



GCE A Level Examiners' Report

Drama and Theatre
A level
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.eduqas.co.uk/
Bank of Professional Learning materials	Access our bank of Professional Learning materials from previous events from our secure website and additional pre-recorded materials available in the public domain.	Portal by WJEC or on the Eduqas subject page.
Become an examiner with WJEC.	We are always looking to recruit new examiners or moderators. These opportunities can provide you with valuable insight into the assessment process, enhance your skill set, increase your understanding of your subject and inform your teaching.	Become an Examiner Eduqas

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Executive Summary

Component 1

Moderators fed back positively about the standard of work seen within Component 1 this year. However, centres are reminded that creative logs for theatre-making should be concise and evidence detailed research, including visuals such as photos and diagrams. Logs can be written or AV presentations (7-10 minutes) and must discuss individual contributions, proxemics, and design processes. High marks require sophisticated understanding and application of theory, not just description. Performances should consider age-appropriate content and involve group interactions (2-5 members). Popular practitioners include Katie Mitchell and Berkoff, with a trend towards non-naturalistic styles. Teacher comments aid in understanding marking decisions. Submissions should be clear, structured, and include all required elements, with a single, labelled recording per group for ease of moderation.

Component 2

This year's Component 2 showcased diverse and well-prepared performances, with centres enhancing the theatrical experience through scenery, props, and live audiences. Administrative tasks, particularly the Centre Approval form, were well-managed, but camera placement for recording remains critical. Proper timing was emphasized, as under-timed pieces cannot receive full marks. Content sensitivity is essential, particularly with sexual themes, requiring discretion. Design candidates must select one technical skill for both text and devised pieces. Adherence to stylistic requirements, particularly in naturalistic performances, is crucial. Devised pieces should clearly reflect the chosen practitioner's methods. Process reports improved, with stronger submissions showing detailed understanding and referencing live productions. Timely uploading of reports and videos is mandatory, with coordination with examiners encouraged.

Component 3

This component demonstrated creative and practical engagement with the set texts, with candidates displaying a broad understanding of style, theme, and context, informed by their exposure to a diverse range of live theatre. Preparation was evident, with most candidates addressing all questions effectively. In Section A, detailed costume descriptions were linked to character and context, though some lacked candidates failed to fully justify the choices made. Directing responses highlighted movement and interaction but occasionally included irrelevant design choices. In Section B, concise extracts allowed focused performance analysis, whilst live theatre examples, where relevant, enriched responses. Section C showcased imaginative lighting and sound designs, though contextual justification was sometimes lacking. Overall, responses were strengthened by integrating question specific guidance and focusing on relevant live theatre examples, avoiding overly broad references to ensure depth of analysis.

Areas for improvement	Classroom resources	Brief description of resource
Assessment Understanding	Guidance for Teaching	An overall look at the teaching of the course.
Making use of exemplar materials	Portal by WJEC	Wide range of exemplar material available to centres
Creative Classroom Pedagogy	Eduqas A Level CPD	Link to all CPD courses being offered to centres
Candidate Resources	Eduqas Digital Educational Resources	A link to pre-prepared classroom resources for candidates
Exam Technique	Eduqas A Level Sams	A guide to better understanding the mark schemes and indicative content.

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COMPONENT 1 – THEATRE WORKSHOP

Overview of the Component

Component 1 is 20% of the qualification.

It is a non-examined assessment; internally assessed, externally moderated.

Moderators reported that the work submitted was of a generally high standard and centres should be commended for the diverse, creative work being performed for Component 1.

Moderators saw appropriate ranges of marks being awarded, linked to closer scrutiny of the mark scheme by teachers. Marks for band four and five were awarded more fairly and it was encouraging to see centres using the full range of marks. This accurate application of the mark scheme is to be commended.

As this was the second year of uploading, many centres took advantage of uploading early. Fewer centres needed to be contacted to upload paperwork or missing content. It is important not to upload any other exam work to Component 1 Surpass; this year some centres uploaded work or paperwork from Component 2 which was incorrect. Please use the Component 1 paperwork which can be found on the Eduqas website under 'A Level-Administration' and ensure it is completed in full. There is no need to upload the 10-15 min extract of the original text.

