



GCE AS Examiners' Report

Drama and Theatre

GCE AS

Summer 2024

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.edugas.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

The work submitted for Component One was generally of high standard, with centres encouraging diverse play selections that showcased contrasting acting and design skills. Accurate application of the mark scheme was evident, leading to appropriate ranges of marks being applied. Compliance with the May 15th submission deadline for uploading materials has improved, with many centres utilising the opportunity for early uploads this year.

However, in some centres there is a need to review working protocols to ensure that strict adherence to performance timings is upheld, with marks unable to be awarded beyond the maximum performance time. The camera should be positioned where it best supports the capture of facial and vocal expression. Furthermore, a continuous 10–15-minute extract should form the basis of performance, with candidates only choosing one discipline—either acting or a design role—for both the faithful and reinterpreted performances.

The best outcomes were found in centres where portfolios had been created within the medium that best supported the strength of the candidates, whether that be PowerPoint, written or AV presentations and included detailed integration of theory alongside the practical work, all of which was aligned closely with the assessment criteria.

Component 2

Candidates demonstrated detailed and creative approaches to set design, acting, and lighting design, reflecting practical exploration of texts. Familiarity with the question types and mark distribution was evident.

Effective responses for set design referenced colours, textures, props, and the dimensions of the set, with less successful responses offering generalised approaches that did not focus on the specific extract provided or offer justification for chosen stage type. Successful responses to character questions offered a detailed understanding of the entire extract as well as in depth illustrations of the performance choices made. Some candidates chose to explore rehearsal techniques, but this was not a requirement of the question. Other errors in the paper included rubric infringements, where the candidate had chosen prohibited extracts. Some candidates also failed to analyse and evaluate two differing live theatre elements within the required question.

Overall, examiners felt the high standard of work reflected a thorough preparation by centres, with most candidates having an evident understanding of the examination requirements. Continued adherence to question parameters and attention to detail would further enhance the quality of candidate outcomes.

Areas for improvement	Classroom resources	Brief description of resource
Understanding the Assessment Criteria	Eduqas AS Drama and Theatre Specification	Outline of all assessment requirements, including timing.
Portfolio Writing	Component 1 Overview	Resource to support portfolio creation
Performance Creation	Portal by WJEC	Varied exemplar materials
Understanding the Written Exam	Eduqas AS Drama SAMs	Exemplar exam paper
Classroom Pedagogy	CPD Courses	A range of courses run for classroom teachers.

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COMPONENT 1: PERFORMANCE WORKSHOP

Overview of the Component

Moderators reported that the work submitted was of a generally high standard. Centres are choosing an effective programme for this component by encouraging candidates to choose diverse plays that require contrasting acting and design skills, resulting in creative and dynamic work.

From most centres, moderators saw appropriate ranges of marks being awarded, linked to closer scrutiny of the mark scheme by teachers. This accurate application of the mark scheme is to be commended.

As this was the second year of uploading, fewer centres needed to be contacted to upload paperwork or missing content. All centres met the May 15th deadline, and many centres took advantage of uploading early.

Centres are asked to apply updated guidance for performance timings outlined on pg.18 of the AS specification for both performances in Component One. Teachers must not award marks once the maximum performance time has passed. The moderator will stop watching a performance after the maximum time has been reached and will only consider work viewed. When structuring work, candidates need to use the allocated time effectively; late introductions of characters or important performance choices that happen outside the time limits will not be seen. When planning performance work, centres and learners should note that work which is significantly short is unlikely to be awarded in the higher mark bands as there may not be enough evidence of development and/or engagement with the audience.

Capturing the performance to provide evidence to support teacher marks, is an important consideration for each centre. Centres are advised not to position the camera too far away from the stage as this limits the moderator's ability to see facial expressions and subtle nuances of performance and affects the audibility of vocal projection.

Please ensure for all performance work, a 10-15 min extract is studied in detail. For the reinterpretation, some candidates were referring to multiple extracts from the text. Although it is fine to be influenced by other parts of the play, the 30-70% text should come from a continuous 10-15 min extract. This should be discussed and analysed in the creative log. Candidates should not be separating their performance material from the context of the whole play for the faithful or reinterpretation. It is important to evidence understanding of the structure, themes, style, character construction and the artistic intentions of the playwright.

It is not permissible under Eduqas guidance to choose acting for the text performance and a technical role for the reinterpretation. Please inform candidates to choose one discipline, either acting or one of the design choices.

