



---

# **GCE A LEVEL EXAMINERS' REPORTS**

---

## **DRAMA AND THEATRE A LEVEL**

**SUMMER 2019**

Grade boundary information for this subject is available on the WJEC public website at:  
<https://www.wjecservices.co.uk/MarkToUMS/default.aspx?!=en>

### **Online Results Analysis**

WJEC provides information to examination centres via the WJEC secure website. This is restricted to centre staff only. Access is granted to centre staff by the Examinations Officer at the centre.

### **Annual Statistical Report**

The annual Statistical Report (issued in the second half of the Autumn Term) gives overall outcomes of all examinations administered by WJEC.

<b>Component</b>	<b>Page</b>
Component 1: Theatre Workshop	1
Component 2: Text in Action	4
Component 3: Text in Performance	6

## **DRAMA AND THEATRE**

### **GCE A LEVEL**

**Summer 2019**

#### **COMPONENT 1: THEATRE WORKSHOP**

##### **General Comments**

A successful year for this component.

Candidates are being well prepared and teachers continue to respond effectively in their delivery of the specification. The work being produced is generally of a high standard with original pieces of theatre created by candidates. Many centres are challenging their candidates to experiment widely with an exciting array of theatrical forms and conventions.

There was a wide variety of practitioners/theatre companies selected for the Reinterpretation work. Brecht, Berkoff and Artaud are still the main three practitioners chosen with Stanislavski and the more naturalistic practitioners appearing less. Frantic Assembly and Kneehigh were the most popular theatre companies selected. There were more examples of work influenced by more contemporary theatre artists this year with Katie Mitchell selected by many centres.

Centres are reminded that when selecting a practitioner/company that is less well-known, teachers should liaise with the Subject Officer to confirm the selection is an appropriate one. Good practice is to include, with your moderation materials, information on which elements of the practitioner/company the learners have focused on. Some centres do this even with the well-established practitioners in order to focus the moderator on the selected techniques. It is important that moderators can clearly identify the theatre conventions associated with the chosen practitioner/theatre company. If learners have selected less obvious elements, then accompanying notes outlining the intentions are invaluable. Of course these will be referenced in the Creative Logs but centres are encouraged to adopt this as effective practice.

##### **ADMINISTRATION**

Generally, administration is excellent. There are areas that some centres still need to give attention. Most centres are sending the appropriate paperwork. There was an increase this year in the number of centres where the re-interpretation scripts were not sent and moderators had to contact centres for these to be forwarded.

A reminder that the moderators need to receive:

- (i) Centre Declaration of Suitability form;
- (ii) Programme Pro-forma with DVD/memory stick references;
- (iii) Scripts highlighting the use of original text;
- (iv) Completed individual mark sheets with timing penalties addressed at centre.

Candidate identification on the work is imperative. Many centres also send photographs of the candidates, often group by group, which assists the process greatly. Some centres also indicate the sampled candidates on the Programme Pro-forma. This was very helpful and much appreciated.

Centres sending work that is password protected must ensure that a password is provided. If the password or access details are sent in a separate envelope, please ensure that this is noted with the moderation materials. There were several instances where moderators had to contact centres to access this information. There were also instances where the process to access the work was not straight forward. Centres are asked to check their disks/memory sticks before posting. There were several instances where moderators could not access the work of some groups due to corrupt disks. Most centres are very good at responding quickly to a moderator's request for another copy of the work to be forwarded. Centres are also reminded to label their DVDs, memory sticks with the centre number. Often these are loosely placed into the envelope or package unlabelled or forwarded under separate cover with no identification.

## **Comments on individual questions/sections**

### **Creative Log**

These are becoming more and more focused. The format and content continues to improve and the layout was generally excellent across many centres. The more successful logs consolidate ideas and make strong connections between dramatic theory and practice using sophisticated and relevant dramatic terminology. Supporting material was submitted as appendices much more effectively. Many candidates are now incorporating photographs and screen shots of their appendices into the main body of their logs which, if labelled correctly, supported their work. Once again, centres are reminded that the work can be annotated by the teacher in order to help the moderator know where and why marks were awarded. Where teachers have annotated the Creative Logs in relation to the Assessment Objectives, the moderation process is generally a smooth one.

