

DRAMA

Paper 0994/12
Written Paper

Key messages

Several candidates lost marks because their answers did not meet the question requirement. It would be helpful if centres could remind and encourage candidates to take time to read the question carefully.

Some candidates continued answering questions into the space allotted to the following question making it impossible to view the complete answer within the online marking system. Answers to **Questions 1** and **2** were where this happened most frequently. This entailed examiners having to switch back and forth between parts of the paper to ensure that all pieces of an answer were seen and marked. It would be helpful if centres could explain to candidates that if they need to exceed the allotted writing space for **any** question they should request an extension booklet and clearly indicate which question is being continued. This applies to all material which will not fit into the specified writing sections of the examination paper.

General comments

A large number of candidates did not take note of the number of marks available per question, which is given in brackets, and they wrote at length on **Question 1**, **Question 2** and **Question 3** where there was a maximum of two or three marks available, while writing significantly less for **Questions 4 – 11**, which were worth considerably more marks.

Candidates should focus their discussion primarily on the practical application of drama skills. Many marks are lost where candidates give narrative description or character analysis.

For longer answers, as required from **Question 6** onward, centres are requested to highlight the need for focused and precise writing. Many answers that are long and detailed include irrelevant or repeated material.

Comments on specific questions

Section A

Question 1

The vast majority of candidates were able to suggest a costume for DR. FROBISHER and say why it would be appropriate.

Question 2

Most candidates were able to identify three different pieces of performance advice to the actor playing the role of ANDREW CROCKER-HARRIS.

Question 3

The majority showed good awareness of the possibilities for playing the role of FRANK HUNTER to show his relationship with MILLIE CROCKER-HARRIS.

Question 4

Most answers showed some understanding of how the actors playing ANDREW CROCKER-HARRIS and TAPLOW could emphasise the imbalance of power between them in the passage although in a number of cases this occupied a limited range, e.g. mostly vocal, or mostly postural. The most successful answers considered all the opportunities open to the actors including vocal, physical, proxemic relationships and use of set and props.

Question 5

A number of candidates interpreted the requirement for 'one design decision' as meaning one design feature or element; a focus on the screen obscuring the entrance to the CROCKER-HARRISES' sitting-room, for example. In one or two exceptional cases this provided a very detailed, well thought-out response. In most instances, however, the choice of a single design feature did not demonstrate an understanding of the purpose of theatrical design as a decision making process and was unable to score higher than Band 2 of the mark scheme.

Question 6

A number of candidates were able to offer some understanding of how to direct the passage, with some specific examples but many tended to focus solely on acting skills. Where this was the case, opportunities to access the full range of marks was curtailed by vague suggestions such as 'I would use facial/physical expressions'. Such non-specific directions cannot be credited.

Section B

Question 7

The majority of answers were able to state which aspects of the character of NABEEL they would emphasise and, in many cases, this was well supported by close reference to the text. However, a number of answers neglected to discuss the application of practical process. Responses which did not include any indication of how these characteristics could be conveyed could not be awarded marks above Band 3 of the mark scheme.

Question 8

Most candidates showed an awareness both of set design challenges and that their suggestions needed to be flexible enough to allow for the events in the plot. Several answers provided a sound and very comprehensive appreciation of the possibilities. More detailed answers demonstrated an ability to develop the cultural references in the text in design terms.

Question 9

Most candidates demonstrated a good grasp of where and how they would create points of dramatic tension in the extract. Opportunities, generally, were clearly recognised and candidates were for the most part able to make workable suggestions of how these could be realised. However, there is an assumption that as far as lighting is concerned, colour equals emotion. For example, many candidates continue to believe that in a naturalistic setting, it is appropriate to flood the set with red light to indicate danger or anger for example. Such responses cannot score above Band 4. The same is true of follow spots, the use of which is incongruous within the action of a naturalistic play.

Section C

Question 10

Although the focus of this question was on the devising process, a high proportion of responses saw the challenges in terms of group dynamics. Many responses cited personal and group issues such as lateness, absence, lack of time, etc. Other responses focused on the 'scriptwriting' process as opposed to the devising process whilst others saw the greatest challenge as being one of expanding the script to fill the designated playing time frame. Answers of this nature are unlikely to score higher than Band 4.

Question 11

The focus of this question is on the performance process and it is important that candidates keep this in mind. The majority showed themselves to have some understanding of how to use design elements within their performance with the majority choosing to concentrate on set and lighting and some also considering aspects of costume.

Those that quoted from the dialogue or highlighted a particular moment in the action to illustrate a specific point scored more highly. However, many candidates continue to lack confidence in their ability to evaluate, where success was often measured in terms of audience feedback and not on internal reflection.