Comments on individual questions/sections

AO1 1a and 1b – Creative Process Logs

This assessment objective is integral for both performances and all candidates should submit two process logs. Some candidates chose not to submit the written work and limited their available marks for this component, despite evidencing understanding through practical work. Planning for the creative log should be introduced early in the process and checked throughout the rehearsal period to avoid candidates not meeting the deadline. Process logs do not have to be a written essay. This year, PowerPoint presentations and spoken AV presentations of between 5-10 mins were also submitted. Centres should choose a format that works for individual candidates and vary the method of submission to support diversity in their groups. No method is preferred; linking closely to the assessment criteria is all that is required to structure the work.

The AO1 assessment was mainly accurate and fairly applied by centres. All bullet points in the grade descriptors should be evident in the work and the quality of the response weighed against the mark scheme. The faithful creative log tends to be very focused on performance skills and analysis of character; this allows candidates to apply their subject terminology and knowledge of rehearsal techniques. The reinterpreted creative log can sometimes focus on group process and be descriptive rather than analytical, discussing storyline or technical decisions. This is the challenge of the reinterpreted creative log; finding a balance between discussing individual and group preparation. It is important that all candidates consider their individual contributions from an actor or designer perspective in depth. Actors should consider how they have prepared and refined their performance skills; designers should write their log focusing on their chosen skill.

The most successful candidates fully integrated theory with their role as an actor or designer and did not focus solely on group process. Less successful logs provided research notes but did not make a clear link with how theory informed their creative process. More candidates are evidencing research from multiple sources and creating detailed research notes to inform their process. It is good practice to include photographs and screen shots into the main body of the log, as when correctly labelled, this supports the work and provides evidence of process.

Some centres are awarding high marks when essential content is missing from the log; the most common omission is the discussion of the extract. To award band 5, all content from the grade descriptors must be evidenced and relevant.

Teacher comments are extremely useful when understanding how a centre has arrived at a mark. Centres used a variety of methods to add comments; some using a summative comment on the mark sheet, whilst others used comments on word or pdf to make clear links to the assessment criteria or wrote notes on the log and scanned for upload.

AO2 – Text Performance:

Candidates were prepared effectively for this assessment task with polished performances and evidence of detailed process evident in the performance and written work.

The work presented for the faithful interpretation included monologues and duologues. The selection of material for the faithful is important. The opportunity to perform a longer piece with detailed interaction is more challenging than the demands of some monologues. A suitably challenging monologue that provides scope for character development or interaction with set/props should be chosen if choosing to work alone. It is important that this should be presented as a theatre performance and not just delivered like an audition piece to camera.

Most of the texts chosen were contemporary with a naturalistic style of acting but there were also Shakespearian and Greek examples.

The text performance should be a faithful interpretation, understanding of the original performance context should inform the work produced by the candidate.

Designers were adept at applying their design skill to monologues or duologue performances; this versatility provides a solid foundation for professional practice and challenged them to develop their design skills. Lighting design is a popular choice for this component and there were examples of excellent practice demonstrating in-depth understanding of industry standard terminology and application of skills.

AO2 – Reinterpreted Performance:

Moderators reported that the work presented was of a strong standard. The pieces being created by candidates showed insight and creativity. The reinterpreted scripts must be submitted with the centre materials, with the original content clearly highlighted.

Most candidates applied their chosen practitioner/theatre company well and it was evident. Centres should be advised that candidates are not allowed to perform a monologue for the reinterpreted performance. The minimum group size is 2-5. If only one exam entry, it is important to find a non-assessed candidate to support. Being able to interact and build dramatic relationships on stage is an essential skill for an actor and working in a pair or group develops these skills effectively.

Candidates who had in-depth research were able to include appropriate rehearsal techniques to develop their work; this showed a greater understanding of the requirements of the text. Popular choices included Frantic Assembly, Artaud, Splendid and Brecht. Most candidates chose a non-naturalistic style for their reinterpretations, which encourages a creative deconstruction of the original source text and promotes exploration. Some candidates chose a TIE approach to their reinterpretation which was innovative. Designers were fully integrated in the development process and appropriate practitioners/companies were chosen to allow actors and designers creative collaboration.

When submitting recordings of immersive and promenade work, some centres are submitting multiple recordings for a group. It would be easier for the purposes of upload and moderation if the performance could be confined to one clearly labelled clip for each group. Moderators should not be expected to decide which version of the performance is best for each candidate.

AO4 – Evaluation

AO4 assessment was accurately awarded by centres using the full mark scheme. This was a strength of this cohort. Candidates demonstrated the ability to evaluate process and final performance with clear examples, subject terminology and links to practitioner techniques. When work was awarded lower bands, it was because the evaluation was imbalanced between process and final realisation, or was written in a descriptive rather than analytical writing style. Most candidates were able to write their evaluation within the 1200-1500 suggested word count. It is advisable to write in two distinct sections using the headings from pg.12 of the AS specification. Not all centres followed this format. The evaluation should be separate from the creative log and presented as a discrete piece of work.