A reminder that printed out web research should be avoided especially pages of 'research' on practitioners and theatre companies that have not been selected. These are irrelevant. Also, learners should not submit copies of the same 'notes'. It is fully appreciated that they are working as part of a group but their logs and appendices need to be individual responses.

It is pleasing that the 'scrapbook' style logs are becoming less and less prevalent but, where centres continue to adopt this style of Creative Log, it is important that teachers are highlighting the content they have assessed. A reminder that candidates must refrain from incorporating materials that are not secured or, if that is impossible, each element must be labelled.

It is also important that each page of the written work, if not fixed together, has the candidate's name on every page. There were instances where the work submitted had no name or candidate number on any of the creative logs and the mark-sheets were collated together making the task of candidate identification difficult for moderators.

### **Re-interpretation/ Performance**

There was some exceptional work again this year. There were some pieces of reinterpretation that were simply outstanding. The more successful work continues to be where the practitioner or theatre company has been applied throughout the whole process. Once again, the less successful relied on naturalistic scenes with only touches of the selected techniques applied occasionally. A full application of the selected conventions is expected and there must be clear evidence of the specific theatrical influences. There must be a correlation between the Creative Log and the work produced. Moderators look for the methodology outlined in the logs in the practical work.

It is important that centres focus on the requirement to apply a practitioner or a theatre company. Genres and styles need to be avoided. Likewise, playwrights do not always constitute a practitioner. Selecting Surrealism, for example, whilst potentially leading to exciting work, does not comply with the specification. Centres are reminded that, if in doubt, please contact the Subject Officer to discuss the proposed practitioners/theatre companies.

Most learners are successfully selecting 30-70% of the original text and reworking this into sometimes extraordinary and original pieces of theatre. Most centres kept to the timings of the pieces and where timing issues arose, the vast majority penalised at assessment stage.

Many centres continue to work hard in preparing the performance space using lighting, sound, set, costume and props to facilitate the artistic intentions of the learner's work. These technical and design elements are being used superbly to establish the selected practitioner or theatre company. This is particularly important when choosing a practitioner such as Katie Mitchell especially if the Creative Logs have stated they will be experimenting with technical aspects. Whilst candidates are not marked on their technical production values, creating an interesting lighting and sound plot, even the most basic, greatly assists them to create atmosphere.

Moderators are reporting that it is often a pleasure to moderate the re-interpretation work. The content is often exciting and the skills being demonstrated are impressive. The more successful learners have ownership of their work and this reflects strong classroom experiences.

### Summary of key points

- Centres are reminded of the requirement to send the scripts of their re-interpreted pieces to the moderator with the original dialogue from the selected extract highlighted
- Centres must stipulate a specific practitioner or theatre company, rather than a theatrical style
- The chosen practitioner or theatre company's theatrical aims should be implemented into the practical work
- Centres are reminded of the key words that form the basis of the Creative Logs; **research** (of the selected extract and practitioner/theatre company), **creation**, **development** and **refinement** of work during the rehearsal process.

## **DRAMA AND THEATRE**

### **GCE A LEVEL**

**Summer 2019**

### **COMPONENT 2: TEXT IN ACTION**

#### **General Comments**

Most centres completed the paperwork correctly prior to the arrival of the examiner – it is important that there is a running order and ideally photographs of the candidates to aid identification. The candidates must also clearly identify themselves to camera prior to the performances.

When sending the recording of the practical work to WJEC, please remember to label your disks and USB sticks with your centre numbers. The quality of recording is important in case marks need to be reviewed at a later date. For this reason too, please position the camera in close proximity to the examiner.

Please make sure the candidates' name, number and centre number are on the individual process and evaluation reports that are sent to the examiner.