Centres are reminded to check their uploaded content before submitting to Surpass:

- Centre approval form – signed by the Headteacher and complete with centre stamp.
- Programme Proforma – completed correctly with group numbers that ideally correspond to the tabs on Surpass. The chosen text must be stated, and the name of the practitioner/theatre company identified.
- A copy of the reinterpreted script, with 30-70% original content clearly highlighted; some centres use a different colour or font to evidence this.
- A creative log or AV presentation for each candidate, with signed candidate/teacher declaration and GDPR consent form.
- Recording of the performance; this only needs to be uploaded once for each group.

There should be a 'performance ready' line up of actors and design candidates who must be clearly identified by name and candidate number at the start of each group performance.

Centres are asked to apply updated guidance for performance timings outlined on pg. 25 of the specification. Teachers must not award marks once the maximum group 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 or design cues 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 interaction or engagement with the audience.

Capturing the performance accurately to evidence teacher marks is an important consideration for each centre. Centres are advised not to position the camera too far away from the stage and to aim for a full view of the stage. When the camera is distant from the stage it can limit the moderator's ability to see facial expressions or subtlety and can affect the audibility of vocal projection. Some staging and lighting decisions also impacted visibility. Centres should not include the audience in the frame; in some performances the audience are in full view, or floor work was obscured by the audience due to the positioning of the camera.

Please ensure that a 10-15 min extract is studied in detail. Some candidates were referring to multiple extracts from the text. It is fine to be influenced by other parts of the play, but the required 30-70% original text should come from a continuous 10-15 min extract. This choice should be discussed and analysed in the creative log to evidence understanding of the structure, themes, style and artistic intentions of the playwright. The text should be from the prescribed text list in the specification.

Comments on individual questions/sections

AO1: Create and develop ideas to communicate meaning as part of the theatre making process, making connections between dramatic theory and practice.

Process logs do not have to be a written essay. This year spoken or narrated AV presentations of between 7-10 mins were also submitted. Centres should choose a format that works for individual candidates and vary the method of submission to support diversity in groups. No method is preferred; linking closely to assessment criteria is all that is required to structure the work. If choosing an AV presentation, it must adhere to the 7-10 mins outlined in the specification. Some candidates are significantly exceeding the guidance of 1500 words for the creative log. Candidates should be encouraged to plan their work effectively to avoid repetition or extraneous content that is not required by the assessment criteria.

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 work and provides evidence of process. If students want to include notes or mind maps as evidence, they should be an appropriate size and clear. Some were hard to read when zooming in on Surpass.

Some centres are awarding high marks when essential content is missing from the log with the most common omission being the discussion of the extract or consideration of proxemics. To award band five, all content from the grade descriptors must be evidenced to a mature and sophisticated standard. Some design candidates did not include the required visual evidence in their creative log. Details of what needs to be submitted is on pg. 12-13 of the specification, and teachers need to take this into account when awarding marks for designers.

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 a summative comment on the mark sheet, 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.

AO1.1a.

This assessment objective was mainly accurate and fairly applied by centres. The most successful acting logs applied detailed research from chosen practitioner/company to the development of their own performance skills and fully explained their choices. They have sophisticated objectives and understand the creative process of shaping work for an audience. These candidates are confident articulating their individual contribution and these contributions are meaningful and instrumental to the success of the group.

The strongest creative logs from a design perspective evidence professional practice and detailed knowledge of their design skill explained with accurate terminology. They articulate a full design process- from initial ideas and inspiration working closely with the performance group, to final development and refinement of their choices. They are visual with screenshots of cues, photographs of experimentation or final ideas, ground plans (if appropriate), mood boards and detailed diagrams.