Thank you for the work that has been carried out in centres in preparation for the AS assessment.

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COMPONENT 2: TEXT IN CONTEXT

Overview of the Component

The following assessment objectives are examined in the paper:

AO3 – demonstrate knowledge and understanding of how drama and theatre is developed and performed.

AO4 – Analyse and evaluate (their own work) and the work of others.

The elements of set design, acting and lighting design were the focus of the questions this year. The standard of work for this component continues to convey detailed and creative approaches to the text studied with evidence of practical exploration of the text throughout the course.

Candidates were familiar with the expectations of the question paper and had been prepared for the types of question, the weighting of the marks and the management of their time over the three questions. Guidance about time to be spent was also stated on the examination paper. It was clear that all candidates had fair access to the same outcomes.

All texts were covered by the cohort with some texts continuing to be more popular than others.

Comments on individual questions/sections

Question 1: Set Design

The weighting of marks for this question are in two parts:

Type of stage and context (5 marks) and design ideas that create location and atmosphere in the extract. (10 marks).

Approaches to the question

Candidates who stated the context of the given extract and its importance in design terms, established their understanding of the extract and its design potential quickly. They also identified their choice of stage type and reasons for choice succinctly. Successful candidates were able to focus closely on the given extract referring to it throughout their response. This led to perceptive and detailed answers connecting to the action of the extract rather than general and descriptive responses. Candidates are provided with bullet points to help structure and focus their response in the restricted time they have.

Candidates chose a variety of stage spaces. Where they justified their choice, it was clear they understood the impact this would make upon the choices made by a set designer. Some candidates did not explain their choice of stage which was limiting and led to confusion when explaining the layout of their set. Successful candidates selected “In the Round” because it reinforced the atmosphere e.g. claustrophobic experience created by the audience surrounding and being on top of the action (Machinal). They extended this explanation by considering the impact it would have on a set designer e.g. that large flats would be impractical due to sight line issues. Their final design idea focused on carefully chosen items of staging or props that suggested location and the atmosphere of the extract.

Where candidates kept to the focus of the question i.e. location and atmosphere, they were successful in focusing their response in a detailed and often perceptive way. Where candidates had not done this, their response lacked focus and detail, often affecting their use of the time available or the clarity of their ideas. The inclusion of information not connected to their creative ideas e.g. original performance conditions (not required in the question) took focus away from the explanation of their ideas.

Perceptive and detailed responses included reference to the colours and textures of the set design e.g. In Hedda Gabler, the use of lace curtains on the window – identifying the location of the extract but linked also with how the lace pattern reinforced the atmosphere of entrapment, as if a net. The use of props, to dress the set, was explored effectively with reference to the action of the extract e.g. the stage being full of expensive flowers contrasting with the simple flowers brought by Miss Tesman and creating an overpowering atmosphere.

Successful candidates considered the dimensions of their set to create location and atmosphere e.g. Machinal: creating a courtroom location where the judges’ bench was much taller than the actors. Made from dark wood (materials / texture), thus creating an imposing atmosphere and showing how the Young Woman was powerless to stand up for herself – being physically belittled.

Areas for improvement:

- Focus closely on the given extract to avoid generic responses.
- Use the bullet points.
- Use subject specific terminology.

Question 2: Acting

A character from the extract was selected by the examiner.

Focus of the question: Character motivation, vocal and physical skills, and character interaction. (25 marks).

Approaches to the question

Responses to this question were confident and displayed a clear knowledge and understanding of the given character. Most candidates were able to focus this analysis on the given extract and link their points to key moments throughout the extract. The bullet points identified the focus of the question to be: Character motivation, vocal and physical skills, and character interaction. The first two bullet points were answered well, but often the final one was not explored fully or at all. The question asked, “how you would perform the role” and therefore did not require detail about what rehearsal processes might be undertaken. AO4 is not required in the response for this question.

Perceptive and detailed responses covered the whole extract, including key changes in character motivation and interaction. Candidates illustrated this with a variety of vocal and physical skills. e.g. Trojan Women – Andromache displays her motherly love and intention to comfort her son by kneeling close to Astyanax and kissing his forehead. Subject specific terminology was used confidently. Some physical skills included: proxemics, facial expression, eye contact, physical tension, and stillness. e.g. Machinal: “Young Woman remains static but physically crumples as if she is fighting against the weight of the world. Her head drops forward, but she still defies the Judge with a stare.” Vocal skills included: tone, volume, pace, register, and silence, which linked effectively with the motivation of the character and specific lines from the extract.