#### **Comments on individual questions/sections**

##### **Text**

Text performances this year included a huge range of texts and authors which is very pleasing. They included Mike Bartlett, Dennis Kelly, Laura Wade, Lucy Prebble, Sarah Kane, Ella Hickson and Sophie Wu as well some of the more traditional choices such as Ibsen, Williams, Moliere and Shakespeare. Examiners noted that they had seen some outstanding work in many centres. There was some imaginative staging including site specific, promenade, traverse and in-the-round pieces. This is to be encouraged to enable the candidates to experience a different theatrical experience for both of their pieces.

Please remember the text pieces are associated with a performance style NOT a practitioner. Stanislavski and Brecht are not performance styles but instead it would be suggested to use Naturalistic or Epic for example.

##### **Devised**

There were some highly imaginative and very creative devised pieces this year, some of which were performed to an impeccably high standard. The most popular choices of the stimuli were Skin Deep and the Elie Wiesel injustice quote but one memorable piece included the characters of Van Gogh's Potato Eaters coming to life.

Practitioners and Theatre Companies were even more varied this year and included Gecko, Mischief, Frantic Assembly, Katie Mitchell, Complicité, Pina Bausch as well some of the more established choices such as Brecht and Artaud. Please remember that there must be clear influence of the practitioner throughout the piece. It is not enough to perform a piece naturalistically and then adding some Frantic Assembly movements to satisfy the requirement, likewise Artaud should not only be defined by minimal dialogue and an abundance of screaming.

Please ensure that candidates have had the opportunity to have a technical rehearsal before the examination if they are using anything that may be a hazard. Likewise use of props such as food can provide performance challenges if they have not been rehearsed beforehand.

### **Process and Evaluation Reports**

The best reports were those that showed a good understanding (with research) of the chosen practitioner / theatre company and performance styles. Most centres heeded the advice to keep the word count to between 2500 and 3000 words but surprisingly some centres are still not advising candidates to write in three clear sections. It is perfectly acceptable to use sub-headings in each section in order to encourage the candidates to answer the appropriate criteria for each section.

It is usually the first and last section where the candidates fail to achieve the highest marks. In the first section there needs to be references to how the stimulus relates to both pieces with evidence of research of the style and practitioner/theatre company. Sometimes candidates didn't show any real knowledge of the chosen style nor did they relate it in any way to their text piece. In the final evaluation section, many candidates didn't relate their experience of how their pieces differed in style.

### **Summary of key points**

- Please provide a programme of the running order ideally with candidate photographs or costume descriptions
- Please remember to heed the time limit for the performances
- Ensure the chosen practitioner/theatre company and style influence the entire performance
- Remember the stimulus applies to both text and devised pieces
- Ensure candidates using anything which may be hazardous have the opportunity to have a technical rehearsal beforehand
- In the Process and Evaluation Report evaluate the experience of performing in two different styles.

## DRAMA AND THEATRE

### GCE A LEVEL

Summer 2019

### COMPONENT 3: TEXT IN PERFORMANCES

#### General Comments

The standard of work for this component conveyed a highly creative approach to the texts studied. Teachers had engaged with the varying interpretations of the texts which had been confidently taken up by the candidates. All the texts offered for section A and B continue to be selected by centres. Evidence of more informed expectations of this component was clear. The opportunities to engage with CPD and access to exemplar work had supported this. There were fewer incidences of candidates misreading or misunderstanding the questions. Candidates were, on the whole, able to manage their time successfully across all the sections. It should be remembered that section A (both questions) only focuses on AO3 and does not require reference to live theatre productions. Unlike section B and C which require answers to consider AO3 and AO4. Candidates had responded very well to Section C. The format of: a cue sheet for lighting and sound, the identification of type of stage, then justification of their ideas, had helped to scaffold the response and candidates' ideas were connected clearly to the action of the scene and detailed.

