

GCE A Level Examiners' Report

Drama and Theatre
A Level
Summer 2025

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Introduction

Our Principal examiners' report provides valuable feedback on the recent assessment series. It has been written by our Principal Examiners and Principal Moderators after the completion of marking and moderation, and details how candidates have performed in each component.

This report opens with a summary of candidates' performance, including the assessment objectives/skills/topics/themes being tested, and highlights the characteristics of successful performance and where performance could be improved. It then looks in detail at each unit, pinpointing aspects that proved challenging to some candidates and suggesting some reasons as to why that might be.¹

The information found in this report provides valuable insight for practitioners to support their teaching and learning activity. We would also encourage practitioners to share this document – in its entirety or in part – with their learners to help with exam preparation, to understand how to avoid pitfalls and to add to their revision toolbox.

Further support

Document	Description	Link
Professional Learning / CPD	Eduqas offers an extensive programme of online and face-to-face Professional Learning events. Access interactive feedback, review example candidate responses, gain practical ideas for the classroom and put questions to our dedicated team by registering for one of our events here.	https://www.eduqas.co.uk/home/professional-learning/
Past papers	Access the bank of past papers for this qualification, including the most recent assessments. Please note that we do not make past papers available on the public website until 12 months after the examination.	Portal by WJEC or on the Eduqas subject page
Grade boundary information	Grade boundaries are the minimum number of marks needed to achieve each grade. For linear specifications, a single grade is awarded for the subject, rather than for each component that contributes towards the overall grade. Grade boundaries are published on results day.	For unitised specifications click here: Results and Grade Boundaries and PRS (eduqas.co.uk)

¹ Please note that where overall performance on a question/question part was considered good, with no particular areas to highlight, these questions have not been included in the report.

Exam Results Analysis	Eduqas provides information to examination centres via the WJEC Portal. This is restricted to centre staff only. Access is granted to centre staff by the Examinations Officer at the centre.	Portal by WJEC
Classroom Resources	Access our extensive range of FREE classroom resources, including blended learning materials, exam walk-throughs and knowledge organisers to support teaching and learning.	https://resources.eduqas.co.uk/
Bank of Professional Learning materials	Access our bank of Professional Learning materials from previous events from our secure website and additional pre-recorded materials available in the public domain.	Portal by WJEC or on the Eduqas subject page.
Become an examiner with WJEC.	We are always looking to recruit new examiners or moderators. These opportunities can provide you with valuable insight into the assessment process, enhance your skill set, increase your understanding of your subject and inform your teaching.	Become an Examiner Eduqas

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Executive Summary

Component 1- Theatre Workshop

Overall, the standard of work within this Component remained consistent with previous series. Successful creative logs embodied clear and detailed research processes that highlighted candidate understanding of their chosen practitioner/style, with the development and refinement of the work based upon meaningful theoretical approaches. The strongest work demonstrated sophisticated artistic aims that were influenced by practitioners or theatrical companies and clearly justified the evolutionary process of their work. Performers are reminded of the need to explain how and why they applied specific skills at differing stages of the process, whilst designers must evidence collaborative practice in the creative process, including the use of accurate terminology, mood boards, ground plans, and cue sheets where relevant. Candidates are also reminded of the need to explore their own individual contributions and explain how these integrated with the overall work of the group. Practitioner influences are of equal importance within the practical work, with evidence of structure, style, character and contextual awareness of the chosen extract where possible. Moderators commented that the best performance/design work was thoroughly rehearsed, and refined, with a concise and impactful meaning effectively communicated to the audience.

Component 2- Text in Action

Overall, it was felt that centres provided excellent opportunities, selecting varied and stimulating material for candidates this year. However, some challenges remain with centre administration, with incomplete programme proformas, late paperwork, and inappropriate performance spaces creating unnecessary stressors for performers and designers alike. Although video recordings were mostly of a good quality and the Surpass uploading process proved more efficient this year, centres are reminded of the need to follow upload guidelines carefully, as this is an imperative part of the process in ensuring accurate outcomes for all. Text performances, although of a good quality again this year, must be performed as written, and should involve the use of basic props. To acquire top band marks, candidates should avoid unrealistic choices, such as performing in socks, as well as honouring the original intentions of the playwright when performing/ designing. Examiners were impressed with the overall creativity of devised pieces, with influences such as Frantic Assembly and Berkoff once again proving popular. Although most centres avoided overly explicit content this series, it is important that sensitive material is presented with trigger warnings and safeguarding measures already in place before the performances commence. Process reports should research both style and practitioner, citing live theatre in detail, and providing thorough evaluations of final performances. Centres are reminded that design candidates must focus on one technical skill across both pieces. Overall, centres responded well to previous feedback, enhancing quality and rigour.

