GCSE Examiners' Report

Drama

GCSE

Summer 2026

© WJEC CBAC Ltd.2026



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 unitised specifications grade boundaries are expressed on a Uniform Mark Scale (UMS). UMS grade boundaries remain the same every year as the range of UMS mark percentages allocated to a particular grade does not change. UMS grade boundaries are published at overall subject and component level. 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.***

© WJEC CBAC Ltd.2026

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

© WJEC CBAC Ltd.2026

Contents

	Page
Executive summary	5
Component 1	6
Component 2	10
Component 3	14
Supporting you – useful contacts and links	20

© WJEC CBAC Ltd.2026

Executive summary

Component 1: Devising Theatre

AO1
As in previous years Portfolios (A01) were generally of good quality when centres followed the specification and assessment objectives. The most successful candidates addressed all three required sections systematically, producing well-balanced and focused work. However, some centres did not adhere to the specified structure, resulting in diluted submissions that were harder to assess. Common issues included the inclusion of irrelevant or extraneous material, unclear organisation, and exceeding the word count. Centres are reminded that penalties must be applied as outlined in the specification.

AO2
Performances (A02) were generally strong, with examiners recording numerous examples of outstanding practice. High-achieving candidates showed a clear understanding of their chosen practitioner, with effective design candidates working collaboratively with actors throughout rehearsals. Candidates who achieved lower outcomes often failed to demonstrate a consistent application of style, with most centres acknowledging this when marks were awarded.

AO4
Moderators commented that evaluations (A04) continue to show a greater disparity in attainment. Strong candidates focused on individual performance or design, using meaningful examples from the final performance to analyse and evaluate their own contribution. They avoided discussing the rehearsal process and maintained a focus on their aims, objectives, and use of practitioner and stimulus. Weaker evaluations often strayed into group work or lacked connection to initial intentions.

Component 2: Performing from a Text

Overall, performances were of a very good standard, with some examiners witnessing outstanding performance and design work. Where centres selected extracts that suited the individual strengths of each candidate, all were able to perform to their potential. However, in some cases, every candidate was given the same scene or play, which may not support individual attainment or attributes. Centres should consider a more tailored approach to extract selection, with a more individualised approach ensuring that varying abilities can still showcase their talents and achieve positively.

© WJEC CBAC Ltd.2026

DRAMA

GCSE

Summer 2026

COMPONENT ONE
DEVISING THEATRE

Overview of the Component

Non-exam assessment: Internally assessed, externally moderated. 60 marks.
Component 1 is 40% of the qualification.

It consists of 3 assessment objectives:

- A01 (20%)- Create and develop ideas to communicate meaning for theatrical performance
- A02 (10%)- Apply theatrical skills to realise artistic intentions in live performance
- A04 (10%)- Analyse and evaluate their own work and the work of others.

Learners are required to devise a piece of original theatre in response to a stimulus, using either the techniques of an influential theatre practitioner or the characteristics of a genre of drama.

Moderators felt Component 1 was generally well-handled by many centres, with most candidates demonstrating ownership of their work and evidently enjoying the opportunity to explore issues and topics which are relevant to them.

The choice of stimuli, whilst being open to interpretation, provided opportunities for candidates to creatively investigate a wide range of areas and topics. Moderators noted the continued growing trend in the number of centres/candidates choosing the design option for this component, with numerous examples of exceptional design work.

Moderators noted that a significant number of centres had used out of date forms and this resulted in delays with the moderation process. Centres should check the Eduqas GCSE Drama website for up-to-date information.

AO1: Create and develop ideas to communicate meaning for theatrical performance

As in previous years, moderators noted that those candidates, whose work was accurately placed in Band 5, demonstrated highly imaginative ideas in response to their chosen stimuli and how the initial idea was developed and researched. There was also an excellent range of relevant techniques selected to demonstrate their understanding of their chosen practitioner/style. As in previous years, centres continue to experiment with a range of different practitioners/styles and the most effective work tangibly incorporated practitioner/ style understanding within the final performance, evidencing how selected methods can be incorporated into a successful devised performance**.**

© WJEC CBAC Ltd.2026

The very best work detailed the candidate's highly relevant contribution to the creation and development, highlighting a sophisticated understanding of why specific performance ideas had been developed, amended and refined. However, moderators noted there were instances where the work of some candidates did not display the depth of understanding to merit the marks awarded. Several centres are still doing mood board style portfolios, which run the risk of not focusing on the specific content required, as well as making the wordcount ambiguous.