#### Comments on individual questions/sections

##### Section A

- (a) The responses to this question produced some detailed and creative responses. Successful candidates took the opportunity to really focus in on the specific detail of hair and make-up, describing how an overall effect would be created e.g. the use and application of colour and texture to shape a face or the overall shape of the hairstyle. Candidates made use of: accessories, hair pieces, hair colour and body make-up, to 'paint' a picture of the character from the scene. Subject specific terminology was used confidently. Some candidates considered the effects of lights on make-up to create effects or to justify compensation for strong stage lights in their choice of colour. Candidates who identified their production style, connected this well to their ideas e.g. Expressionistic style for *Machinal* evident in exaggerated facial expressions drawn upon the face or the use of make-up to create a 'mask' with fixed expression of anguish for Cassandra in *The Trojan Women*. Candidates who had chosen a more naturalistic style had described facial hair and how features in the face might be enhanced with make-up to subtly convey meaning e.g. Loevborg, in *Hedda Gabler*, having dark circles under his eyes to convey his struggles with alcohol. Successful candidates also described how age, status, period and gender might be conveyed through hair and make-up e.g. Mae, in *Cat on a Hot Tin Roof*, having a 1950s hairstyle. The volume of a bouffant style but a little messy and deflated from playing with her children in the heat and humidity of the Mississippi day. Successful candidates referenced key moments from the given scene in their response making the answer pertinent to the action of the scene and the emotional state of the chosen character.

Less successful responses included costume ideas which the question did not ask for. This often led to less detail from the scene and a general communication of character.



Hair and make-up ideas lacked detail or appeared tagged onto the costume ideas. Knowledge about character was general and did not explicitly link to the chosen scene. If a 'natural' look was chosen candidates did not express how this could be achieved using hair and make-up.

- (b) Successful candidates used subject specific terminology to express their ideas succinctly. Physical skills of facial expression, gesture, posture and eye contact were used to show the character motivation and reaction to other characters both with dialogue and in moments of silence. Candidates had thought creatively about the positioning of candidates within the performance space. E.g. *The Trojan Women* the position and movement of the chorus as a whole unit across the stage or how they might be used to protect Hecuba from the "frenzied" Cassandra. Similarly in *Cat on a Hot Tin Roof*, how the Reverend Tooker might be positioned upstage almost hugging the wall to keep out of the tension between the other characters or he returns to the safety of this position once he has been dismissed/ ignored by Big Mama.

Successful candidates referred to most of the characters in the scene to give a clear view of the interactions in the scene. The number of characters was not prescribed in the question but a director considers all the action in a scene. Sufficient focus on characters to show the dynamics between them was successfully conveyed by some candidates. E.g. *Machinal* candidates also focused on the voices in the scene as well as Mother and Young Woman in detail. Whilst others acknowledged their presence in terms of the Young Woman and Mothers' reaction to their voices. Both responses conveyed an understanding of the role of the director within the scene. Reference to key moments of dialogue and stage directions were used effectively to justify their ideas. These candidates also acknowledged that character motivation can change in response to what others say and do and showed this development throughout the scene.

Less successful answers did not cover enough of the scene to show the change in motivation and how the tension of the scene can be conveyed physically, vocally and in the use of the performance space. E.g. *Hedda Gabler* - Loevborg is finally persuaded to take a drink by Hedda at the end of the scene. This is a culmination of the pressure been put upon him by Hedda throughout the scene and his reaction to it. Some candidates interpreted the given scene more as an actor, and as a result focused mainly on the interpretation of one role in the scene and little about the interactions of the characters. Ideas about the characters in the scene need to be justified in terms of its context and the action and dialogue within it. Less successful responses focused on rehearsal techniques. They were often a description of generic exercises, which did not inform about motivation or interaction for the specific scene. Often such answers were taken up with description and did not allow time for analysis of the scene.

## Section B

The question asked candidates to discuss their creative choices as a set designer (set and props) for two key extracts to enhance the relevance to a contemporary audience. They were also required to refer to any live productions that might have influenced their ideas. Successful candidates responded to this question in highly creative ways. They connected their ideas to theme, style and context throughout their response. Some chose to update their productions to emphasise current concerns about technology (*Love and Information*) whilst others kept to the period of the play but reinforced the themes that are still important in 2019 e.g. Police corruption (*Accidental Death of an Anarchist*).

