

# DRAMA

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**Paper 9482/11**  
**Open-Book Written Examination 11**

There were too few candidates for a meaningful report to be produced.

# DRAMA

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<p><b>Paper 9482/12</b> <b>Open-Book Written Examination 12</b></p>
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## General comments

### Key messages

This syllabus is now well-established, but it may still be appreciated by teachers in centres who have adopted the syllabus for the first time, or who are relatively new to the syllabus, if some of the key aspects of the requirements of the written paper are reiterated here.

First and foremost, Component 1 of this AS/A Level syllabus in Drama assesses candidates' knowledge and understanding of how Drama may be interpreted, on stage, to communicate meaning to an audience. Candidates need to have a working knowledge of how plays are staged in the professional theatre.

While a literary understanding of themes and characters may be useful to candidates in answering questions about dramatic texts on an English Literature paper, Component 1 of the Drama syllabus demands that candidates are conversant with the language of the theatre and that they approach their classwork, homework and examination preparation from the perspective of a theatre 'practitioner', be that from a director's, a performer's or a designer's viewpoint.

Questions that ask, 'How would you direct...?', 'Explain how your designs would communicate....', 'How would you perform the role of ...?' require the candidate to write in the first person, using the language of the theatre. Answers should be detailed and should include short, pithy quotations from the play in question, where appropriate, to illustrate or to support the directions, designs or performance ideas that are being suggested.

Overwhelmingly, well-prepared candidates who underachieve in the written paper do so because their answers do not meet the precise focus of the question set as well as its more general demands.

The 'general demands' of a question dictate which perspective the candidate is being asked to adopt.

It is not unknown, but it is self-limiting, for a candidate to attempt a question that asks, 'How would you direct specific moments from the extract?' with a response that is mainly focused upon lighting and sound effects.

The 'focus' of the question contains the 'theatrical brief' that candidates are being asked to fulfil, from the given perspective of director, performer or designer.

In this paper, candidates face two types of questions. In the first type of question, there is a **specific** 'theatrical brief' for candidates to meet. For example, one of the Questions on *The Seagull* asked: How would you perform the role of KONSTANTIN in **two or more separate** sections of the play, *to convey his increasing unhappiness in the course of the play*?

Candidates choosing this question had a specific task to fulfil (italicised above) and they had to include specific performance ideas that have the capacity to convey Konstantin's increasing unhappiness to the audience. They also had to follow Konstantin's 'journey' over the course of the play, selecting appropriate moments from the text where his increase in unhappiness could be made evident to the audience.

The other type of question is more open-ended and offers candidates the opportunity to meet a theatrical brief **of their own**.

One of the questions on *Enron* asked: How would you perform the role of ANDY FASTOW in selected moments from the extract to achieve *your intended audience response*?

In this instance, candidates were charged with the responsibility of establishing their own 'brief' from the outset, and then meeting the demands of that brief in their answer. For example, a candidate needed to start their answer to this question with a clear statement of intention. For example: *I intend the audience to have a negative response to Andy Fastow in this extract, as he establishes his character as being arrogant and unfeeling and I intend for the audience to condemn him for his unscrupulous actions.*

Whatever the type of question, candidates need to recognise that they are working to a 'brief' – either one that is already prescribed in the question, or a brief of their own devising – when invited to choose, for example, what response they wish to achieve, what interpretation they wish to convey, or what dramatic effects they intend to create.

To be successful in this paper, candidates need to be equipped to answer the **specific** brief of the question – or to devise their **own brief**, where the question invites them to do so – explain that brief at the beginning of their answers and achieve their intentions in the course of their answer, using apposite practical examples and textual support.

### **General comments**

There were very many very good and some outstanding responses to a range of question in this November series.

In this series, candidates answered questions on *The Tempest*, *The Country Wife*, *Death of a Salesman* and *The Lion and the Jewel* in **Section A** and on *Medea*, *The Seagull*, *Curious Incident* and *Snow in Midsummer* in **Section B**.

Candidates appeared to find the questions on their set plays quite accessible, and many wrote detailed and vivid responses to the precise demands of individual questions, that succeeded in bringing to life an extract or section of text, so that the Examiner was able to imagine the section of action, or moment of tension, unfolding on the stage.

Very good answers tended to demonstrate a secure grasp of theatrical terminology which was applied accurately, and which supported the 'virtual' realisation of a moment or section of text.

In less successful answers, candidates revealed a dearth of appropriate theatrical vocabulary and were thus restricted in their ability to communicate their ideas to the Examiner. Particularly noticeable were candidates' difficulties in discussing design elements using the correct terminology.

A number of candidates attempted design questions, for example, without demonstrating a secure grasp of the chosen design discipline.

The most frequently seen errors of approach involved candidates who selected textual examples that were inappropriate to the question focus or whose answers were overly literary in approach.

Candidates should be reminded that, in **Section B**, where editions of the plays are not prescribed, they should never refer to moments from their texts using page numbers or line numbers. They should always illustrate their ideas by using short quotations. Use of ellipses should also be avoided.

Significant omissions this series included instances where candidates made no explicit reference to the style, genre or context of their selected text.

At the other extremes, some candidates devoted pages of their answers to offering a 'brief' history of Elizabethan/Jacobean theatre or to the origin and development of Greek tragedy, as a prelude to a very short attempt at answering the actual question set.

It continued to be the case that candidates often referred, at some length, to previous productions of their chosen text, but without making any attempt to explain the connection between previous productions and their own ideas. Such references attract little credit.

Most candidate timed their answers well and produced two quite developed pieces of writing. There were some very brief responses, however, where candidates appeared satisfied with offering material that covered

only a couple of pages of the answer booklet but which contained their responses to both **Section A** and **Section B** questions.

### **Section A**

#### ***The Tempest***

#### **Question 1**

- (a) **How would you perform the role of ARIEL in selected moments from the extract to convey his supernatural qualities?**

The question invited a performer's perspective and a focus on conveying Ariel's supernatural qualities. Unfortunately, not all of the candidates who attempted this question – the more popular of the two options – actually adopted a performer's perspective.

Some revealed more interest in designing for a supernatural character and they offered suggestions for costuming Ariel, for example, in a diaphanous outfit, skirt or bodysuit – some with wings attached.

Candidates spent time sketching Ariel in flight, or camouflaged against a tree trunk or against the 'sky'. Unless these ideas were linked to specific performance ideas – supported by reference to the text- they could not be accepted as performance suggestions, per se.

Other candidates referred to what Ariel would look like, but these suggestions were linked closely to the action of the extract. For example, some candidates wrote in detail about how they would perform Ariel's re-enactment, for Prospero, of his exploits on the ship, where he 'flam'd amazement', due to his accomplishment of numerous 'supernatural' acts.