As in previous years, stage 2 remains the weakest, with candidates not clearly addressing how ideas from the chosen practitioner/genre had been incorporated into the piece to communicate meaning. Whilst the understanding was often apparent in the realisation of the piece, candidates were unable to analyse and evaluate why a specific technique had been chosen or the intended impact they were seeking within the final performance. Often coverage of how the practitioner was applied appeared as a list of techniques rather than how they had incorporated into the rehearsal process.

Frequently the design portfolios did not focus on the design, rather discussing plot or characters, and in these instances, were often overmarked as they did not fulfil the AO criteria. Conversely several performance candidates using Brecht referenced a lot of Brechtian staging devices as opposed to focusing on Brechtian performance techniques. As in previous years, a minority of centres used a combination of two practitioners/styles. This approach diluted the quality and understanding of the work across each of the three elements and had a significant impact on AO1.

Several moderators also commented on work exceeding the stipulated word count of 900 words. Please note that work exceeding the word limit by over 100 words must have a penalty applied, as outlined in the specification. Centres are also reminded that illustrative material should be included within the portfolio.

AO2: Apply theatrical skills to realise artistic intentions in live performance

Moderators noted that, like in previous years, this element produced some exceptional work. The very best work, demonstrated by both performance and design candidates alike, showed a sophisticated understanding of theatrical techniques, tangibly evidenced within the final performance. This work demonstrated an excellent interpretation of the role/design using highly relevant aspects of the practitioner/ style to successfully realise artistic intentions.

Although moderators witnessed some exceptional work using practitioners such as Berkoff and Paper Birds, the work of certain practitioners such as Emma Rice lacked both the understanding and the facilities to produce a piece of work that truly reflected the style. As in previous years, the work involving some practitioners tended to focus on one specific aspect of the style.

In some highly successful instances of Musical Theatre, for example, candidates had carefully crafted song, movement and dialogue into a devised performance, therefore fulfilling all of the assessment criteria. However, in other less successful instances of the same style, work consisted of a random selection of songs and dances, displaying little relevance to the chosen stimuli and the final performance lacking shape and structure. Centres should also note that the chosen style must allow candidates to access all the assessment criteria. Physical Theatre for example, must include dialogue and should not be comprised solely of movement. Candidates who play masked or mute characters need to find opportunities to display facial expressions and vocal skills respectively.

© WJEC CBAC Ltd.2026

Moderators also commented that some performances, in the style of horror or comedy, were less successful because they lacked a coherent performance skill.

This series included several centres that had produced some very sophisticated design work, with the number of candidates choosing sound design increasing. The very best candidates were not just creating playlists but creating their own sounds and underscores for challenging practitioners such as Artaud. Centres are reminded to check the specification for the minimum requirements for design candidates, with examiners reporting that several costume candidates did not include hair and make-up as part of their design. Centres are also reminded that performance candidates must adhere to the specified timings outlined in the specification.

AO4: Analyse and evaluate their own work and the work of others

As in previous years the evaluations tended to be more polarised in the level of attainment. The successful work clearly focused on the evaluation and analysis of performance/design skills, highlighting successful and unsuccessful elements of the piece, role/design interpretation and individual contribution to the work as a whole. This work concentrated wholly on their individual performance as opposed to the group. It focused on the final performance and did not veer back into the rehearsal process. Clear and meaningful examples from the final performance were referenced to illustrate key points. The weakest section for many candidates tended to be how their individual performance contributed to fulfilling their initial aims and objectives by referring to the practitioner and stimulus. Candidates need to analysis and evaluation where, in the final performance, they were responsible for highlighting the stimulus and practitioner. As in previous years, a significant percentage of candidates focused on the rehearsal process as opposed to the final performance. Centres are reminded that candidates are allowed to use two sides of A4 bullet points, however, these should be uploaded with the rest of the work for any selected candidates. Moderators noted that a significant number of centres failed to upload them.