Component 3 – Text in Performance

Examiners reported that the quality of Section A responses varied this series. Successful answers closely linked costume design ideas to the extract, using details such as fabric, colour, and accessories to communicate character and themes. Less successful responses were generic or unfocused. For the rehearsal technique question, successful candidates explained specific methods, such as Stanislavski's 'Magic If' or hot seating, connecting them clearly and concisely to character motivation. Less successful answers listed techniques without justification or alignment to the sought-after outcomes. In Section B, effective answers for lighting and sound selected contrasting extracts, integrated social, historical, and cultural context, and used precise subject specific language, clearly describing stage spaces and the intended impact on the audience. Live theatre was also analysed critically and linked to their own ideas. Less effective responses were overly descriptive, lacked technical explanation, or included context that was not relevant to the question posed. Section C showed imaginative set and props concepts for *Curious Incident*, often inspired by the original production, with clear ground plans and justification linked to Christopher's perspective. Traverse staging was generally well understood, though some confused it with thrust. Strong answers incorporated AO4 by evaluating live theatre and relating it to their own design choices. Weaker responses mentioned many productions without analysis or clear links to their own approach. Overall, thoughtful integration of context, technical detail, and audience impact distinguished the stronger responses.

Resources:

We have resources available to support centres:

Areas for Improvement	Resources	Description
Meeting the demands of the question	Exemplar Materials Portal by WJEC	Top, middle and lower band Eduqas GCE Drama and Theatre exemplar materials for Acting and Design
Understanding the course	Eduqas GCE Drama and Theatre Specification	For all aims, subject content, assessment and technical information
Applying the assessment criteria	Eduqas GCE Drama and Theatre SAMs – under 'Teaching Support Materials, entitled 'Additional Exemplar Materials'	Sample Assessment Materials for Eduqas GCE Drama and Theatre
Guidance for Teaching	Eduqas GCE Drama and Theatre Guidance for Teaching – under 'Teaching Support Materials'	The principal aim of the Guidance for Teaching is to support teachers in the delivery of the WJEC GCE Drama and Theatre specification and to guide teachers on the requirements of the qualification and the assessment process

Understanding the different elements of the course	Eduqas A Level Drama Resources	• Blended Learning resources for each set text. • Knowledge Organisers • Exam Walk-Through materials
Administration and paperwork	Eduqas GCE Drama and Theatre administration forms and guidance	Copies of all necessary paperwork to be completed

Our digital resources website has many blended learning lessons and knowledge organisers, among other resources, available to help centres. You can use the filters to find the resource that you need.

DRAMA AND THEATRE

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COMPONENT 1

Overview of the Component

Non-exam assessment: Internally assessed and externally moderated. 60 marks

Component 1 is 20% of the qualification. It consists of 2 assessment objectives:

AO1 (10%) - Create and develop ideas to communicate meaning as part of the theatre making process, making connections between dramatic theory and practice

AO2 (10%) - Apply theatrical skills to realise artistic intentions in live performance

Learners are required to create a piece of theatre based on an extract from a text using the techniques and working methods of either an influential theatre practitioner or a recognised theatre company. Learners must produce a realisation of the performance or design and a creative log, which can be in a written or audio-visual format.

Overall, moderators reported that work submitted was of a similar standard to previous years. Centres are choosing an effective programme for this component, demonstrating a range of classical and modern texts, theatre companies and practitioners. Most candidates chose acting as their option but there was also a range of technical skills offered evidencing all mark bands. Appropriate arrangements for singular candidates were made this year, working with a teacher or non-assessed candidate.

Effective scrutiny of the mark scheme by teachers saw most mark bands being applied. Lower bands or exceptional work tend to be awarded accurately. The difference in standard between band four and band five is the most inaccurate. Where marks were not accepted, it was due to insufficient evidence for the band awarded or content required by the descriptors was missing. Centres are encouraged to look through the C1 exemplar on the WJEC Portal website to better understand the national standard.