In stronger answers, candidates who wished to combine design ideas with performance ideas wrote about Ariel's use of his/her wings, or use of a wand. In one answer, a candidate wrote about emerging from layers of material that made 'her' 'look first like a sea creature then like a bird, giving Ariel the supernatural quality of 'shapeshifting' on stage. These ideas were linked to specific lines of Ariel's speeches.

Others stuck, perfectly appropriately, to performance ideas only – the main focus of the question – and offered inventive ideas for Ariel's movement and stage positions, changes of tone, pace and pitch as he proudly shares his exploits with Prospero.

The strongest candidates always considered the delivery of the text and offered clear ideas for Ariel's performance through voice, gesture and movement.

- (b) **How would you direct selected moments from the extract to convey your interpretation of the relationship between PROSPERO and ARIEL?**

Only a handful of responses were seen in answer to this question. Most candidates sensibly established their interpretation of the relationship between Prospero and Ariel at the start of their answer. Some candidates did not outline the interpretation that they were trying to convey at any point in their answer.

In stronger answers, candidates acknowledged some ambiguities within a traditional 'master/servant' relationship. These candidates tended to interpret the overall relationship between the pair as affectionate, initially. Candidates justified their interpretation with reference to Prospero addressing Ariel as 'my Ariel', speaking tenderly to him and Ariel responding respectfully, shown both in his demeanour and gestures, such as bowing (head or full body) when addressing his 'master'.

Some candidates wrote about Ariel's desire to receive Prospero's approval, and about his gratification when Prospero congratulates him on his success in dealing with the King and court. Others focused on Prospero's disappointment in Ariel when he displays his reluctance to undertake 'more toil'.

Some detailed and inventive work was seen in candidates' ideas for directing the exchange where Prospero rebukes Ariel and reminds him of what misery he has spared him.

There was also so sensitive work seen where candidates focused on Ariel's shame when Prospero reminds him of the debt of gratitude that he owes his 'master'.

When Prospero promises Ariel his freedom within 'two days', there were some very strong directions of the pair where Ariel demonstrated his jubilation with exuberance. One candidate suggested a tableaux/silhouette of the pair, at this point, with Prospero's arm affectionately laid on Ariel's shoulder as Ariel looks up at his master (father-figure) in rapt attention, set against a backdrop of a rising sun.

## SCG

Some candidates integrated SCG material into their answer by considering 17<sup>th</sup> century notions of hierarchy and the relationships between 'masters and their servants'. Some managed to make the themes of usurpation, colonialism and Jacobean attitudes to 'magic' relevant to the extract also.

Some candidates do not understand the need for their SCG knowledge to inform their interpretation rather than to be offered as a 'slab' of knowledge, unrelated to anything that is happening in the extract.

Some candidates referred to the original performance of the play at the Blackfriars theatre but did not succeed in making their points relevant.

Some candidates wrote about previous productions of the play without making their observations relevant to their answers or to the specific question chosen.

Some candidates offered no explicit reference to SCG and forfeited the bulk of the 10 marks available.

Candidates need to be reminded that they can earn credit by explicitly referencing the style and genre of the play in their answers and in their suggestions for realising the extract (or wider play) in the theatre.

## *The Country Wife*

### Question 2

- (a) **How would you direct selected moments from the extract to create comedy from MARGERY's unconvincing disguise?**

Only a handful of responses was seen on this play, and it is not possible to draw general inferences from them.

Of the few answers seen, stronger scripts included practical suggestions for costuming Margery in a less-than-convincing 'disguise' that failed to conceal her womanly shape. Margery's inability to adopt a masculine voice was also mentioned.

- (b) **How would you perform the role of HORNER in selected moments from the extract to convey his mischievous enjoyment of tormenting PINCHWIFE?**

There were too few responses to this question to draw general inferences, although Horner's pleasure in Pinchwife's suffering was generally understood.

## SCG

Better candidates revealed knowledge and understanding of the social and historical context of the play and what a Restoration comedy/comedy of manners represented within the movement of the time.

One or two candidates wrote about conventions surrounding the lack of women's rights within marriage. There was some discussion of lax morality amongst the aristocracy and the topic of cuckoldry (as an outmoded concept) was occasionally touched upon.

***Death of a Salesman***

**Question 3**

- (a) **How would you perform the role of BIFF in selected moments from the extract to demonstrate his increasing sense of helplessness at the unfolding situation?**

This play is the most widely studied text in **Section A** and this question received many responses, but a significant number of candidates who attempted it did not succeed in addressing the actual task set in the question.

First, the question asks candidates to write from the perspective of a performer who is playing the role of Biff. Surprisingly, a significant minority of candidates wrote as if they were being asked about directing the extract.

Secondly, where candidates did read the question carefully and did understand that the focus should be on performing Biff, they frequently omitted to attempt to 'demonstrate' Biff's 'increasing sense of helplessness' at the unfolding situation.

Some made no allusion, whatsoever, to the 'situation' that was unfolding in the given extract, and they wrote, instead, about Biff's horrified realisation in Boston that Willy was cheating on Linda.

This led a couple of candidates away from the prescribed extract and they answered, exclusively, on the interaction between Willy and Biff in the hotel room in Boston. This approach resulted in candidates offering negligible relevant work, even where an understanding of Biff's character, as a much younger man, appeared secure.

Stronger answers were seen from candidates who were prepared for the demands of the question, knew that they must focus exclusively on the prescribed extract and who did so with close attention to the delivery of the text, to Biff's interaction with the other characters on stage, both verbal and non-verbal, and his movement and gestures.

In these answers, candidates grappled with the challenges faced by the performer of Biff, who has his own agenda in trying to speak the truth to his father; an agenda which is derailed by Willy's 'psychotic' episode and the necessity for Biff of trying to prevent Willy from having a complete break-down.

Some sensitive responses also focused on Biff's exasperation with Happy, whose apparent imperviousness to the seriousness of Willy's mental issues, cause Biff real distress.

- (b) **How would you direct selected moments from the extract to convey the atmosphere of spiralling crisis as WILLY loses his grip on reality?**

There were similar mis-readings of this, slightly less popular, question.

Some candidates interpreted this as a question about performing Willy. Even those candidates who appreciated the directorial focus of the question, sometimes gave exclusive attention to directing Willy, rather than on conveying 'the atmosphere of spiralling crisis' – as demanded by the question.

Amongst the stronger responses that were focused appropriately, candidates tended to include directions for Willy to highlight his erratic behaviour and words, as his past begins to collide with the present, causing the atmosphere to shift from potentially 'convivial' to one of 'crisis'.

Only in better answers did Examiners see candidates considering the reactions of the other characters on stage to the unfolding crisis. For example, when Biff recognises Willy's relapse into the past and realises that Willy's mental decline is mainly traceable to his own failure in Maths.

In well-developed answers, candidates had recognised that both Willy and Biff appear to experience a crisis in this extract. Only self-centred Happy is immune and oblivious to the seismic shift in atmosphere as the scene continues. Some candidates used expressionistic staging ideas to help to convey the spiralling crisis including the use of coloured lighting, occasionally strobes, and/or bursts of 'white noise'.