Key points

Both written and practical work was fairly assessed in most centres. The assessment was generally accurate regarding the rank order of candidates, but a minority of centres were generous with their marks when the work did not reflect the assessment band(s). Teachers are encouraged to be objective when assessing the work and be realistic in terms of candidate attainment by not awarding band 5 marks for band 4 work. Centres are reminded the best candidate in a particular cohort may not be a full-mark candidate when the assessment criteria are applied.

Although teacher comments are not required on the candidate's work moderators noted where these were included, they proved helpful indicating where and why marks had been awarded.

Centres must ensure they are using the EDUQAS stimuli, assessment criteria and forms. A minority of centres used the WJEC unit 1 stimuli, assessment criteria and forms.

Moderators noted the most time-consuming element of the moderation process involved inaccurate uploading of required documentation. Centres are reminded to check that every element of the sample is included.

© WJEC CBAC Ltd.2026

Centres need to check the positioning of the camera to ensure the performance is being recorded with optimal effectiveness. Moderators noted that cameras positioned at a distance from the performance, with audience obscuring the view etc did make the moderation process more difficult.

Candidate introductions are still proving problematic. Centres need to ensure that moderators can identify each candidate and which role they are performing

© WJEC CBAC Ltd.2026

DRAMA

GCSE

Summer 2026

COMPONENT TWO
PERFORMING FROM A TEXT

Overview of the Component

Non-exam assessment: externally assessed by a visiting examiner.
Component 2 is 20% of the qualification.

It consists of 1 assessment objective:
- A02 (20%)- Apply theatrical skills to realise artistic intentions in live performance

Learners are required to participate in a performance based on the study of two significant, ten-minute extracts from a text, which has been performed professionally and/or written for theatrical performance.

An examiner marks the performance which focuses on three elements:
- Application of performance/design skills to realise artistic intentions
- Interpretation and engagement to realise artistic intentions
- Contribution to the performance to realise artistic intentions

As in previous years, examiners reported that the work was generally of a very good standard, with some examiners privileged to experience some outstanding performances and design. It was also noted that a growing trend with a significant number of centres chosen work by contemporary playwrights. These plays often produced work that many candidates across the ability range were able to identify with.

Examiners noted that there was also some excellent exploration of the work of more traditional playwrights, such as Pinter's "The Dumb Waiter".

Centres that were the most successful explored subtext and control of dialogue to show expert understanding of character and relationship. Comedies such as Dear Octopus and Teechers demonstrated an excellent understanding of performing comic characters, along with comic timing.

Undoubtedly the best work across the ability range in both performance and design indicated that candidates had been given sufficient preparation time to rehearse and refine their work, which resulted in polished, final performances.

Many candidates produced Artistic Intentions which highlighted specific areas as opposed to a general overview. Many design candidates supplemented their artistic intentions with additional material *for example* lighting/sound cue sheets, set designs etc.

Although several warnings and reminders have been issued, examiners continue to note that a significant number of candidates had been given texts which clashed with their Component 3 texts. Centres are reminded that this will incur a -5 penalty.

© WJEC CBAC Ltd.2026

Comments on individual questions/sections

Pre-visit

Centres were generally prompt at responding to communication and securing performance dates.

The majority of centres sent Artistic intention forms, Proformas and approval forms in good time before the exam. Some needed reminding to have design candidates sign the AI forms.

Visits

All centres were welcoming and the vast majority were very well organised, with the exam in a dedicated space with no interruption. The majority of centres had an audience, usually consisting of the drama class, though some centres (with very confident performers and high levels of organisation) had invited larger audiences of year tens, year nine and some sixth form that created a real sense of event out of the day.

A few centres moved extremely slowly through the exam pieces with large and unnecessary gaps between groups.

Post-visit

About 80% of centres uploaded within the two-week window to Surpass. Most appreciated a confirmation email once the material had been checked, with any issues being dealt with very fast by centres.