Less developed creative logs focus on group process and are descriptive rather than analytical, discussing storyline or final technical decisions. This is the challenge of the reinterpreted creative log, finding a balance between discussing individual and group preparation, analysis of both is required. It is important that all candidates consider their individual contributions from an actor or designer perspective in depth. Actors should explain how and why they have utilised their performance skills; designers need to evidence and justify appropriate research and explain how and why they have chosen specific design techniques to support the work of the group.

AO1.1b.

This assessment objective is often generously awarded by centres. To award the highest marks, there must be evidence of sophisticated understanding in the practical and the same level of sophistication in the creative log. Moderators are looking for academic rigour in the application of theory in both written and practical work to justify high marks being awarded. The research skills utilised, and the understanding gained from this process are the foundation for success in Component 1.

The most developed work uses research on the original source text and practitioner or company to form artistic objectives and fully integrates theory with their role as actor or designer. Band five and band four work is not descriptive but underpinned with justification and analysis.

Less successful work provided research notes but did not explain why techniques or conventions had been chosen to inform their creative process.

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

Moderators reported a strong standard of performance and design work. The pieces being created by candidates show insight and creativity. There has been a resurgence in choosing from the pre-1956 list and excellent reinterpretations of classical texts which question themes and original playwright intentions or find links between historical and current perspectives.

Popular choices of practitioner or company included Katie Mitchell, Punchdrunk, Berkoff, Kneehigh, Frantic Assembly, Artaud, Splendid and Brecht; there were also less familiar additions such as Ostermeier, Alecky Blythe, Polly Teale, Strasberg and Grotowski. This suggests that centres are introducing candidates to a wide range of theatre styles, and encouraging learners to experiment and choose a practitioner which supports their artistic vision. Many candidates choose a non-naturalistic style; this can encourage a creative deconstruction of the original source text and promote exploration. Designers were fully integrated in the development process and appropriate practitioners/companies were chosen to allow actors and designers creative collaboration.

This year raised questions for moderators about the suitability of some performance content. Whilst this did not impact the moderation process, there was a discussion of the appropriateness of some material considering the centre declaration form and the importance of safeguarding candidates physically and mentally. There were several examples of work that contained highly sexualised language, explicit dramatic action or depicted extreme, graphic violence against women. This discussion in the report is not to censor or remove the autonomy of candidates to choose and create their performance material. Candidates who want to make an artistic statement to comment or challenge current or historical injustice and oppression are supported. This is a reminder that centres should consider the age of performers and audience when assessing the suitability of material for a performance exam.

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.

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 provides the best evidence for each candidate.

Thank you for all the work that has been carried out in centres in preparation for the assessment. It is always impressive to see the level of detail and care for Component 1.

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COMPONENT 2 – TEXT IN ACTION

Overview of the Component

Component 2 is 40% of the qualification.

It is externally assessed by a visiting examiner.

This component is the main practical component of the A level and it is divided into 3 sections. The candidates may choose to perform or apply one technical skill (lighting, sound, costume/make up, set design) to both performances.

A **Text** performance, (an extract of an appropriate text performed in groups of 2, 3 or 4 from any published play) the themes of which are linked to a given stimulus. This scene must be performed in a recognised theatrical style e.g naturalistic, epic, physical theatre etc.

Focus of assessment A01a (10 marks) and A02 (30 marks)

A **Devised** performance, (a piece made up by the groups of 2, 3 or 4 candidates) created from a given stimulus (the same used for the text piece) and linked to a recognised practitioner or theatre company e.g. Brecht, Frantic Assembly, Berkoff.

Focus of assessment A01a (10 marks) and A02 (30 marks)

A **Process Report** – a 3000-word report in three sections outlining the ideas, development and process and the evaluation of both performances.

Focus of assessment A01b (10 marks) and A04 (30 marks)

Comments on individual questions/sections

Component 2 once again offered a wide range of performances this year, with evidence of many centres going to great lengths to ensure their candidates have a genuine theatrical experience (scenery, props, lighting, sound and crucially an audience). Whilst it should be emphasised that candidates are marked on their performances and the relationship with the space and the appropriateness of style, the performance is always enhanced by a proper sense of occasion.