## SCG

Often candidates were able to integrate relevant SGC into their responses. Reference to the naturalistic style of the play and/or to its expressionist elements were frequently useful, especially in the directing question, although relevant to each answer. 'The American Dream' featured frequently, with occasional relevance, as did the economic strictures of the era. Rarely, but pertinently, some candidates discussed the notion of the nuclear family and Willy's betrayal of that ideal in his dalliance with the Woman.

### *The Lion and the Jewel*

#### Question 4

- (a) **How would you perform the role of SIDI in selected moments from the extract to convey her changing attitude towards BAROKA as she falls under his 'spell'?**

Only a handful of responses was seen on this play, and this was the question option selected.

The question demanded a performer's perspective and focus on conveying Sidi's changing attitude towards Baroka, in the course of the extract. Candidates appeared to find the question accessible and there were no apparent misreadings of the question's demands.

Though few in number, most of the answers were written in a lively style and were generally written in the first person and well-focused on Sidi's emotional journey from appearing scornful of Baroka to complete emotional capitulation.

Several candidates focused on Sidi's initial haughtiness, based on Sadiku's 'gossip' that Baroka is now impotent. Some wrote sensitively of her changing facial expressions as she becomes enthralled by the notion of the power of her own image on the stamps.

Others offered some subtle performance details as Sidi falls for Baroka's flattery, including sighs and shifts in breathing patterns, one or two even suggested small signs such as angling her body towards Baroka, having previously been looking and turning away from him.

Some candidates went into precise details of adjustments made in Sidi's eyeline, for example, or in what she was doing with her hands.

Soyinka's stage directions were used intelligently, in some responses, and candidates found physical expression for displaying her 'drowning' in contemplation of her future fame.

In very good answers, the performance ideas were extremely subtle and well-observed, culminating in Sidi's increasingly relaxed body as she rests her head on Baroka's shoulder, signalling her utter submission to his will.

## SCG

The most successful candidates in this area were those who were able to explain how the characters and their actions reflected the themes of the play – 'modernity' v 'tradition.'

Some candidates gained marks for their consideration of the genre or style of the piece; here opinions varied about its 'epic' qualities as well as its comic tone. There was some reference made to the context of Nigeria's achievement of independent status.

### **Section B**

#### *Medea*

#### Question 6

- (a) **How would you direct the interaction between MEDEA and JASON in two separate sections of the play to help the audience understand the nature of their troubled relationship?**



The question required a director's perspective and a focus on conveying the troubled nature of the relationship between Medea and Jason.

Of the relatively few candidates who chose this question, most maintained a directorial focus, although not all candidates abided by the instruction to focus only on two separate sections.

When candidates write about more than the stipulated number of sections required – in this case, more than two – Examiners are instructed to credit the most successfully treated two sections.

Candidates who abided by the limit set in the question tended to choose the first meeting of the pair, when Jason is patronising towards Medea and exhibits pride in his willingness to help Medea and she rebuffs his offer robustly, and their final meeting. In the second meeting, where Jason is confronted with the extent of Medea's hatred for him and the audience see Medea's gloating over her ex-husband's abject misery, candidates often displayed a real understanding of the style of this gory tragedy.

Better answers were focused on the direction of the action and the dialogue between the couple. Less successful answers introduced all kinds of design features that did not contribute to helping the audience to understand the troubled relationship. Where candidates wrote at length about hair, make-up and costume, they rarely made the material relevant to the troubled relationship.

**(b) How would you use design elements of your choice to create dramatic impact in two separate sections?**

While there were too few responses to this question to make meaningful comment, it is worth noting that, of the few candidates who attempted an answer, there was little sense of having decided upon what kind of 'dramatic impact' was intended for the audience through the use of design elements, even though the designs in themselves were not inappropriate.

**SCG**

The most successful responses here were those that demonstrated an understanding of the origins and religious and civic function of Greek Theatre. As reported previously, the inclusion of a potted history of the development of Greek theatre is not a purposeful way to approach the inclusion of SCG.

Often, marks for understanding of style were derived from sensitive direction or performance detail that captured the essence of the tragic form.

Some candidates revealed their knowledge and understanding through the selection of appropriate classical Greek setting and/or costume. It is necessary, in these cases, for the candidates to know the correct terminology and not to betray their lack of knowledge by referring to 'togas', for example.

Top level candidates were confident in their use of the terminology associated with the classical Greek stage and always integrated their knowledge of SGC into the body of their answers.

***The Seagull***

**Question 8**

**(a) How would you use one or more design elements to create an appropriate atmosphere for the unfolding action in two separate sections of the play?**

There were too few responses on design to draw any meaningful inferences.

**(b) How would you perform the role of KONSTANTIN in two or more separate sections of the play, to convey his increasing unhappiness in the course of the play?**

A handful of candidates attempted this question which invited performance ideas for Konstantin that would convey his increasing unhappiness in the course of the play.

Candidates who had absorbed the requirements of the question, generally started with the scene where Konstantin was beginning to feel unhappy. Some took that to be immediately after he has



stopped the play in Act One, when his mother has made her lack of respect for him as a writer (as well as a son) so palpably clear both to him and to the assembled audience.

Others skipped this and went straight to revealing Konstantin's wretched state having recognised Nina's infatuation with Trigorin, his 'gift' of the dead seagull and Nina's rejection of him.

Most included the section in Act Four where Konstantin's reunion with Nina is so unsatisfactory and confirms his own sense of being a 'nonentity'.

Some candidates did not appear to notice the specific demand of the question to focus on Konstantin's increasing unhappiness and they selected sections apparently at random and with no particular purpose apparent.

Some candidates were also sidetracked into a discussion of how useful Stanislavski's methodology would be to an actor preparing for the role of Konstantin. While this was often credited as a contribution to the demonstration of SGC, it rarely helped the candidate to construct an appropriate response to a question which is framed 'How would you perform...?' rather than 'How would you prepare to perform...?'

### SCG

Some understanding of style and genre could be inferred from the apparently naturalistic performances that were described, although negligible explicit awareness of the period or setting or genre of the play was seen.

The mention of a Stanislavskian approach to acting was potentially credit-worthy, but some candidates devoted too much time and space to discussing Stanislavskian rehearsal methods, which diverted their attention from the thrust of the questions.

### *The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-Time*

#### Question 9

- (a) **How would you direct two sections where JUDY and ROGER appear together to reveal the nature of their relationship?**

Most candidates recognised the strained nature of the relationship between Judy and Roger, even before Christopher turns up. Candidates presented the pair as arguing before discovering Christopher on the doorstep.

Christopher's presence seems to drive them further apart and better candidates were able to visualise a version of their relationship, on stage, expressed both through distance and naturalistic movement and, very occasionally, through physical theatre sequences.