Many thanks to teachers and exams officers in transitioning to IAMIS upload. Most work was clearly labelled, and sample content was working and accessible. One notable benefit of the IAMIS system, was the ease with which centres could upload a missing file or correct any paperwork issues before the deadline. Most centres met the May 15th deadline, and many centres took advantage of uploading early before the Easter holiday. Centres are reminded that there is no need to upload the 10-15 min extract of the original text, but the reinterpreted script must be uploaded with 30-70% content from the original text clearly highlighted. Please ensure that one 10-15 min extract is studied in detail. Some candidates cited multiple extracts from the whole text when meeting the 30-70% requirement of original text in the reinterpreted script. Centres should note that IAMIS is to be used for examination purposes only, with Live Theatre forms being sent directly to drama@eduqas.co.uk.

There should be a 'performance ready' line up of actors and design candidates who must be clearly identified by name and candidate number at the start of each group performance. It is also beneficial if they are in costume and clearly state their character or design role. A04 evaluation is not assessed in A level Component 1 and should not be included in the creative log, with some centres are including this as an additional but unnecessary subheading. No marks will be awarded for this work. The text chosen for Component 1 should be from the prescribed text list in Appendix A of the specification, including playwright or suggested translation. Moderators commented that teacher comments, when provided, proved extremely useful when understanding how a centre has arrived at a mark. Centres are welcomed to employ a variety of methods when adding such comments, such as a summative comment on the mark sheet, comments sheets to make clear links to the assessment criteria or handwritten notes within the creative log, to name but a few.

Comments on individual questions/sections

A01: Create and develop ideas to communicate meaning as part of the theatre making process, making connections between dramatic theory and practice.

A01.1a.

Creative logs do not have to be a written essay, with spoken or narrated audio-visual presentations of between 7-10 mins also being acceptable. The strongest presentations were accompanied by a PowerPoint that linked closely to the assessment criteria. This served to structure the presentation, thus ensuring required content was clear and focused. Successful creative logs give detailed accounts of carefully selected processes which evidence research, development and refinement. They have sophisticated artistic aims that are informed by practitioner or company research and evidence all content required by the descriptors to a mature and sophisticated level.

The strongest creative logs by designers evidence professional practice and detailed knowledge of their design skill, explained with accurate terminology. They articulate a full design process, from initial ideas to final development and refinement of their choices. They offer visual screenshots of cues, photographs of experimentation or final ideas, ground plans, mood boards and detailed diagrams. These candidates are fully integrated into their performance group and the creative log explains how design ideas have been informed by the collaborative process. There were some design candidates that did not include all the required work, such as costume designers not discussing hair and make-up, lighting designers omitting the ground plan of the space and not identifying lantern positions and sound designers not including 8 different cues. The creative log is essential for designers to support their practical work and is the correct place to evidence all required content outlined in the specification. Finding a balance between discussing individual and group preparation, or identifying which techniques and conventions are the most important remains a challenge for some candidates. All candidates should consider their individual contributions from an actor or designer perspective in depth.

Actors should explain how and why they have utilised their performance skills, whilst designers need to evidence appropriate research and explain how and why they have chosen specific design techniques. It is good practice to include examples of research, development notes, refinement comments, photographs and planning diagrams. If candidates want to include notes or mind maps as evidence, they should be an appropriate size and clear. Few succeeded in adhering to the word count guidelines of 1,200-1500 words but centres are reminded that it is more than possible for candidates to access the higher bands without exceeding the suggested word count.

A01.1b.

In the strongest work, the practitioner/company influence is evident immediately, demonstrating a clear link between theory and practical application. It is important that acting candidates utilise performance conventions and techniques and do not rely on design techniques associated with the practitioner or company. This work is at its best when there is a correlation between artistic intentions, process of reinterpretation, original source text and research. The most successful creative logs include all required research outlined in the specification, effectively citing a wide range of sources. All candidates must discuss the 10–15-minute extract and its context within the whole text. Evidence of research on structure, character construction and style should inform knowledge and understanding.

A02: Apply theatrical skills to realise artistic intentions in live performance.