Performance

The standard of work across the majority of centres was good to very good, with some exceptional centres. A small number of centres presented less effective work. The best centres had clearly considered their text selection and casting extremely carefully, resulting in performances where candidates were fully challenged within their ability range.

The range of texts was varied. Perpetually popular texts included *Blood Brothers, Shakers, Teechers, Bouncers*. It was interesting to see some outstanding performances of *Blood Brothers*, with some centres using songs and narration, creating a rounded and exciting theatrical experience for the audience. The best performances of these popular texts included considerable level of detail and nuance from the performers, for example, providing very clear differentiation between characters in *Shakers* or Bouncers, or highly accomplished multirole in *Teechers*.

Less effective at a number of centres was *Bouncers* which often over-challenged weaker candidates with its deceptively challenging performance style.

Some centres presented very interesting and ambitious material – there were some highly effective performances of *The IT* with some excellent design candidates. *Journey's End, Two* and *Mudlarks* were also popular and again produced a range of work, with some outstandingly detailed and engaging performances.

Also popular were *A Taste of Honey* (which often over challenged weaker candidates who struggled with the characterisation and elements of direct address), *Art* (some struggled with coherent characterisation and pacing) , *The Dumb Waiter* (where again, weaker candidates struggled with characterisation, movement and pacing) *Top Girls* (usually excellent); *The*

© WJEC CBAC Ltd.2026

Woman Who Cooked Her Husband (some struggles with character, timing, direct address and pacing) Effie's Burning (some really good but weaker candidates struggling with line quantity and sustaining character) *Girls Like That* was hugely popular and provided a very wide range of performance work.

Often, it felt like weaker candidates did not always understand the style of a particular performance piece and the challenges/requirements that that placed on them as performers. There was a small amount of Shakespeare with some strong performances from *Macbeth*; however, several centres cast cross-gender which sometimes hindered candidates from being able to fully explore character; at a number of centres, candidates were not comfortable with the delivery of Shakespeare lines, resulting in quite inaccurate communication of intent.

Candidates multi-rolling in naturalistic pieces appeared to hinder characterisation and interpretation. Multi-rolling should only be considered an option for texts suited to more ensemble work.

In a small number of centres every group was given the same text which proved highly challenging for the weaker candidates in the cohort when presented with a complex text and its demands.

Some candidates only performed/ designed for one extract which had an impact on their overall mark.

Some centres presented a wider range of material including *The Beauty Queen of Leenane, Face*, *Tryal of Witches; Slag; Red; Cassie and the Lights, Bluebird*.

Design

Whilst there was some outstanding design work, there was still a sense that at several centres weak candidates followed a design option (particularly Set and Props and Costume, Hair and Make Up) with designs that were basic, generic or did not reflect the text sufficiently. Quite frequently, whilst costume had been considered, hair and make-up were neglected and there was often little development or variation of the design. In the weaker design pieces, the actors often felt more like hangers for the costume, rather than characters inhabiting them and interacting with them. On occasion there was significant difference between the artistic intentions of design candidates and the design realised in performance. There was some bold and inventive work, with some actors finishing or executing costume changes on stage, applying make-up within the context of the piece, modifying make-up as a character evolved during the piece.

There were some outstanding set and prop designs that were highly detailed, original, creative and provided a fully coherent interpretation of the text. In the best work the actors were at home in the space and interacted with the set and props, suggesting a synergy between the design and performance that had developed during the rehearsal process. The weaker designs often consisted of a school table and two school chairs.

Lighting candidates generally provided a good to high level of design work. In a number of pieces, design candidates would have fared better if they had been allocated a script that presented a wider range of opportunities and elements for more inventive and varied lighting designs. Non-naturalistic pieces often fared much better here, with often inventive and dynamic lighting that fully complimented the piece.

© WJEC CBAC Ltd.2026

Sound design was less frequently chosen. Often mid to lower end work consisted of a reasonably well curated playlist but little more; as the ork became more effective, a wider variety of sound and sound sources were used. Some candidates sampled their own work, created their own sound effects or had created voice-overs or added effects to their sound. Some candidates used a combination of recorded sound, microphones and in one centre also created a number of sound effects live in a Brechtian styled performance.