Later, candidates acknowledged that Roger is sarcastic with Judy and is even aggressive, while Judy is irritated by Roger's inability to understand Christopher. These emotional states were sometime represented through 'Frantic Assembly' style sequences.

- (b) **How would you perform the role of MRS ALEXANDER in two separate sections of the play to convey her genuine concern for CHRISTOPHER?**

There were very few answers to this question. Those who did attempt it showed secure understanding of Mrs Alexander's character. Candidates found fairly straightforward performance ideas to portray her 'grandmotherly' nature and concern for Christopher's well-being.

Some candidates did not concentrate on the focus of the question and looked instead at other aspects of her character, such as her 'gossip-mongering' and a quality that some candidates associated with her 'nosiness'.

### SCG

As has been reported in previous series, very few candidates seemed to appreciate the actual genre of this play – many suggested it is a murder mystery or a 'Brechtian' play but very few alluded to 'physical theatre'.

Much misunderstanding of Brecht's work was in evidence. Frantic Assembly's style occasionally influenced movement work.

***Snow in Midsummer***

Very few candidates answered on this text.

**Question 10**

- (a) **How would you perform the role of HANDSOME in two or more sections to convey the development of his character over the course of the play?**

Of the two questions, 10 (a) was more popular but, in total, there were very few answers to either question on this play.

Handsome's development as a character was mainly defined in respect of his relationship with Rocket, and the question focus – on Handsome's individual development as a character – was neglected.

Handsome's role was described initially as a devoted partner to Rocket, anticipating married life together. Candidates noted Handsome's initially amiable attitude towards Fei-Fei and her mother. After Rocket's death, Handsome was depicted as a devastated mourner, communing with Dou Yi in order to reach his dead love.

His rejection of Madam Wong, late in the play, was frequently depicted as a cruel betrayal, but there was some sympathy for him in choosing suicide to enable him to join Rocket in the realm of Spirits.

- (b) **Explain how your combination of two or more design elements would enhance the dramatic effectiveness of two sections of the play involving DOU YI.**

There were very few responses to this question but each of them displayed a confident grasp of design elements. Candidates coped well with the requirement to discuss design elements, in combination, and they were also able to offer some evaluation of the potential of their ideas to create chosen effects.

**SCG**

Candidates did not often consider the cultural context of the play. Some did link it to the original Chinese version of the play. Those that considered the play's episodic, and 'non-naturalistic' genre were the most successful.

# DRAMA

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## **Key messages**

This syllabus is now well-established, but it may still be appreciated by teachers in centres who have adopted the syllabus for the first time, or who are relatively new to the syllabus, if some of the key aspects of the requirements of the written paper are reiterated here.

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Overwhelmingly, well-prepared candidates who underachieve in the written paper do so because their answers do not meet the precise focus of the question set as well as its more general demands.

The 'general demands' of a question dictate which perspective the candidate is being asked to adopt.

It is not unknown, but it is self-limiting, for a candidate to attempt a question that asks, 'How would you direct specific moments from the extract?' with a response that is mainly focused upon lighting and sound effects.

The 'focus' of the question contains the 'theatrical brief' that candidates are being asked to fulfil, from the given perspective of director, performer or designer.

In this paper, candidates face two types of questions. In the first type of question, there is a **specific** 'theatrical brief' for candidates to meet. For example, one of the questions on *The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-time* asked:

*How would you create comedy for your audience through your direction of two separate sections of the play?*

Candidates choosing this question had a specific task to fulfil (create comedy) and they had to offer specific directorial strategies that have the capacity to create comedy for the audience in two aptly chosen sections.

The other type of question is more open-ended and offers candidates the opportunity to meet a theatrical brief **of their own**.

For example:

*How would you perform the role of CHRISTOPHER in two or more separate sections to achieve your intended audience responses?*

In this instance, candidates were charged with the responsibility of establishing their own 'brief' from the outset, which involved them nominating their intended audience responses and then meeting the demands of that brief, for example to achieve a sympathetic or amused or concerned response to Christopher in two or more sections of the play.

A candidate tackling this question should start their answer to this question with a clear statement of intention. For example: *I intend to achieve a sympathetic audience response to Christopher in the section where he is interviewed by the Police Officer in the following ways...*

Whatever the type of question, candidates need to recognise that they are working to a 'brief' – either one that is already prescribed in the question, or a brief of their own devising - when invited to choose, for example, what response they wish to achieve, what interpretation they wish to convey, or what dramatic effects they intend to create.

Summing up, to be successful in this paper candidates need to be equipped to answer the **specific** brief of the question - or to devise their **own brief**, where the question invites them to do so – explain that brief at the beginning of their answers and achieve their intentions in the course of their answer, using apposite practical examples and textual support.

For completion, in stronger answers, the candidate concludes by reminding the examiner that they have met the 'brief', for example, by concluding with a statement such as, 'Using these methods I will have achieved my intentions to create a mainly sympathetic response to Christopher'.

### **General comments**

There were very many very good and some outstanding responses to a range of question in this November series.

In this series, candidates answered questions on *The Tempest* and *Death of a Salesman* in **Section A** and on *Medea*, *The Seagull*, and *Curious Incident* in **Section B**.

Candidates appeared to find the questions on their set plays quite accessible, and many wrote detailed and vivid responses to the precise demands of individual questions, that succeeded in bringing to life an extract or section of text, so that the examiner was able to imagine the section of action, or moment of tension, unfolding on the stage.

Very good answers tended to demonstrate a secure grasp of theatrical terminology which was applied accurately, and which supported the 'virtual' realisation of a moment or section of text.

In less successful answers, candidates revealed a dearth of appropriate theatrical vocabulary and were thus restricted in their ability to communicate their ideas to the examiner. Particularly noticeable were candidates' difficulties in discussing design elements using the correct terminology.

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Significant omissions this series included instances where candidates made no explicit reference to the style, genre or context of their selected text.

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It continued to be the case that candidates often referred, at some length, to previous productions of their chosen text, but without making any attempt to explain the connection between previous productions and their own ideas. Such references attract little credit.

Most candidates timed their answers well and produced two quite developed pieces of writing. There were some very brief responses, however, where candidates appeared satisfied with offering material that covered only a couple of pages of the answer booklet, but which contained their responses to both **Section A** and **Section B** questions.

## **Section A**

### ***The Tempest***

#### **Question 1**

- (a) **As a designer, explain how you would create a suitable setting for the extract using set, lighting and sound.**

The question invited a designer's perspective and most candidates who attempted this option did adopt the mantle of a designer.

Some candidates appeared not to have read the question very carefully as, although they offered ideas for a general design of the set, they omitted to consider lighting and sound.

In stronger answers, candidates embraced the full design challenge and offered ideas for each of the required areas of design resulting in quite a comprehensive and pleasing harmony of ideas.

Relative success was dependent upon candidates' clarity in identifying what a 'suitable' setting might be for this scene which takes place in a different part of the island from the scene described as being set 'Before Prospero's cell'.