Less effective responses concentrated on one or two of the bullet points and omitted the other. E.g. Vocal and physical skills, but not connected in detail with the character’s motivation at key moments. There was some limited coverage of the extract which limited discussion of the character motivation.

Areas for improvement

- Include all the bullet points in the response.
- Cover the whole extract.
- Avoid focusing on acting elements if not asked for in the question e.g. rehearsal techniques.

Question 3:

AO3 & AO4 equal weighting of marks.

Two extracts to be selected by the candidate. The extract used in questions 1 & 2 should not be selected by the candidate.

Lighting design element.

Focus: Original production conditions, chosen production style, type of lighting (including colour and intensity) and impact upon the audience.

Approaches to the question

Some candidates infringed the rubric of the question by selecting the extract used for question 1 and 2. It states as part of the question paper that this is not allowed, and as such incurred a penalty for these candidates. Some candidates were vague with exactly which part of the text they were selecting as their extracts. Pages in the text must be identified and the start and end of the extract stated clearly.

Some candidates did not refer to two separate examples of live theatre seen during the course. Consequently, they were not able to access all the allocated marks for this Assessment Objective.

AO3

Perceptive and mature responses focused on the lighting aspects of the original production conditions and conveyed a sophisticated knowledge of the first production of the play alongside relevant context. Sophisticated understanding of the production style was established where particular features of lighting choices were linked to the style. E.g. Expressionism often explores feelings / emotions and might use colour and abstract/ dreamlike / nightmare lighting design ideas. Highly creative solutions were evident in the selection of different lighting cues connected to the extracts chosen. Often the chosen extracts contrasted e.g. in mood or atmosphere, production style, location significantly enough for a wider range of lighting effects to be used. Successful candidates used various types of lighting effect e.g. projections, specific lanterns, gobos, rhythmic lighting changes, various directions of light, the creation of shadows, colour etc. The length of lighting cues was linked to specific dialogue and conveyed a perceptive connection between their ideas and the text. This was qualified throughout by the intended impact their ideas would have on the audience and why.

Less effective responses included a pre-prepared paragraph about all of the aspects of the original production conditions and context of the play, referring to all elements and not focusing the response on lighting design or relevant context. Some responses omitted reference to this aspect entirely. When production style was stated, it was not explained and as a result often the production style was contradicted by some of the lighting design choices e.g. naturalism stated and used to create the Forest of Arden (As You Like It) but later design choices used follow spots or intensity and colour choicest that were highly abstract. The use of a variety of lighting states throughout the extract was limited and did not reflect an understanding of how lighting design can create impact upon the audience.

AO4

Perceptive and detailed evaluation of live theatre was evident from some candidates. They had carefully selected the productions most appropriate for analysis and that linked to their own lighting design ideas. These candidates had engaged in each performance from the perspective of a lighting designer. They analysed how effects were created e.g. references to type of light specific cues, colour and intensity, and the impact it had upon them as an audience member. Links to their own ideas were detailed. Candidates who were confident with the use of subject specific terminology were able to describe their ideas more succinctly.

Some candidates needed to refine the selection of live theatre examples they used. Those who wrote about 4 examples often did so in little detail and lacked evaluation and analysis in their response. Some links made to their own ideas were superficial. They might have been more selective and written about 2 productions in a lot more depth. This would include evaluating how the lighting effects they observed worked and their impact on the audience. Often links to their own ideas for lighting were inferred and needed to be more explicit. Further use of subject specific terminology needs to be used.

Areas for improvement

- Explore a variety of LX design ideas e.g. different lighting states throughout each extract and link to cues in the text.
- Make clear the extract details – do not use the extract given for Question 1 & 2.
- Choose two live theatre productions.
- Evaluate and analyse the production from the perspective of a LX Designer.

Summary

- Be aware that rubric infringement limits the access a candidate has to the marks available.
- Use the bullet points, given as part of the question, to guide the focus and structure of the responses.
- Practice the use of subject specific terminology.
- Practice the selection of extracts used for each element that might be on the exam , its appropriate length (take the length of the given extract as a useful guide) and how to identify it.

Supporting you

Useful contacts and links

Our friendly subject team is on hand to support you between 8.30am and 5.00pm, Monday to Friday.

Tel: 02920 404299

Email: drama@edugas.co.uk

Qualification webpage: [AS and A Level Drama | Edugas](#)

See other useful contacts here: [Useful Contacts | Edugas](#)

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