Significantly with candidates who chose set or costume as their design option there was no changes/variations in the overall design which did not allow candidates to access marks in the application of design to realise artistic intentions.

The highest scoring candidates were able to execute their ideas effectively and had the resources to do so, or were highly imaginative in their response to limited resources (for example, candles, torches, glowsticks, phone screens etc.

Artistic Intentions

The artistic intentions, although not assessed, form an integral part in assisting the examiner in assessing the realisation of artistic intentions. Examiners reported that the standard of the Artistic Intentions forms continue to improve. Most centres had followed guidance and encouraged candidates to focus on specific areas as opposed to the generic “use my movement and voice to create a character”. Where candidates performed multiple characters, it is useful to clearly outline the interpretation of each character within the artistic intention form. This helps the examiner gain a clearer understanding of their aims and objectives. Design candidates can and should include additional material, for example, lighting plots and mood boards, to support their design in performance. Although not assessed, additional material for design candidates can aid the examiner’s understanding of the design in performance.

Key Points

- Centres should check their school’s calendar thoroughly before submitting or accepting an exam date.
- Many examiners felt that a significant number of centres did not have the specified paperwork available on the day of the exam. Centres must check what forms are required and which forms need to be signed. The examiner will clearly outline the necessary paperwork requirements in their initial email.
- Centres are reminded that programme proformas and artistic intentions should be sent to their examiner at least two weeks before the visit.
- Visting examiners will not conduct vivas with GCSE design candidates for the current specification • Performances should be uploaded onto SURPASS within 14 days of the final performance.
- All candidates should introduce themselves at the beginning of each performance, stating name, role and candidate number.
- Although most centres recognise Component two is an external exam and should be treated accordingly, examiners reported that some centres treated the exam with a sense of nonchalance and were overly relaxed in their approach. Whilst examiners recognise it is a stressful day for both candidates and teachers alike, it is disconcerting to see students eating or using their phones while other candidates are performing.

© WJEC CBAC Ltd.2026

DRAMA

GCSE

Summer 2026

COMPONENT THREE
INTERPRETING THEATRE

Overview of the Component

Written examination: 1 hour 30 minutes
40% of the qualification

Component 3 assesses AO3 and AO4, requiring learners to demonstrate knowledge and understanding of how drama and theatre are developed and performed, alongside the ability to analyse and evaluate their own work and the work of others. AO3 forms the primary focus of the written examination, while AO4 is applied particularly in responses to live theatre. The component tests learners' ability to apply their understanding through both set text study and live theatre analysis. In Section A, candidates respond to a prescribed play, demonstrating understanding of character, structure, genre, form, language, stage directions and context, and interpreting how meaning is created through performance and design. They must analyse both an extract and the wider text using appropriate drama terminology. In Section B, learners evaluate a live production, considering the roles of actor, designer and director, and assessing overall effectiveness.

The 2026 examination introduced a revised layout, with the extract placed immediately after the set text questions, which reduced confusion and supported clearer navigation for candidates. The paper was well balanced, with equal focus on performance and design, and effectively assessed AO3 and AO4. Noughts and Crosses, An Inspector Calls and Find Me were the most popular texts, followed by The IT and I Love You Mum…, with Macbeth and Refugee Boy less frequently chosen; however, the quality of responses across all texts was comparable. Most pupils displayed a sound understanding of thrust staging and, on the whole, designed effectively. Misinterpretation of questions remained a common issue, with some candidates failing to address the specific demands. Overall, time management improved, with a more balanced approach across Sections A and B.

Comments on individual questions/sections

Section A

Q.1 (i) This opening question was highly accessible, with many candidates achieving full marks. However, while most demonstrated secure understanding of the basic dramatic concepts assessed, some responses limited their effectiveness by discussing each character individually rather than focusing on the dynamics of their relationship.

(ii) This question was generally well answered, with a high proportion of candidates effectively referring to the use of voice and providing clear, relevant reasons for their choices. However, a common issue was a lack of precision, as some candidates did not clearly specify which actor and which character they were referring to. This ambiguity made responses more difficult to interpret and proved problematic during marking.

