of the performance.

What did candidates do well?

The most successful responses from candidates were those rooted in the question and which used the performance seen and the impact/role of the actor as the main input to their answer and offered examples alongside this, rather than simply listing all aspects of the actor in performance with no analysis. The best responses were often those that had a good blend of describing how the actor created impact for the audience and were able to offer very strong, creative solutions to things they saw as not as effective in the production. It was evident that some centres had encouraged their candidates to write in a very positive manner about their experiences, which when done well, showed a genuine love of live performance. Technical vocabulary was used well with a good sense of understanding by a pleasing number of candidates also.

Candidates who scored well in this question discussed and evaluated many of the following aspects:

- How the actor created and communicated meaning by actions, voice, gestures, presence, use of costume, use of space, etc.
- What skills the actor used in their characterisation and overall performance, including any physically or visual elements.
- How the actor effectively used props and/or stage design and the impact of the style of performance had on meaning, especially in relation to how the actor communicated this to the audience during the performance.
- The positive and/or negative impacts of the actor's performance.
- The impact the performance had on the candidate as an audience member.
- Clear examples used to support their evaluative statements about the performance and the role/impact of the actor on them, as an audience member and the overall impact in general.
- Evaluate the strengths of the actor in the performance and the impact they had on them as an audience member with specific and detailed reference to the production.
- Clear examples used which were relevant to the performance seen, not dependent on the script.
- The impact on the audience was discussed in detail and showed an interpretation of themes and meanings for the audience.
- Higher grade responses from candidates offered a clear distinction between actor and the character.
- The candidate's use of specialist drama and theatre terminology was highly developed and integrated throughout their response.
- Candidates offered a highly developed understanding of how meaning is communicated to an audience in a live performance and their line of reasoning throughout their response was well developed, sustained, relevant and logically structured.

What did candidates find a challenge?

Again, some candidates not responding to the question was an issue. Some candidates failed to focus on one actor and often referred to the actor/character with the no discernible differentiation. The use of subject specific language and terminology was also limited. Some candidate's responses were very short, and there was often a link back to the comments in previous questions concerning the level of detail and time spent by some candidates on lower marked questions. Also, lower level responses tended to be more descriptive rather than analytical and evaluative and tended to present basic opinions on the impacts of the actor in the production which focused on description.

The examples given to support the candidates analysis lacked specific detail and tended to focus on only one or two aspects of the performance only and there was usually only a very tentative link made between the actor's impact and the audience's response. Low level

responses were often very descriptive in relation to plot, use of technical aspects and characters in general and failed to offer clear analysis of the role of one actor within this.

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