Some candidates relied upon the productions and designs of previous productions that they had either seen or been made aware of, but precedence alone does not guarantee 'suitability' and the question was designed to elicit responses whereby the candidate justified their selection of setting, lighting and sound elements that would serve the action of the extract.

In terms of the 'set' design, several candidates suggested that the island, which had sustained Prospero, Miranda and Caliban for many years, would be a 'fruitful' one – as Caliban describes – and they often included reference to the inclusion of lush vegetation, palm trees, low boughs and/or vines, either presented pictorially, or in three dimensions, on stage.

Others opted for a more abstract design with less justification or by referencing a production that they had seen where minimalism had been the selected 'vision'.

Technical design was less securely handled, although there were some suggestions offered for the creation of a sense of daylight/sunlight; gobos, mimicking a leafy bower, for example, were sometimes suggested.

Sound design suggestions included, for example, the naturalistic sound of birdsong or background sounds of the sea as well as more symbolic sounds or music such as the 'twangling instruments' that Caliban alludes to later in the play.

- (b) **How would you direct selected moments from the extract to create comedy for the audience?**

There were very few answers to this question.

The question required a director's perspective and a focus on the creation of comedy. Of the few responses seen, some adopted a somewhat slapstick style of comedy, perhaps more suited to scenes with Stephano and Trinculo.

Candidates occasionally focused briefly on the witty banter between Antonio and Sebastian and their incredulous responses to Gonzalo's vision of the ideal 'commonwealth'.

A couple of candidates made some comical suggestions for Ariel's intervention and the potential for comedy arising from the instantaneousness of the sleep that overcomes the King and his retinue, to the comical amazement of Antonio and Sebastian.

## SCG

Some candidates integrated SCG material into their answer by considering 17th century notions of the divine right of kings. Some managed to make the themes of usurpation, colonialism and Jacobean attitudes to 'magic' relevant to the extract also.

Candidates need to be reminded that they can earn credit by explicitly referencing the style and genre of the play in their answers and in their suggestions for realising the extract (or wider play) in the theatre.

## *Death of a Salesman*

### Question 3

- (a) **How would you perform the role of LINDA at selected moments from the extract to convey her protective attitude towards WILLY?**

This was a popular question that demanded a performer's perspective and a focus on conveying Linda's protective attitude towards Willy.

There were some accomplished responses to the question that revealed some sensitivity in the treatment of Linda and her unconditional love and loyalty towards Willy, despite his frequently irascible treatment of her.

At the beginning of Act Two, Linda is at her most hopeful as she believes that Willy has abandoned his suicidal thoughts. Some candidates wrote in good detail about Linda's fussing over Willy – as if she was his mother rather than his wife – as a number of candidates remarked.

The strongest answers contained detailed performance suggestions for a fully naturalistic interpretation of Linda, revealing her wifely indulgence of Willy's idiosyncrasies, as she overlooks his occasional 'testiness' and tries to persuade him to adopt an optimistic view of the future.

Some very good answers dealt with small details such as the way that Linda might handle items that she was passing to Willy and the way she straightened his clothes, adjusted his hair, hat or tie or helped him into his jacket.

The best answers contained detailed performance ideas to accompany the delivery of lines that were, in turn, given precise attention in terms of tone, volume and pace.

In short, the character of Linda was interpreted in some detail with particular attention to revealing her protective attitude towards her husband.

- (b) **Explain how your direction of selected moments from the extract would convey the new mood of optimism of WILLY and LINDA. You may support your ideas with reference to design elements.**

There were too few responses to this option to draw many inferences.

Candidates tended not to support their directorial ideas with reference to design elements, or if they did, they confined themselves to lighting to emulate sunshine and sound to suggest the spring-like sound of birdsong – both of which were apt suggestions.

## Section B

### Medea

#### Question 6

- (a) How would you direct two separate sections involving minor characters to help the audience understand MEDEA's despair? You may select sections that include one or more of:
- NURSE • TUTOR • AEGEUS.

No answers to this question were seen.

- (b) How would your performance of JASON in two or more separate sections engage audience sympathy as he moves from greatness to catastrophe?

Of the very small number of answers to this question, none focused on the terms of the question in a meaningful way. One or two used the term 'sympathetic' but none considered the scope of the question, a consideration of Jason's fall from 'greatness to catastrophe'.

Instead, these answers contained at least 80 per cent of matter related to the history of the development of Greek theatre, leaving barely any space for a proper investigation of the question focus. More than one candidate 'sandwiched' some reasonable details about the character of Jason between two 'slabs' of historical/theatrical context with predictably limited results.

## SCG

There were no successful responses to this aspect of the question in this series. As reported previously, the inclusion of a potted history of the development of Greek theatre is not a purposeful way to approach the inclusion of SCG.

### The Seagull

A minority choice in the November series.

#### Question 8

- (a) How would you direct two sections of the play where four or more characters interact to create your intended effects for the audience?

No responses to this question were seen.

- (b) How would you perform the role of TRIGORIN in two or more separate sections of the play to convey your interpretation of his character?

Of the very few candidates who attempted this question none succeeded in offering interpretative statements about Trigorin that in any way appeared to reflect the character as written by Chekhov.

There was, at best, a superficial understanding of Trigorin's 'friendliness' and of his 'love' for Nina.

One candidate offered comments about Trigorin's feelings, but negligible precise details of how the role might be performed were seen.

## SCG

No meaningful reference to the style, genre or context of *The Seagull* was offered in this series.

### The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-Time

#### Question 9





**(a) How would you perform the role of CHRISTOPHER in two or more separate sections to achieve your intended audience responses?**

Several candidates attempted this question, although their success depended upon how closely they had read the demands of the question and on how far they understood what an 'audience response' to Christopher might mean.

Most candidates who wrote about performing Christopher, did so without apparently having given any consideration to how the playwright intended an audience to respond to the play's central character. In the majority of answers, no 'audience responses' were identified.

Most candidates wrote about 'showing' the audience a variety of Christopher's traits, and these ideas could be credited where practical suggestions were valid. However, the aim of 'showing' the audience what Christopher's 'neutral state' is, or of 'trying to communicate' 'the daily struggles one with autism may face' are not 'audience responses' and could not be credited as such.

Answers that did not address the crux of the question, i.e. to perform the role 'to achieve your intended audience responses', rarely achieved a level beyond the 'entry mark' for the 'workable' band, however detailed their practical suggestions were.

Several candidates hoped to perform Christopher in such a way as to increase the audience's understanding of 'neurodiversity' but this aim – worthy though it may be – is not the same as eliciting a response to an individual character, which is what Christopher is.

In the answers of a tiny minority who did understand the demands of the question, proposed audience responses included, for example: empathy for his individual struggles, respect for his determination to solve the mystery of Wellington, amusement at his often literal interpretation of the world and/or in his exchanges with Mrs Alexander, sympathy when he discovers Ed's deceit, admiration, as he battles his phobias to find his mother, concern for him when he is faced with Roger's animosity, delight for him when he is reconciled with Ed and when he achieves his A grade.