Moderators reported a high standard of diverse performance and design work that succeeded in accessing the higher bands. These marks are the most accurately awarded by teachers. Centres should be commended for using their available resources imaginatively when supporting candidates. The most popular choice was Frantic Assembly, and this was applied to a wide range of modern and classical texts. Other popular choices of practitioner or company included Katie Mitchell, Berkoff, Paper Birds, Kneehigh, Artaud, Splendid and Brecht. There was a positive mix of non-naturalistic and naturalistic acting styles chosen, reflecting group interests and experimentation. Designers were fully integrated in the development process and the best examples chose practitioners or companies where design is an essential component of their artistic vision. Candidates are very confident with their performance work for Component 1, with pieces effectively rehearsed and refined and embodying detailed characterisations and significant audience impact. Designers effectively supported the performances, shaping mood and atmosphere or communicating a strong visual aesthetic.

DRAMA AND THEATRE

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COMPONENT 2- TEXT IN ACTION

Overview of the Component

Overview of the Component

Non-exam assessment: Externally assessed by a visiting examiner. 120 marks

Component 2 is 40% of the qualification. It consists of 3 assessment objectives:

AO1 (10%) - Create and develop ideas to communicate meaning as part of the theatre making process, making connections between dramatic theory and practice

A02 (20%) - Apply theatrical skills to realise artistic intentions in live performance

A04 (10%) - Analyse and evaluate their own work and the work of others.

This component requires learners to engage with a stimulus to create two pieces of live theatre: one devised piece using the working methods and techniques of either an influential theatre practitioner or a recognised theatre company and one extract from a text in a different style to the devised piece.

As in previous series, centres embraced the performance elements of this exam and in many cases, gave candidates an opportunity to perform contrasting and challenging pieces, with many centres going over and above in the delivery of theatrical experience. Whilst the paperwork on the day was completed by most centres, examiners reported that the programme pro-forma detailing the performances was very often late in being submitted. This is essential and provides the examiner with an opportunity to prepare fully for the forthcoming examination. The completion of this should also include the chosen practitioner and the chosen style; too often this was left blank. Centres are therefore reminded that all administrative forms must be completed correctly and in their entirety.

Recordings were mostly of good quality, but centres are encouraged to minimise extraneous noise outside of the performance space. This is a public exam and centres must do all they can to ensure the candidates have an appropriately quiet environment, just as they would in any other examination. The use of Surpass was more efficient this year with only a minority of centres not uploading 7 calendar days after the performance. Centres should check the video performances before uploading the files and follow the guidelines for uploading. This makes the marking review period considerably more efficient for all parties. Centres are reminded that the zipping of files into one folder is not permitted.

For the most part, centres followed the guidance contained within last year's Principal's report and therefore avoided overtly sexualised content within devised work. Use of swearing is less of a concern if appropriate within the performance, but sensitive, explicit subject matter or physical contact should be handled appropriately. Many centres now have an intimacy policy and centres should be aware that when audiences are present, they should be made aware of the subject matter prior to the performances commencing. Triggers warnings should be considered when handling sensitive material such as death and bereavement, suicide, self-harm and/or sexual assault, eating disorders and abuse. Challenging material can be encouraged but teachers have a responsibility to ensure the safeguarding and well-being of both the candidates and the audience.

When choosing styles and practitioners, please do consider the similarities and differences between them. The choice of a practitioner such as Katie Mitchell, coupled with a style such as naturalism, doesn't necessarily give students a true contrast of performance skills. Whilst the specification is not prescriptive, candidates should be encouraged to deepen their knowledge of dramatic theory through a greater diversity of study and practice. When choosing a Theatre Company as an influence for the devised work, please choose a company whose style and working practice can be discerned effectively. The National Theatre Company, for example, is too broad in its repertoire to be effective as a choice in this regard.

Comments on individual questions/sections

Design Candidates

Last year, centres were reminded that choosing two different technical skills is not permitted for this component. It also not permitted to be a designer in one piece and a performer in the other. Unfortunately, not all centres adhere to this guidance. Centres are reminded of their responsibility to follow the specification guidance and to avoid malpractice of this kind. If in doubt about the requirements for technical candidates, please refer to the specification or contact drama@wjec.co.uk.

Text Performance

Centres are reminded that texts performances should be 'as written'. The text performance is not the same as Component 1 as it is not a reinterpretation. Therefore, adding music to a piece that was not written with music is not appropriate, nor sanctioned by the specification. Likewise, whilst gender-blind casting is welcomed, the integrity of the writer's original intentions means genders of the characters should not be changed. The use of monologues should be used sparingly as marks are awarded for interaction with other characters in the scene. Centres should be commended for their use of non-examined candidates in ensuring that the requirements of the component can be fulfilled.