© WJEC CBAC Ltd.2026

Q.2 (i) This question was generally well answered, with most candidates providing clear and relevant references to the character within the extract. Responses typically demonstrated a sound understanding of the character as presented in the given moment. However, some candidates relied on more generalised character traits that were not always rooted specifically in the extract, which limited the precision and effectiveness of their answers.

(ii) This question was, on the whole, well answered, with many candidates offering creative and innovative ideas. The strongest responses referred closely to the specific moment in the extract and provided clear, appropriate suggestions for both hair and make-up, supported by relevant reasons. However, some candidates limited their marks by suggesting the absence of make-up, despite the question requiring explicit make-up choices linked to the character in the scene. Additionally, a number of responses focused on full costume rather than the specific requirements of hair and make-up, which also reduced their effectiveness.

Q.3 (i) This question proved more challenging for a number of candidates. While some provided clear and accurate descriptions of the setting - identifying both the time and place of the extract - many responses focused instead on describing a set design or commenting only on the atmosphere. As a result, these answers did not fully address the concept of setting as defined by both space and time. Candidates who had a clear understanding of this distinction were able to give precise and effective responses.

(ii) This question was generally well answered, with many candidates demonstrating a clear understanding of how lighting can be used to define setting. The strongest responses showed creativity alongside a secure grasp of theatrical lighting, identifying two distinct lighting states and supporting each with an appropriate reason. However, some candidates limited their marks by failing to provide clear or developed reasons for their choices, which reduced the effectiveness of otherwise valid ideas.

Q.4 This question produced a range of responses, with many candidates demonstrating a sound understanding of the thrust stage configuration. Several key trends emerged:

- Most candidates correctly identified the original staging, and the audience positioning on three sides on a thrust stage and were able to explain how this influenced staging decisions.

Stronger responses:

- Focused directly on staging choices rather than describing the original production in detail.
- Clearly explained how and why staging decisions were made for a thrust stage.
- Demonstrated an awareness of atmosphere and impact, explaining how proximity to the audience enhanced tension or engagement in the extract.
- Made effective use of the backdrop, entrances, and space around the audience, showing a thoughtful use of the performance area.
- Included creative and innovative ideas involving flooring and the space above the stage, adding depth to the design.
- Addressed the requirement for props in detail, often giving specific and relevant examples (e.g. glow sticks, whistles, or carefully chosen symbolic items), and clearly explaining how these communicated meaning to the audience.

© WJEC CBAC Ltd.2026

Weaker responses:

- Included lengthy introductions or descriptions of the original staging, which were not required.
- Lacked a clear design concept or style, often resulting in very basic or underdeveloped staging ideas.
- Provided limited detail, particularly in relation to colour, texture, and overall visual impact.
- Referred to props only briefly or generically, without explaining their significance or effect.
- Displayed a misunderstanding of "staging": A notable number interpreted staging as character movement rather than scenic design or prop placement, indicating a need for further clarification in teaching.
- A small number of candidates mistakenly referenced the wrong scene; however, the mark scheme did accommodate this where appropriate.

Overall:

- While many candidates showed a secure understanding of staging in a thrust configuration, the most successful responses combined clarity, creativity, and detailed justification, fully addressing both staging and props in relation to the extract.

Q.5 This question required candidates to select a new extract from the play and assessed their broader knowledge through their exploration of a specific character and trait.

Stronger responses:

- Maintained a clear and consistent focus on the specified character trait, rather than drifting into more general character analysis.
- Selected an appropriate extract from elsewhere in the play (rather than the set extract used in earlier questions), showing thoughtful engagement with the full text.
- Effectively tracked the development of the specified character trait throughout the chosen scene, demonstrating a sense of progression and dramatic arc.
- Gave balanced attention to key performance skills, including voice, movement, facial expression, interaction, and motivation, integrating these elements cohesively.
- Supported ideas with clear references to the chosen scene, using moments from the text to justify performance decisions.