**(b) How would you create comedy for your audience through your direction of two separate sections of the play?**

No answers to this question were seen.

**SCG**

As has been reported in previous series, very few candidates seemed to appreciate the actual genre of this play – many suggested it is a murder mystery or a 'Brechtian' play but very few alluded to 'physical theatre'. Much misunderstanding of Brecht's work was in evidence. Frantic Assembly's style occasionally influenced movement work.

# DRAMA

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<p><b>Paper 9482/02</b> <b>Practical Drama</b></p>
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## **Key messages**

- It is essential that the scripted performance allows all performers the opportunity to have similar levels of exposure.
- In devised work, it is important for the stimulus to be clear so that the piece has a clear sense of purpose and intention.
- The reflective account should be a structured reflection based on the details of the devised piece rather than an improvised commentary to camera.

## **Administration**

The November series for this syllabus was much smaller than in June and there were very few issues of administration.

There were some issues with candidate identification in the performances and Moderators had to spend additional time working out the identity of each to ensure that the correct candidate was being watched. Centres are reminded that a full description of appearance should be included on the ICMS forms, and that each candidate should announce their name and candidate number at the start of each piece.

## **Devised Piece (30 marks)**

The quality of work was variable.

There were several very strong pieces where the candidates had worked creatively from the stimulus through to a well-structured performance that drew the audience into an engaging piece of theatre. This was generally supported by a workable structure for the piece, with agile movement between scenes/episodes and a good sense of pacing.

Several weaker pieces got caught up unhelpfully in the subject matter of the performance, which had become of greater interest to the candidates than the means of turning it into performance work. This was often an issue where the piece explored a contemporary global challenge, such as sustainability, people trafficking or political corruption, and where there was so much potential source material that candidates were unable to select and refine. In other cases, the group had clearly decided what they wished their piece to be about in advance of choosing a stimulus and then tried to back-read their piece into what they had chosen.

## **Self Evaluation**

These were mainly competent, with a few very strong submissions and some very weak ones.

The strongest submissions engaged with the working process and how they went about translating their ideas into a well-shaped performance. To do this in three minutes was a challenge but these candidates were able to say a lot in a short space of time, not by talking quickly, but by slimming down the number of points this wished to make and making high-level points supported by a few detailed examples.

There were other candidates who read a blow-by-blow commentary of the piece, which produced a mid-band response and a worryingly high number who appeared to be making it up as they went along, remembering apparently random aspects of the piece and even looking forlornly around for inspiration.

### Scripted piece

As may be seen from the list below, the choice of repertoire overlapped significantly with that offered in previous sessions.

The strongest performances inhabited the thought world of the play and conveyed a powerful sense of ensemble, which had the potential to sustain audience engagement for the full duration of the piece. These pieces had the ability to present a selection of well-rounded characters, each with a clear performance delineation.

Weaker work communicated little to the audience and was typified by undifferentiated pacing and delivery and character realisation that did little justice to the nuances of the performance text.

Richard Bean	<i>One Man, Two Guvnors</i>
Samuel Beckett	<i>Waiting for Godot</i>
Caryl Churchill	<i>Top Girls</i>
Nick Dear	<i>Frankenstein</i>
John Godber	<i>Teachers</i>
Henrik Ibsen	<i>A Doll's House</i>
Tony Kushner	<i>Angels in America</i>
Harold Pinter	<i>The Caretaker</i>
Neil Simon	<i>The Odd Couple</i>
John Steinback	<i>Of Mice and Men</i>
Sophocles	<i>Antigone</i>
Tom Stoppard	<i>Rosencrantz and Guildenstern are Dead</i>
Oscar Wilde	<i>An Ideal Husband</i>
Tennessee Williams	<i>A Streetcar Named Desire</i>

# DRAMA

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<p><b>Paper 9482/03</b> <b>Theatre-Making and Performing</b></p>
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## **Key messages**

- Centres need to refer closely to the syllabus requirements for this component and conduct appropriate research.
- The exploration of practitioners/traditions/styles should ideally be supported with research beyond the performance investigation of one developed professional work with appropriate qualities from which to draw an understanding of practitioner /tradition/style in practice.
- Making clear and appropriate links in individual performance is essential for a successful presentation.

## **General comments**

Nine centres entered for November assessment, with small candidate entries. All centres are advised to review previous Examination Reports before embarking on this component. These are intended to provide supportive information to all centres entering for this component.

The necessary administration documentation was usually completed fully and submitted with the work. The Group Devised Cover Sheet is essential in providing a case study statement informing of the investigation of practitioner, tradition or style and the work that was investigated for the Group Devised performances. Some statements extended beyond the end of the box available on the form and so were not fully readable. The essential information to be provided is the practitioner/tradition/style selected; the professional production investigated from which the distinctive traits of the practitioner/tradition/style could be drawn; and the research activities undertaken using appropriate literary sources and practical activities. Some reference to individual contributions to the process may be made if it is judged by the teacher/ assessor that this will aid moderation. It is not expected that individual candidates will each produce a case study statement nor should the case study statement offer an extensive narrative of the devising process.

The Individual Candidate Mark Sheet (ICMS) should be completed in full to assist the moderator to follow the judgments made by the teacher/assessor. The boxes for identification in Group Devised Performance and Theme/title for Individual Presentation must be completed also. Assessment comments on the ICMS forms were usually very helpful in identifying where credit had been awarded.

Candidates were identifiable in video recordings of performances. Video recordings must be from a single camera without editing of any kind. Two-camera submissions edited between near and far views are not appropriate. A full body view of the performer(s) and stage should be maintained throughout, particularly in Individual Presentation. Pan and zoom of the single camera to follow movement on stage. The purpose of the video recording is to provide the moderator with a view similar to that of the audience present at the event. Televisual camera techniques are therefore to be avoided.

Quality of recordings was generally good and usually in good lighting. Low lighting should be avoided. Centres are advised to check the quality of camera and sound equipment and stage lighting in a full test recording, before making the final examination recording.

In all instances for this component, the stage should be set for that performance. Assessed performance on a stage set for another event is not appropriate. There were no design option candidate submissions. In more than one centre's work and in both devised and individual presentations, additional non-assessed participants appeared as part of the performance. Please note that non-assessed participants should only be used where there is a single candidate undertaking a group presentation. In this case there should ideally be only one non-assessed participant.

In Individual Presentation a second person on stage is rarely necessary and should be present only as an object to which the candidate addresses their words and must not engage in any way in the presentation.

For this component there should not be audience participation as part of any assessed performance.

The maximum group number of five must also not be exceeded.

For this component there should not be audience participation as part of any assessed performance.

In Group Devised Performance, to include performers assessed for a different qualification or for Component 02 is likely to limit performance outcomes for this 03 Component where any degree of compromise with other performance is made. This is likely to reduce the rigorous application of the necessary stylistic requirements for this component.