Devised

Examiners were grateful that centres had noted the concerns raised last year regarding the lack of vocal range in Artaudian influenced performances, which appears to have been addressed this year. Likewise Punch-Drunk performances were less in evidence, and when they were, consideration had been given to the nature of the performance so that the examiner was able to watch all the action, as appropriate. Centres are reminded that it is not permissible to perform the piece more than once, so when using Punch Drunk as a practitioner, please bear this in mind. In addition, when choosing Paper Birds, one would expect to see physical theatre within the performance; it is not enough to just focus on verbatim theatre to represent their influences.

Process & Evaluation Reports

Centres are becoming adept at ensuring candidates keep as close as possible to the 3000 words specified for this aspect of the component. The first section should show some level of understanding and research of both the style and the practitioner. Too often, candidates focus on the devised piece and may forget to also research proponents of their chosen style. Live theatre influences should be apparent in the second section and should be relevant. Examiners expect to see details of the chosen performance, possibly the venue, the director or one of the lead actors, in order to show a level of discernment. It is not enough to quote the name of the play and expect it to serve as evidence of live theatre seen. Digital Theatre references are perfectly acceptable but again, should be detailed appropriately. Top band outcomes are achieved by analysing the process, referencing elements of dramatic theory and using terminology appropriately. YouTube references and links in themselves are not proof of knowledge and should be contextualised appropriately to justify research and understanding. The final section should highlight individual contribution to the piece and reference contrast in performing the two styles. It is also worth stressing that the final section is an evaluation of the final performance and as a result, reference to the impact upon the audience is to be expected. Centres are reminded that 15 marks are available for the final section, with many examiners noting that some candidates write significantly less than the first section, which is only worth 10 marks.

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COMPONENT 3- TEXT IN PERFORMANCE

Overview of the Component

Written Examination. 120 marks

Component 3 is 40% of the qualification. It consists of 2 assessment objectives:

AO3 (40%) - Demonstrate knowledge and understanding of how drama and theatre is developed and performed

AO4 (10%) - Analyse and evaluate their own work and the work of others.

In this component, learners are required to study two complete texts and one extract from a third contrasting text. Centres are reminded that the five texts studied for this qualification must represent a range of social, historical and cultural contexts. The component sees learners given the opportunity to demonstrate their knowledge, understanding and skills in interpreting texts for performance in a written examination, with a requirement to view a minimum of two live theatre productions to inform their understanding.

Section A responses varied this year, with strong answers for costume or rehearsal techniques directly linked to the extracts specified and justified explanations for the choices made. Less successful answers were generic or unfocused. In Section B, effective lighting and sound designs combined contextual knowledge, technical detail, clear staging concepts, and critical thinking in response to live theatre. Less successful answers gave irrelevant context or vague technical ideas. Section C showed creative set and props ideas for *Curious Incident*, often reflecting Christopher's view, with intuitive ground plans and AO4 links to live theatre. Less successful answers confused stage types or didn't offer any depth of analysis. Overall, detailed, well-connected ideas and critical engagement with productions were of note this series.

Comments on individual questions/sections

Section A

Generally, the outcomes of Section A were more varied than the other sections of the paper. Where candidates had addressed the questions fully, responses were detailed and inventive, conveying a clear insight into the characters and methods asked for in the question. Weaker responses left little time to complete the response, focused on non-assessed criteria, or did not address all aspects of the question.

Questions 1a – 5 a

This question asked candidates to discuss their ideas as a costume designer for a given character in the extract printed in the question booklet. Candidates also had to consider how their choices communicated meaning to an audience.

Some candidates elected to answer this question last due to the smaller tariff of marks. In a few cases, responses were not as thorough as they could have been due to the time constrictions on them at this stage in the examination. However, this was not always the case and candidates mostly approached this question with creativity and imagination, supported by evidence from the extract and knowledge of suitable production styles for their interpretation.

Successful candidates used the extract printed to support their ideas for costume design. Close reference to the action of the extract, using quotations and stage directions to support this, were very effective. It was evident that candidates had used the printed extract to underline key information to use as evidence in their response. This was particularly clear when referring to how an actor might use the costume design in the extract. For example, in 'Accidental Death of an Anarchist,' candidates focused on how the costume contributed to the comedic style of the extract and that the actor playing the role of the Maniac might use the costume to perform prat falls and slapstick movement. These were linked to key dialogue and stage directions in the extract.