Most centres had the paperwork completed in preparation for the examiner's visit but again, the importance of the Centre Approval form cannot be over stressed; it must be signed before the performances commence.

Recordings of the performances were, on the most part, satisfactory, but if the camera is too far away, or the picture is not clear, the centre may have problems if they wish to review the marks. Please try and place the camera as close to the examiner's position and if in doubt, please check with the examiner before the performances commence.

Timings were better this year. Although not penalised for going over the time-limit this year examiners have been instructed not to mark any work past the specified timings in the

specification. Likewise, if the performances are under the specified timings then it will not be possible for the candidate to gain full marks as there is not enough material on which to assess them.

Uploading everything to surpass this year was mandatory and was generally successful; although where it was late or proved difficult, centres are encouraged to correspond with both their specific examiner and the subject officer. It is very important that the reports are uploaded within one week of the performance and the videos within two weeks of the performance, although it is very helpful if the videos can be uploaded at the same time, with most centres obliging with this request.

Centres should be mindful of the safeguarding necessities when dealing with sensitive subject matter either in text work or devised work. Some devised pieces were overtly sexualised this year and discretion should be considered in a school environment. All examiners are familiar with the nature of the certain texts and playwrights and the use of challenging and mature material is encouraged, but sexualised content should generally be implicit rather than explicit. If in doubt, please consult with the subject officer.

Design Candidates

It is not permitted to choose two different technical skills for this component. If a candidate chooses sound for their text piece, they should choose sound for their devised. There were also instances this year of candidates performing in one piece and choosing a technical skill for another. This is against the requirements of the specification and is not permitted.

Text

It is always pleasing to see candidates tackle texts appropriate to this level e.g Sartre, Williams, Rattigan, Shakespeare, Kane, Stephens etc and many centre choose to use texts on the A level list but which the centre has not opted for Component 3, which again is commended. Please do not associate the text pieces with a practitioner. Stanislavski is not a style, but a practitioner. This component requires the candidates to recognise a given style for their text piece and not a practitioner.

Whilst it is not essential to have detailed set and props for a performance, if a group has chosen to perform in a naturalistic style, then even small attention to detail can make a difference to the overall performance e.g. avoid miming cups or pens, avoid wearing stocking feet if the character has entered from 'outside'. Authentic costume is not essential but there should be some consideration given to character detail in keeping with the style.

Candidates should also give close consideration if choosing a naturalistic style. By its very nature, it means that direct address i.e. breaking the fourth wall is not in keeping with a naturalistic performance. In this instance, it may be more appropriate to consider it being naturalistic with non-naturalistic elements. If the candidates don't consider this, it will impact on their process report because they will have misinterpreted their own style, its possibilities and its limitations. Where possible, try to avoid scene changes within the performance; candidates should be encouraged to find a scene of an appropriate length and then perform the character's emotional arc within that scene.

Devised

There were some outstanding performances this year inspired by the given stimuli. Subjects included political upheaval, consent, freedom of speech, the environment and sexual and social equality to name but a few.

More centres chose to use Punch Drunk as their chosen practitioner this year and whilst innovation is commended, in the case of Punch Drunk, it can often prove difficult to see the candidates work under the conditions specified. It is not permitted to perform the piece twice or more so that examiner can see performances in more than one area. If choosing to perform in this style, first and foremost teachers should remind students that everything should take place within the required time and ideally in such an area that no student would be impeded by the examiner being unable to see them at the appropriate time.

Mischief was also another chosen practitioner that was not always effectively executed, proving how difficult it is to write physical satirical comedy. Candidates should also avoid the overuse of monologues in their devised pieces as it minimises the interaction and listening skills for which they can be marked.

Using Artaud as a practitioner can sometimes mean that groups interpret his methods as having no dialogue at all; merely noises, screams and moans and this is a somewhat simplistic interpretation of his theories and practices. Likewise, when using Frantic Assembly, it is not enough to merely focus on setting Frantic movements to music. All pieces should be inspired by the chosen practitioner. It should be possible to recognise the key attributes of a given practitioner or theatre company within the piece such as are listed on p33 & 34 of the specification, but this does mean all need to be used. If in doubt, please check with the subject officer prior to rehearsals.