### **Comments on specific tasks**

#### **Devised Performance and Evaluation (40 marks)**

##### *Devising*

Group Devised Performances were mostly within the maximum time limit. Part of the assessment for devising skills should include the ability to shape material to remain within the specified maximum time.

In more than one instance, the requirements for devising were not followed as stated in the syllabus:

*Each group of candidates chooses **one** practitioner, tradition or style from the list and carries out an investigation and Candidates must investigate **one** professionally performed production, either current or historic, that represents the work of their chosen practitioner or bears the hallmarks of their chosen tradition or style. (page 31)*

A short list of examples is given on page 16 of the syllabus. From this it should be clear that where it is a practitioner that is selected from the list, one of that practitioner's works will be investigated. There is not the option to investigate additional dramatists or works of interest considered to have some relevance to the first. This would conflate the two and lose clarity of focus on the named work of the listed practitioner.

Where a tradition or style is selected, centres should ensure that candidates focus their investigation on one professionally performed work which *bears the hallmarks of their chosen tradition or style*. (page 15)

Centres should be aware that contemporary theatre companies will not usually perform in a historical manner to closely replicate a style from an earlier age. Contemporary productions of a listed practitioner which are not directed by that practitioner may also adapt and blend relevant stylistic or practitioner elements with other directorial and staging techniques to engage a modern audience.

It is advisable therefore to approach the investigation while undertaking research from appropriate literary sources to identify stylistic features for devising, with the question - *To what extent does this investigated work represent the distinctive traits of the practitioner, tradition or style chosen?*

A professional production investigation should be of a developed work of theatre. Performance sketches and shortened adaptations of work from a second genre showing some elements of the style chosen for investigation are unlikely to provide an adequate model from which the distinctive traits for effective devising can be identified and drawn.

Devising which approached the practitioner or investigated work as a stimulus more than as source for close investigation from which to identify and apply the distinctive traits of the practitioner tended to show general understanding and some application of the chosen practitioner's style.

With regard to performance content, the syllabus states - *The group performance does not have to reproduce the content or themes of the 'investigation production' but should be appropriate to the application of the chosen practitioner, tradition or style.* (page 16) It should be clear through appropriate research, however, that some themes and approaches may be specific to a practitioner or chosen playwright within a tradition or style, and/or that certain situational content is a feature of the tradition or style itself. As such some subject matter may have identifiable traits of that practitioner or style. This should become evident from

basic research for example, into *Brecht*, *Commedia dell'Arte*, *Katie Mitchell*, *Farce*, *Revenge Tragedy* and to various extents *Absurd Drama*, in which the range of playwrights may demonstrate a variety of concerns. Where that is found to be the case, to include those themes and approaches may be appropriate when aiming to align the devised work to that of the chosen practitioner, tradition or style.

It was not always apparent that candidates had considered the bullet point list to aid the investigation given on page 16 of the syllabus.

All italicised syllabus references above may be found on pages 15, 16 and 31 of the syllabus.

### *Written evaluations*

Candidates were careful to meet the written limit of 800 words. Some marking of the written evaluations for the Group Devising showed generosity in the application of the assessment criteria for evaluation. The majority of evaluative commentary seen tended towards a review of the performance outcome more than analysis of the process. The marking descriptors are clear that for marks in the upper range the evaluative account should aim to be reasoned and analytical, focused on the process of devising and of the individual's contribution to the success of the outcome.

Centres should be careful to align the marking to the appropriate level for AO4 Quality of Analysis and Evaluation taking into account both descriptors at each level.

In their account, candidates should aim to justify their decision-making as it related to the chosen practitioner, tradition or style and to the work investigated.

### **Individual performance (20 marks)**

Most Individual presentations were of an appropriate length. It is an expectation that the candidate will refine their work in rehearsal to meet syllabus requirements. Assessment should include the candidate's ability to shape material to remain within the specified maximum time. Material beyond the maximum length should not be included in marking.

Candidates showed good and sometimes excellent commitment to their work. All texts should be introduced as they are about to be performed. This was not always clearly apparent. The syllabus is clear that linking material should be brief. This includes introductions, some of which were excessively long. It should be considered in a context of 6–8 minutes performance and a minimum of three texts, that as a general guideline, an introduction or link between pieces approaching a minute or more in length would become a substantial part of the presentation, drawing attention away from the focus on the texts.

It is for the candidate to offer a mode of address which they consider appropriate and with clear differentiation between a spoken link and a text performance in the progression of their programme of pieces. It must be clear by voice and manner when the candidate is presenting a text and when they are making a link, and the division points between candidate links and performed texts should be clearly distinguishable to an audience. Most candidates achieved this with good clarity.

The focus of the presentation, including the linking material, should be on the texts. While introducing the texts and making the links candidates should not be drawn into a personal statement or discussion of the subject of the theme. To use quotations as links does not clearly introduce the next piece and blurs the distinction between a link and a text.

There is no category of spoken or written texts in English that is not permitted for presentation. The sole exception is those texts set for Component 01 written examination, which may not be used for Component 03 performance as stated on page 17 of syllabus subject content.

Whilst song is not specifically excluded, centres should be aware that musical performance is not assessable in Group Devised or in Individual Performance.

Candidates may not perform any text in a language other than English. Texts translated into English from another language are entirely acceptable.

### **Examples of selected texts for November 2023**

Cambridge International Advanced Subsidiary and Advanced Level  
9482 Drama November 2023  
Principal Examiner Report for Teachers

<b>Theatre Traditions and Styles</b>	
<i>Revenge tragedy</i>	<i>Hamlet</i>
<i>Absurd Drama</i>	<i>Happy Days, Waiting For Godot</i>
<i>Farce</i>	
<i>Commedia dell'Arte</i>	
<b>Practitioners</b>	
<i>Bertolt Brecht</i>	<i>The Caucasian Chalk Circle, Mother Courage And Her Children</i>
<i>Kneehigh Theatre Company</i>	



# DRAMA

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<p><b>Paper 9482/04</b> <b>Theatre in Context</b></p>
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## **Key messages**

The choice of an appropriate research question or statement is crucial in that it guides the direction of the essay. A well-focussed, specific research question or statement is key to accessing the full range of marks available.

A literary analysis of practitioners' work cannot score highly. The same may be said of essays with too much emphasis on socio-historical content. The focus should be on theatre-making which implies practical, applied techniques and methodology with illustrative examples. Extended biographical accounts of practitioners' lives are unlikely to be marked positively.

Candidates need to avoid the dangers of a socio-political 'soapbox' approach where they present a personal opinion.

Over dependence on cultural contexts encourages a literary approach and textual analysis which reduces opportunities to access the mark scheme. A common problem may be found in approaches such as 'How is the playwright's intention/philosophy portrayed?' These tend to be philosophical or literary discussions with little opportunity to access marks at AO1 B.