How the costume was worn by the actor also contributed to this effect. The Maniac might be wearing several layers of disguise, causing them to become tighter as they stretch over the costumes beneath. Candidates linked the function of costume to the various persona played by the Maniac and as a way of communicating meaning to an audience through the themes of deceit and secrecy in the play. Successful candidates described their costume in detail from head to toe, creating a strong visual image of the design and in addition, considered its function in communicating meaning. Candidates referred to the condition of the costume to convey character and meaning. In 'Love and Information,' the character who is obsessed by the A.I. person was often characterised as introverted and focused on the cyber world they preferred to live in. Ideas conveyed this by their costume being comfortable and relaxed in fit, but some aspects of tidiness and cleanliness neglected to show they are less interested in the real world and more comfortable with their 'imagined' one. Some candidates suggested that the exterior costume reflected the depressive mental state of this character.

Candidates used logos and pictures of the A.I. character printed on T shirts to convey their idolization of the character. The choice of fabrics and colour communicated the use of costume for comfort and relaxation, as well as more neutral colours to suggest how they did not want to stand out or be noticed. Accessories were also used to show character and meaning. An example of this was seen in 'Chimerica,' where David's cycle helmet was adorned with childish stickers that contrasted with the suit worn beneath his high viz vest. This served to communicate his role as a father when not at work and added contrast with his work persona.

Less successful responses referred to a generic costume that did not connect with the extract given and therefore did not communicate meaning in the given circumstances of the extract. Candidates referred to alternative ideas which confused their concept and meaning of the costume. It is best to commit to one concept and write in detail, as opposed to offering variety in a superficial manner. Candidates began their responses with introductory paragraphs about the context of the play and extract, which was not linked to their ideas. Responses for section A do not have to refer to the play as a whole; but can do so if used to support an idea. The extract should be sufficient and help to keep responses focused. Occasionally candidates referred to AO4 which is not assessed for this section. Where candidates had set their costume ideas in a specific period, they were not clear about the type or style of costume worn at the time and how this might communicate meaning to the audience. Hair and makeup ideas were not asked for in the question, but fake beards and removable items were considered accessories and part of the costume concept. Candidates were able to describe their costumes but struggled to connect this with how meaning was communicated.

Questions 1b-5 b

This question asked candidates to discuss at least one rehearsal technique they could use to explore the motivation of a given character in the printed extract. One rehearsal technique explained in detail, or a few different techniques were expected. This was to give free choice of aspects of the extract an actor would choose to work on in rehearsal. A rehearsal technique is used to explore and /or develop the interpretation of a role by an actor. A wide variety of rehearsal techniques were used imaginatively to draw out meaning in the extract and to open ways of interpreting the role and communicating meaning.

Successful responses understood the purpose of rehearsal techniques and clearly referred to processes they were familiar with in their own practical work as an actor. Highly successful responses understood that rehearsal techniques have different outcomes at different parts of the extract. Candidates linked the development of the role or meaning to several moments in the extract, which conveyed a complex and highly developed understanding of things such as character motivation throughout the extract.

Candidates who were clear as to what aspect of the characterisation they were developing, for example, vocal characterisation, chose specific techniques that focus on this development and were able to name the practitioner and the method. Techniques often have different names or are called different things by practitioners/ teachers; if the intent and the description of the techniques were explained, examiners were able to reward candidates for their application of process to the text. Examples of effective rehearsal techniques included: specific vocal work by Patsy Rodenburg, physical characterisation work used by Complicite and Frantic Assembly, Stanislavski's system exploring subtext, the application of Brechtian methods in rehearsal to explore the meaning / message of the extract, hot seating and improvisation around the text. Candidates will be familiar with these techniques from their work on Component 2 and practical exploration of their texts in class. Highly successful candidates identified challenges for an actor and used rehearsal techniques to find solutions for themselves, such as applying Max Stafford Clark's status exercises to the relationship in 'Saved.' Successful candidates explained the use of playing cards to randomly identify status and how an improvised scene with the status of the cards could help actors experiment with different dynamics, stating how this exercise might help identify the power that Len holds in his ability to sooth the baby. This might make Pam resent both him and the baby more as she feels isolated from the caring role. For the extract from 'Racing Demon,' some candidates explored the interrogatory methods Tony uses whilst questioning Stella, by improvising an interrogation scene between the characters. They then discussed what might be observed and how this would affect their choices as an actor, such as vocal and physical skills.