Weaker responses:

- Did not always maintain focus on the specific trait, instead offering more generalised interpretations of the set character.
- Showed imbalance in their responses, with some candidates spending too much time on motivation, leaving limited scope to explore practical performance skills in sufficient detail.
- Lacked precise reference to the chosen extract, resulting in less convincing justification of ideas.
- Occasionally selected inappropriate moments from the play or did not clearly situate their response within a specific scene.

© WJEC CBAC Ltd.2026

Overall:

- While many candidates demonstrated a sound understanding of the task, the most successful responses combined clear focus, balanced coverage of performance skills, and detailed reference to a well-chosen extract, resulting in a more coherent and effective explanation**.**
- Terminology: Many candidates demonstrated an excellent grasp of drama-specific vocabulary, strengthening their evaluative and analytical responses

Section B: Response to Live Theatre

Candidates were given the opportunity to respond to either acting or design elements from a live or digitally streamed production. As in previous years, this section revealed a genuine engagement with performance and a diverse range of productions.

Question 8.1 (Design Focus)

Question focus: This question required candidates to analyse and evaluate how costume design for one character was used across two distinct moments to communicate meaning and create impact for the audience. Responses needed to reference production style, explore how costume contributed to character and meaning, and include a clear personal audience response, with balanced coverage of both moments.

- **Positive trends**: Many candidates engaged well with costume design, demonstrating an understanding of how it can communicate meaning and create impact. Strong responses selected two clearly defined moments and explored costume choices -such as colour, texture, and style - with relevant reference to the character and context. The most successful answers showed a detailed and perceptive understanding of how costume contributes to meaning, offering thoughtful and well-developed analysis.

- **Stronger responses**: The best candidates maintained a clear balance between the two moments, making explicit comparisons or distinctions. They analysed how costume evolved or differed across the scene(s) and linked these changes directly to character development or thematic significance. These responses moved beyond description, offering insightful evaluation of audience impact and demonstrating secure critical judgement.

- **Weaker responses:** Less successful answers tended to describe costume elements without clearly explaining their significance or effect. Some responses lacked balance, focusing heavily on one moment while giving limited attention to the second, which restricted their ability to fully meet the demands of the question.

- **Evaluation framework**: Stronger candidates followed a clear evaluative structure - identifying specific costume choices, analysing their symbolic or thematic meaning, considering their impact on the audience, and offering a personal, informed response.

- **Common issue**: Some candidates did not fully engage with the evaluative aspect of the question, offering limited analysis of meaning or audience impact. Greater emphasis on interpretation and evaluation across two distinct moments is needed to access higher marks.

© WJEC CBAC Ltd.2026

Question 9.1 (Acting Focus)

Question focus: This question required candidates to analyse and evaluate how movement was used by a performer in two distinct moments, with clear reference to production style, the communication of character and meaning, and their own response as an audience member. A balanced and detailed exploration of both moments was essential.

- **Common weaknesses**: Many responses tended to include generalised description or narrative of the moment rather than maintaining a consistent focus on how movement was used as a performance skill. In some cases, answers lacked clear links between movement and the communication of meaning or audience impact.

- **Performance skills:** The strongest candidates provided excellent responses, creating a detailed and vivid picture of how the performer used movement across two distinct moments. These answers offered thorough descriptions that covered a wide range of movement skills (e.g. gesture, posture, physicality, spatial relationships, and dynamics) and linked them clearly to character development and meaning. They also demonstrated a secure understanding of production style, integrating it effectively into their analysis, and supported their ideas with precise references.

- **Balance and structure**: The best answers maintained a clear balance between the two chosen moments, offering direct comparison or contrast. They ensured both moments were explored in equal depth, strengthening the overall evaluation.

- **Audience response**: High-level responses included a clear and perceptive personal response, showing strong theatrical understanding. Candidates explained how the movement affected them as audience members with clarity and insight, directly linking this to intention and impact.

- **Common issue:** Some candidates did not fully address all elements of the question, particularly the requirement to refer to production style or include a developed audience response. Greater emphasis on analysis, evaluation, and coverage of all bullet points, rather than description alone, is needed for higher-level performance.