The format specified is that of an academic research essay which should adhere strictly to the word limit, should be thoroughly referenced with citations in accord with a recognised style guide and include a full bibliography (including web sites accessed by date). Failure to follow this guidance will result in lower marks.

## **General comments**

As last year, there was a range of work with some excellent essays that proposed a clear question, with a suitable scope for the parameters of the task, and a clear response that used a carefully selected range of sources appropriately.

The strongest essays consistently engaged with the question set and regularly returned to explicitly answer it.

They were well referenced but also founded in a research question that enabled the candidate to consider in depth the practicalities of performance, directing or theatre-making. Additionally, they also took care to analyse the material under discussion and critically evaluate the work of practitioners.

Weaker essays usually struggled from having either no clear research question or one that was too broad to meaningfully explore salient material within the word count given. It is advisable for schools to read carefully the instructions for the task as provided on pages 41 and 42 of the published syllabus.

Weaker responses also often lacked specific exploration of theatre-making when the research question was not focused on specific plays or theatrical styles.

Unsubstantiated statements and general or personal assumptions should be avoided, especially so in the research question. An example of this would be the research question/title 'Why is Greek Tragedy so Alive today?' Alternatively, if such a statement is included as a quotation in the body of the text it should be cited against its origin and used as a starting point for analysis and evaluation.

Care should be taken to address the need for critical evaluation at AO4 D for which ten marks are available. Much of the analysis was not primary or critical in nature but secondary and often generic, having been garnered 'second hand' from cited sources.

Musicals proved a popular choice and where two cited specific productions were used to compare and contrast directors, writers, performance styles or design topics this did enable candidates to clearly discuss performance and theatre-making with a good deal of depth.

Careful consideration should be given to the selection of illustrative figures or images. Generic, stock images are not helpful and candidates should think carefully about their selection. Wherever possible images should be well-researched and taken from relevant sources or specific productions – to further illustrate a design idea for example.

In summary, the strongest work was characterised by the following:

- a passion for the chosen topic
- a well-chosen question/title
- thorough research and exploration
- highly relevant, well-referenced/cited sources
- clear examples of wider reading/viewing as noted in a comprehensive bibliography
- a clear, concise conclusion
- well-researched and carefully selected illustrative figures.

The importance of teacher/centre guidance in making the right choices with regard to the title or research question or statement cannot be over-emphasised; ensuring that the essay is written under the correct parameters is crucial to achieving the higher mark bands.

As noted above, the most successful essays had a carefully crafted question that allowed sufficient scope to meet the demands of the task. Stronger work repeatedly sought to explicitly address the question whilst demonstrating Knowledge and Understanding of practical aspects of theatre-making with a good level of analysis and evaluation. An example of a very mature and capable essay was one in which the author explored the relationship between Shakespeare's women and the misogynistic portrayal of women in theatre – skilfully linking modern and historical productions. This essay demonstrated a highly accomplished exploration of concepts and ideas with seamless blending of knowledge, understanding, analysis and evaluation.

Weaker essays often included extensive narration and/or biographical information that did not precisely relate to the focus of the question. Weaker responses often lacked specific exploration of theatre-making when the research question was not focused on specific plays or theatrical styles. This could lead to research essays that were mostly re-explaining a theatre practitioner's theory without examining the way in which it is or has been applied to theatrical performance.

Common issues affecting approaches to this component are typified by candidates not fulfilling the requirements of the task. Examples of this include:

- Not taking full advantage of the word allowance (essays were often shorter which perhaps prevented enough detail and opportunity to analyse/evaluate). The word count is specified as '2,500 – 3,000' on p. 41 of the syllabus and this is repeated on p. 42 along with the admonition to 'not exceed 3,000'. Those candidates who wrote beyond the maximum words of 3,000 were self-penalising because examiners stopped marking at the count limit and hence candidates may have lost marks they might have earned by a well-written conclusion.
- Not referring to guidance provided in the syllabus on p. 41 where it explains what the essay 'must' explore and which 'one or more' aspects should be its focus.
- Several essays did not include a bibliography although some did include in-text references. The task requires a bibliography. Conversely, sometimes a bibliography was included but in-text references were not. On p. 42 of the syllabus it states 'candidates must present their findings in accordance with the conventions of academic writing, including thorough referencing of sources and a full bibliography'.
- Some responses incorporated wild, unsubstantiated sweeping statements along the lines of – 'it is clear practitioner X changed the world of theatre as we know it today'.

Positive approaches include:

- candidates replicating the work of practitioners with fellow students in their own centres; this is a potentially rich area for primary research and often produces fascinating results
- well-written, concise introductions that draw the reader in
- effective conclusions which unite the points contained in the essay and which demonstrate the criteria of Analysis and Evaluation very well.

### **Comments on specific criteria**

#### **Criteria A.**

For a great many candidates, this criteria remained the strongest, with many demonstrating very good knowledge and understanding. As reported last year, schools should insist on candidates providing bibliographies and in-text citations. Some essays were missing both elements. Candidates should be encouraged to carefully cite all sources they have considered, including visuals, which also need to be titled as figures. This is not just necessary for academic convention but is a useful way for them to demonstrate their familiarity with the available literature and of a 'good' or 'wide' range of supporting evidence.

#### **Criteria B.**

Again, this was the second strongest criteria with many essays showing a good level of understanding of the practicalities of theatre-making. The Strongest work had carefully selected illustrative details that very effectively communicated and supported the points made. However, work that strayed from the parameters of the task into other areas (as outlined above) often struggled to score well here. There are still some candidates approaching the task as they would for the IGCSE 0411 course giving a blow-by-blow account of their directorial choices. Candidates need to be reminded that this is primarily a research task and not a director's notebook. One essay on Beckett and existentialism, for example, focused a great deal on the candidate's personal directorial choices at the expense of appropriate research.

#### **Criteria C.**

There was a range of marks in evidence here with some candidates analysing the artistic intentions and the creative approaches various practitioners have adopted. Sometimes the research question gave a clear focus on artistic methodologies which in turn helped structure the output to achieve the marks. A good percentage of candidates did try, to some degree at least, to offer analysis with perhaps more of them securing marks in the 'competent' band than last year.

#### **Criteria D.**

As with **Criteria C**, there tended to be a mix of achievement levels here with some well sustained and well-developed evaluation and some work with superficial and occasional comments. Again, it seemed much easier for candidates to be evaluative if they had created questions that clearly prompted an evaluative response (e.g. 'to what extent has Ancient Greek theatre influenced...?') Weaker essays tended to offer occasional evaluative points, and these tended to remain general and superficial. A few times, candidates were clearly fans of a practitioner and passionately repeated their admiration for the work but unfortunately they failed to develop this further to offer a (well) developed evaluation. As has been noted above, referred or 'second hand' evaluative comment taken from others does not constitute rigorous analysis. Such analysis should be the product of the author, not of others.