Process & Evaluation Reports

The process reports were generally good this year. The 3000 target is being far more strictly adhered to and as a result, many candidates understood the importance of brevity in their writing. Some entire centres' cohorts fail to reference the stimulus to the text piece. It must apply to both the devised and the text pieces and this should be mentioned in the first section of the report.

The stronger reports showed a sound, detailed understanding of both the chosen style and the chosen practitioner and this was backed up by research which may have involved detailed appendices. These same reports would show analysis of the process and detailed and thorough references to live productions. It is important that candidates know they can use digital recordings of theatrical productions but not television programmes or films. References to YouTube are allowed if they make relevant reference to the theatre company or practitioner but the A04 references should be discerning. There should be an obvious reference to the actual production (theatre, director etc.) and not merely naming another play.

The best reports detailed what they had used from at least two live theatre productions and referenced how they had inspired their own performance. This could of course be a contrasting technique from the one used in their own piece because it acts as a point of reference.

The final section of the report is to evaluate the final performance. Some candidates continue to merely reference the process as a whole, without any mention of the performance itself. Those in the top bands also mention the comparison between the two pieces and how they have found those differences and in addition, their individual contribution to the piece and what they particularly have brought to the final outcome.

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COMPONENT 3 - TEXT IN PERFORMANCE

Overview of the Component

Component 3 is 40% of the qualification.

Written Examination: 2 hours 30 minutes.

The examination is divided into 3 sections:

Section A

Assessment Objective: AO3.

Elements examined: Costume and Directing.

Section B

Assessment Objective: AO3 and AO4.

Element examined: Acting

Section C

Assessment Objective: AO3 and AO4.

Element examined: Lighting and Sound Design

Comments on the component as a whole

The standard of work assessed for this component exhibited a creative and practical engagement with the texts studied for each section of the examination. Candidates conveyed a wide knowledge of the style, theme, context, and practical nature of the texts. A wide experience of live theatre, in its various forms and contemporary styles, had informed the ideas of candidates. It was pleasing to see that candidates had been exposed to a variety of challenging live productions and digital recordings from which they had built up an extensive repertoire of ideas and interpretations of contemporary performance styles.

Candidates had been prepared well for the format and focus of each question. They understood the timing constraints and dealt with these demands well. Very few candidates were not able to attempt all the questions offered. Candidates focused on the demands of the question and mostly answered all parts of the question as asked.

It was clear in the approach to all questions; but especially Section B and Section C that advice from last year's report regarding answering the question fully had been integrated into the preparation for this exam. There are still some areas where centres' interpretation of the guidance in the specification, regarding Rubric of questions, affected some outcomes for candidates. Centres are advised to revisit the guidance concerning these instances and observe exemplar which is widely available post results.

All texts available for study during this component continue to be selected with some combination of texts more popular than others. The approaches to the study of all are varied and imaginative.

Comments on individual questions/sections

Section A Question (a) - Costume

/10

Most candidates focused closely on the character selected by the examiner in the extract given. Successful responses combined a detailed description of costume with reasoning linked to the character and the context of the action or location in the extract. In the description of their idea's candidates used specific terminology, engaging with how the choice of fabric and colour can convey a meaning to the audience.

In Chimerica some candidates were clear to identify the period that Joe occupies (as there are two separate locations and different time frames in the extract) by referring to fashionable footwear of the time. Age and status of the characters were defined by the choice of their costume as well as their function within the extract. E.g. In *Accidental Death of an Anarchist*, responses referred to the status of Bertozzo through the choice of uniform he wears and how its many adornments convey his self-importance. This was also combined with the type of activity an actor will engage with in the extract and how these choices impact upon the choice of costume e.g. the physical performance style of Bertozzo leading to a choice of clown like baggy trousers, imitating the *Commedia dell Arte* influence used by Fo. Where candidates moved away from a more obvious interpretation of character through costume, this was rewarded if the reasoning for their ideas was relevant to the extract and the function of the character.