Less successful candidates had not planned their responses and rushed the choice of techniques appropriate to the extract. Sometimes this was still not clear by the end of the response. Narrative description of the technique was often present but was rarely succinct with the intended outcome not always made clear. Candidates applied several rehearsal techniques that had the same outcome. A common error was that responses began with a rehearsal technique that then became a description of how an actor would perform the role. The result was not connecting the method with the outcome or showing an understanding of how roles are built in rehearsal by the actor. Some candidates referred to the director in their response when the questions asked for an actor. There is a cross over in use of methods, but the focus here was the actor preparing the named character.

Section B

Questions 6- 10

A03

Responses to this question were mostly successful. It was clear that candidates had been guided as to how best to structure the response and how to most effectively include AO4 material to support their own concepts for LX and SFX. Candidates selected two extracts, usually from differing parts of the play, which offered contrast in atmosphere, location and action. Successful candidates conveyed a detailed understanding of the social, historical and cultural context of the text and how this might inform their design ideas for lighting and sound. Effective responses connected their ideas to their contextual knowledge throughout their response, with all contextual information relevant to the decision-making process in the extract chosen. Similarly, candidates were keen to consider the impact of their lighting and sound ideas upon a contemporary audience. Highly successful candidates combined this with a clear understanding of how theatre adapts in the choices made by creatives in the process. Candidates who identified the type of stage they were designing for from the offset were able to build up a clear image of the stage and express how its dimensions are used by lighting and sound designers. They were able to identify parts of the stage where LX was focused or areas of the auditorium where SFX were relayed to create an impact upon an audience. The technical knowledge of some candidates is very detailed, and they confidently use terminology to explain their ideas. It is important to get a balance between the technical explanation of ideas and the intended impact they wish to convey, connected to the extracts chosen.

The use of projections was used in a creative way, such as creating a montage of images to reinforce the mood or the message of the extract. Within 'Machinal,' images of caged birds were used effectively to mirror the feelings of the Young Woman. Candidates also changed the locations of the play to contemporary settings that lent themselves more to dynamic lighting and sound design ideas. In 'As You Like It,' for example, the court was set in the cut and thrust of the business district of Wall Street in New York and the forest, a more tranquil contrast of Central Park. Lighting and sound cues were successfully linked to the action and dialogue of the extracts, indicating the length of a cue and enabling a description of the whole LX or SFX sequence. The direction of light and sound and how it works in the space is also important in creating the effect upon the audience and establishing meaning. Successful references to live theatre were interlinked with their own ideas. It was clear that candidates had engaged with these productions as an audience member, evaluating and analysing the success of the LX & SFX design ideas and linking these as inspiration to their own concepts. Some responses built upon the ideas and sort to develop them further.

Less successful responses focused on detail in one extract and less on the second. This might have been due to timing issues. It would be good to see all candidates being more selective of the contextual evidence provided for their design ideas. There are responses that begin with a prepared introduction of contextual information. A more successful approach to this is that the knowledge and understanding of context inform the ideas. The inclusion of irrelevant biographical information about the playwright means there is less time to discuss their design ideas. Some attempt was made to consider the meaning for a contemporary audience. Often this was limited to highlighting themes that might be of concern today and not relating how that theme is conveyed or emphasised in the design ideas. When candidates are designing lighting and sound, it is important to visualise the space they are designing for, with an indication of this proving helpful in imagining the concept and specific cues. Some candidates were able to describe the effect they wanted to create but were not able to explain how lighting and sound might create this. A more consistent use of subject specific terminology is needed alongside understanding of what effects lighting equipment can achieve.

AO4

This aspect of the question has improved greatly over the years. Candidates have visited, and watched digitally, a wide variety of theatrical productions over their course of study. The impact of this is evident in their understanding of how theatre is made and developed. Candidates are developing a critical approach to seeing practitioners at work and use this to inspire their own ideas and preferences. Creatives' Youtube videos explaining their concept and the ways they have achieved this has encouraged candidates to talk about decision making in a confident manner with the use of technical vocabulary. Their knowledge of how theatre is changing and blending various performance and production styles with new innovations is widening their theatrical experience and vocabulary. Often, they express how these experiences have inspired them.