Summary

- Overall, candidates demonstrated a secure understanding of key dramatic concepts, particularly in the lower tariff questions, which were generally well answered. Many responses showed confidence in applying basic knowledge, though there were some recurring misunderstandings (e.g. confusion between setting, set, and atmosphere, or between staging and movement).
- Across Section A, the strongest responses were characterised by clear focus on the specific demands of the question, precise reference to the extract, and the ability to justify ideas effectively. However, a significant number of candidates did not tailor their answers closely enough to the set extract or spent too long on less relevant aspects such as original performance conditions.
- Higher tariff questions produced a wide range of responses, successfully differentiating candidates. The best answers demonstrated creativity, detailed knowledge, and strong justification, while weaker responses often lacked detail, balance, or a clear design or performance concept.
- In Question 5, many candidates showed good understanding of character and performance, particularly when tracking a trait through a chosen scene. However, some responses were imbalanced, often focusing too heavily on motivation at the expense of practical performance skills.

© WJEC CBAC Ltd.2026

- Section B included some excellent, highly perceptive responses, particularly in design and movement questions. The strongest candidates demonstrated detailed analysis, clear evaluation, and confident personal response, often supported by precise examples.
- A key issue in Section B was the tendency for some candidates to over-describe rather than analyse, or to produce overbalanced responses, particularly focusing excessively on personal reaction without clearly explaining what was effective and why.
- Time management was an underlying concern, with some candidates producing overlong responses in certain questions, which limited the depth and quality of later answers.

Recommendations

- **Focus on question requirements**: Centres should emphasise the importance of reading the question carefully and responding directly to its specific demands, particularly in higher tariff questions and when working from a set extract.
- **Clarify key terminology**: Further teaching is needed to reinforce distinctions between key terms such as setting (time and place), set, staging, atmosphere, and performance skills, to avoid recurring misunderstandings.
- **Develop analytical and evaluative skills:** Candidates should be encouraged to move beyond description by consistently applying a clear structure:
  What, How, Why, Effect on the audience, Personal response.
- **Ensure balance in extended responses**: Candidates should practise structuring answers to ensure balanced coverage (e.g. two moments, multiple performance skills), avoiding overemphasis on any one aspect such as motivation.
- **Encourage precise referencing:** Stronger responses consistently refer closely to the extract or chosen scene. Centres should support students in selecting appropriate moments and using specific textual or performance references to justify ideas.
- **Promote creativity with justification**: While imaginative ideas are encouraged, candidates must ensure these are clearly explained and linked to meaning and audience impact, rather than remaining undeveloped.
- **Improve time management**: Candidates should practise timed responses to ensure they allocate time appropriately across all questions and avoid overlong answers that compromise later sections.
- **Strengthen Section B responses:** Teaching should emphasise the need for clear evaluation and justified personal response, ensuring candidates explain not just what they saw, but why it was effective and how it created impact.

© WJEC CBAC Ltd.2026

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: 029 2240 4299
Email: drama@eduqas.co.uk
Qualification webpage: https://www.eduqas.co.uk/qualifications/drama-gcse/ - tab_keydocuments

See other useful contacts here: Useful Contacts | Eduqas

CPD Training / Professional Learning

Access our popular, free online CPD/PL courses to receive exam feedback and put questions to our subject team, and attend one of our face-to-face events, focused on enhancing teaching and learning, providing practical classroom ideas and developing understanding of marking and assessment.

Please find details for all our courses here: https://www.eduqas.co.uk/home/professional-learning/

Regional Rep Team

Our regional team covers all areas of England and can provide face-to-face and online advice at a time which is convenient to you.

Get in contact today and discover how our team can support you and your students.
Regional Support Team | Eduqas

Eduqas Qualifications

We are one the largest providers of qualifications for schools, academies, sixth form and further education colleges across England, offering valued qualifications to suit a range of abilities. Each and every one of our qualifications is carefully designed to engage students and to equip them for the next stage of their lives.

We support our education communities by providing trusted qualifications and specialist support, to allow our students the opportunity to reach their full potential.

© WJEC CBAC Ltd.2026



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

© WJEC CBAC Ltd.2026