Set ideas were described in detail remembering to consider the use of levels, proportion/size, shape of stage and relationship with the audience. Inventive use of floor coverings and how the set was dressed were relevant to the scenes chosen. The use of projections to create images on the set showing location or reinforcing themes were widely used especially in plays where their structure is such that there are a lot of short scenes or two juxtaposed alongside each other (*Chimerica* and *Love and information*). Such candidates had chosen two concurrent scenes/extracts to describe how the transition could be achieved and how further meaning was communicated by this. Candidates had thought creatively about the performance space with examples of site specific sets to create an immersive style of performance, often suggesting how the audience members access different responses from seeing scenes at different times and locations. Reference to the influence of live theatre was detailed and evaluative. Successful candidates analysed influences and then developed them further to fit their own interpretation of their extracts.

Less successful candidates described a generic set and did not connect it to the themes and style of the play or the two extracts required in the question. Where such things as props might change e.g. *Accidental Death of an Anarchist* has two very similar sets yet the use of props varies in all the scenes. A Black Box Set was used to create a minimalist style of design however it needs further description. This type of space can be used in many configurations, and audience can be placed anywhere. The position of the audience is important especially in such plays as *Accidental Death of an Anarchist* where the metatheatrical style and relationship with the audience is key. In an attempt to be relevant to a contemporary audience, some ideas were developed which seemed incongruous to the action of a scene. Contemporary relevance does not mean having to change it, but can also be to just emphasise the themes relevant today. Reference to live productions occasionally covered only one production. This assessment objective carries 20 marks in this section. Some links made were not in connection to set design (set and props) but other aspects of theatre production e.g. lights and sound.

## Section C

Successful candidates were confident with how lighting and sound could be used to create atmosphere, mood and location. They justified the type of stage and referred to it in relation to how they used lighting and sound within the space. They were confident in the use of different types of light, colour and intensity to create impact upon the audience. At specific moments, colour was used symbolically to show Christopher's fear. The combination of lighting and sound together throughout the scene showed a clear understanding of how effects can be layered. Successful candidates showed how they could manipulate sound to create impact and draw the audience into the world and experience of Christopher. Some responses described an immersive experience for the audience using head phones or placement of speakers in the audience to intensify the impact of the experience. Candidates who did this, also acknowledged how the story is told from Christopher's point of view, and connected their ideas to the context of the scene and the whole play. Successful candidates connected their cues to specific dialogue in the scene. This was assisted by the use of the cue sheet which candidates found helpful to break down the steps of the task. Successful candidates used this to envisage the development of mood through the scene and some used silence at particular points very effectively to show Christopher moving in and out of reality. In their justification of the cues some candidates referred to the cue by number which minimised having to describe the effect again and made for a more purposeful justification of the idea. References to live theatre productions were purposeful and connected to lighting and sound ideas. Often candidates evaluated the influence and developed the ideas further to fit the context of the extract given.

Less successful candidates had been able to explore the use of cues on the cue sheet, but had not developed the justification of their ideas within the context of the scene or the whole

play. Ideas for lighting and sound did not always combine and only connected to a few moments of dialogue or action in the scene. Candidates did not state the type of stage or justify their choice. The purpose of this had been to assist in visualising the space where the action takes place and where lights and sound might be directed/ placed. Some candidates did not refer to two or more live theatre productions. Where they did this, connections were made with their ideas but they often lacked evaluation of the production from the perspective of a lighting and sound designer. AO4 carries 10 marks in this section.

### **Summary of key points**

- In the justification of ideas candidates should refer to the context of the scene and whole play
- AO3 is the only focus for Section A. There is no need to consider live theatre
- The weighting of AO4 varies. Section B = 20 marks and section C =10 marks
- At least two live theatre productions need to be referenced for AO4.



WJEC  
245 Western Avenue  
Cardiff CF5 2YX  
Tel No 029 2026 5000  
Fax 029 2057 5994  
E-mail: [exams@wjec.co.uk](mailto:exams@wjec.co.uk)  
website: [www.wjec.co.uk](http://www.wjec.co.uk)