Successful responses identify the production and location clearly. They explain how the LX and SFX design idea was created, evaluate its impact upon the audience and link this to their own design ideas in the extracts chosen. Some candidates responded critically to the design idea and suggested ways in which it could be developed more successfully for their own creative purposes. Less effective AO4 references tried to cover many theatre productions and as a result, the analysis and evaluation was superficial. Often, they name the design idea and link it to their own idea, missing out the critical response to the concept. Very few candidates described the production idea and did not link it to their own idea. However, there was a tendency for some candidates to list lots of productions seen but not use them as part of their critical analysis.

Section C

Question 11

Candidates are confident with this text and the structure of the question. It is evident between the pre-release date and the exam that candidates have experimented with their ideas and mostly prepared a variety of adaptable concepts. The contextual understanding of the play and extract is often sophisticated; the metatheatrical nature of the 'play within a play' and the events interpreted through Christopher's eyes informed set design and props ideas in a highly imaginative way, such as the presence of Siobhan on a podium/ rostrum visible to the audience, reminds them of Christopher's story being read by her. Candidates were keen that their creative designs reflect the way Christopher views and interprets the world as a way of informing the audience about neurodivergence. The houses of the characters conveyed how Christopher responded to the, such as the colour of the door being yellow, which is Christopher's least favourite colour, or an expressionistic interpretation of the house, with distorted and grotesquely shaped doors to convey Christopher's fear of society and his personal emotional response to the character living there. This was contrasted with a more friendly use of the colour red and the familiar setting of Mrs Alexander's house. Some candidates used the 'detective story' format to inspire how Christopher collects information and set the stage to mirror the location of a Police Incident Room. This helped the audience to see how Christopher collects and stores every detail of information meticulously. Most candidates were familiar with drawing a ground plan and clearly labelled or used a key to identify entrance and exits, audience position and placement of set in the space. Some set designs were multi set ideas that remained the same throughout the extract and others identified how the set moved and changed on their ground plan at various parts of the extract. Some chose to draw several ground plans throughout the given extract showing the points at which transitions occurred.

Successful candidates identified the Traverse Stage correctly and considered its benefits and limitations for a set designer, such as audience sight lines, the need for flexible movement of small set structures and that the space lends itself well to the representation of the location of the extract, being a street space. Less successful candidates confused a traverse stage for a thrust stage, where the audience position and relationship with the action is very different, thus making for different demands upon a set designer. Candidates selected to 'fly' in larger pieces of set, such as door frames or rostra. The use of a revolve was effectively explained to create the movement of Christopher along the road and a sense of the 'bigger journey' taking place in his life. Candidates also utilised the space at each end of the stage to construct screens on which they projected location images or the information that Christopher was gathering in his notebook. Movement of the set was used successfully to reflect the pace and energy of the extract. Reference to the ensembles' role in striking and setting items of set were also indicated, as well as which exits and entrances were used. Interactive floor covering designs were used to show Christopher's love of maths. These ideas were often inspired by the original production style of the play directed by Marianne Elliott. Successful candidates used key props to indicate character and location, mostly hand props, except Mrs Alexander, whose garden was created in more detail to convey a friendly environment. Less successful candidates stated that they wanted little or no use of set and props. These responses were self-limiting.

AO4

A variety of different live theatre experiences had informed the candidates understanding of production style and ideas. Successful candidates referred to productions where the stage shape had been important to their response to the play. This analysis showed how they understood how stage space can inform choices made by a set and props designer. The inclusion of a revolve was connected to productions seen, such as 'Hamilton.' Candidates analysed key moments when the revolve was used effectively and the impact upon the audience and then stated a cue for its use at relevant places in the extract. They explained how the set and props design idea was created, evaluated its impact upon the audience and linked this to their own design ideas in the extracts chosen. Some candidates responded critically to the design idea and suggested ways in which it could be developed more successfully for their own creative purposes. The tariff of marks for AO4 in this question is 10 marks and therefore, the length of reference and frequency of examples for this assessment objective should reflect this. Less successful candidates referred to many theatre productions but did not evaluate and analyse them from the perspective of a set and props designer and /or link them to their own design ideas.

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