Some candidates gave a detailed description of the costume -head to toe of the given character; but failed to give reasons for their choices. E.g. using the stage direction for the costume of Harry in *Saved* but failing to give reasons regarding e.g. Period, style, age or status. This often led to very generic responses that did not consider the context or the function of the character and costume within the given extract. A few candidates did not answer the question properly and focused on more than one of the characters in the extract and / or covered ideas for make -up and hair which are not included in the element of costume in the written paper. Please see specification page 22 – they are considered separate. The question will always guide and clarify the focus of the question. In this instance candidates were rewarded for the costume ideas about the character in the question and understanding of how costume function in conveying ideas to an audience.

This question asked candidates to consider choices a director might make to show interactions between characters in the extract and how this communicated meaning to an audience. Successful responses identified the performance space at the start of their response so that their ideas for movement and positioning in the extract were easily visualised. This enabled candidates to identify important entrances and exits and areas of significant action. E.g. in *Chimerica* – the action takes place on an end on, split stage in separate locations and later, in different time frames. Although the two main characters do not physically interact, successful candidates were able to build an interaction using subtle eye contact as the extract became more fluid in time and space between Joe and Zhang Lin. Other ways candidates identified areas of interaction and action was by having different physical action, pace and interaction that happen in contrast to one another e.g. In *Accidental Death of an Anarchist*, the interaction of Felletti and the Maniac might take place centre stage; it is quieter and more vocal as opposed to the action of the police officers, which is very physical, frenetic, violent and reactive. They selected appropriate vocal movement and positioning to communicate this to an audience. An indication of the performance style informed choices made by a director regarding movement, positioning and interaction. Setting this up at the beginning of the response was helpful. Candidates working across several vignettes within the given extract e.g. *Love and Information*, used effective movement and positioning as transitions to connect the scenes together. Here the choices of a director were used to make a connection between the scenes and add further meaning to the extract given. Whilst the extract from *Saved* contained little verbal interaction, successful candidates were aware that this silence had meaning. As a director they made choices about the use of facial expression, eye contact – or lack of it -and character tempo, to identify moments of connection and interaction between the characters.

A few candidates continue to consider the responsibilities of a director to include design choices. For the examination this is not the case and whilst candidates were not penalised for this, their responses lacked the focus on movement positioning and interaction demanded by the question. Less successful responses also focused on the rehearsal techniques used to create the roles and relationships in development. The question did not ask for this and focused on how the choices made by a director communicate meaning to an audience. Some candidates focused on the main character in the extract and excluded the other characters which were asked for in the question. E.g. In *Chimerica*, the effect of the guard's presence was ignored; this would be of clear consideration for a director to show the contrast between the East and West, which is brought together in the final image of the extract. In *Racing Demon* there are only two characters in the extract, therefore the focus for a director is to create the intensity between the characters and a sense of threat in their vocal and physical interpretation. Some candidates were vague about their performance style and the performance space which led to confusion when understanding their choices as director.

Section B - Acting

AO3

This question allowed the candidates to choose one extract for a given character that they would interpret as an actor. Successful candidates chose an extract that was not too long so that they were able to focus very closely on the language, action, motivation, and performance skills required by an actor in performance. They identified their extract clearly via the beginning and end dialogue, which assisted the examiner in identifying it. Brief context of the extract in terms of placement in the action and where the character is in their development was helpful before focusing on the extract in detail. Candidates who used their contextual knowledge such as social, historical, and cultural understanding to inform the choices made as an actor were often perceptive in their understanding of how a contemporary audience might read their interpretation. A clear statement of stage shape and performance style were useful and established parameters within which they could work as an actor. Imaginative and creative choices of performance styles were evident in the choices made by an actor e.g. *Machinal* as an expressionistic style causing the actions of the actor to deteriorate into buffering and freezing movements. Mature responses focused on an arc of development for the character and how they reacted to the dialogue of others. E.g. *The Mother* in *Machinal*; candidates understood the subtleties of her character and the ambitions she has for her daughter as well as herself.

Less successful responses did not clearly identify the parameter of their extract and as such they focused on too big an extract e.g. *Machinal* and the whole of Episode 2 – rather than two pages of it. Where the context of the text was provided, it was often unclear as to how this informed their choices as an actor. A few candidates focused on the rehearsal techniques they might employ despite the question asking about how they might 'perform the role.' Candidates were credited for the understanding of character motivation and choice of performance skills that such a response highlighted. A few candidates attempted the question with the incorrect character; again, candidates were credited for their understanding and knowledge of the performance skills and any contextual understanding pertinent to an actor's performance choices.

AO4

Candidates continue to be exposed to imaginative and creative live theatre which has had a great impact upon their understanding of contemporary theatre styles. Successful candidates focused on two live theatre examples in detail: evaluating a performance as an actor and making perceptive links to their own ideas for performance. Attention to a key moment of performance made for a focused analysis and succinct link to their choices as an actor. Further development of an idea observed in a production was extended further by successful candidates.

This year, candidates were tempted to write about many live theatre productions. Whilst it illustrated a broad knowledge and experience of theatre practitioners in action, this often led to superficial analysis and repetition. Candidates should make sure that their connection to live theatre is through the element of the question e.g. Acting, and not a connection of plot or character. The purpose is to analyse the techniques and skills used, by an actor in this case, and use these to inform their own ideas. As the weighting between AO3 and AO4 is equal for this question (20 marks each), this should be reflected in the balance and analytical depth of the response between the two assessment objectives.

Section C

AO3

It was evident that many candidates had chosen to answer this question first to avoid timing issues with a 40-mark question. Most candidates refer to the given stage space showing some understanding the opportunities it affords in design choices. Some candidates embraced the opportunities of the whole theatre space and placement of the audience suggested by the proscenium arch stage. Here they used placement of speakers and relays throughout the auditorium space and on/ above the stage to create an immersive impact.

Imaginative ideas were used for lighting. Confident use of a variety of lanterns, colours, and intensity to create impact where evident in the responses. Length of cues and sympathetic integration with the action was clear. Direction of the light source was used to create silhouettes and patterns in the space given and the use of the back wall as a cyclorama for projection effectively used the performance space given in the question.

Highly creative use of music, background noises, manipulation of sound and a variety of intensity to create impact, location and atmosphere. Successful candidates used the two elements of light and sound together to recreate the sensory world in which Christopher lives and to show how it can change according to the external stimulus of his environment. Their focus on Christopher's point of view immersed the audience into the action and conveyed to their understanding of the powerful purpose of LX and SFX in performance.

Most candidates were able to use their knowledge of lighting and sound to create atmosphere but not all candidates were able to justify their ideas within the context of the extract or the play as a whole.

AO4

Highly effective evaluation of live theatre from the perspective of a LX and SFX designer was evident. Effective focus on key moments were evaluated and linked to their own ideas in the extract.

Too few or too many live theatre references were a problem for some candidates. Centres must be aware that 'live theatre productions' is a minimum of two. Reference to many more than that can lead to a lack of evaluation and focus. There are 10 marks in this section for AO4-(25% of the available marks for this question). The weighting is therefore more on the creative ideas and their justification-AO3- this should be reflected in the amount of the response addressing AO4.

Summary of key points

- **Section A** – use the extract as the focus to avoid generic responses. The response must be tailored to the extract. Try to get straight into the response. There is no need for detailed context in section A unless used to justify their ideas.
- **Section B** – Choice of extract needs to be identified to the examiner. Choose a section of two pages per extract requested to focus on -more than that is too much action to cover.
- Balance of the assessment objectives differ between section B and C and the dedication of focus should reflect this.
- The impact of too many live theatre examples can affect the detail and depth of analysis required at this level.

Supporting you

Useful contacts and links

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Tel: 02920 404299

Email: drama@edugas.co.uk

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

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