

GCSE (9-1)

Examiners' report

DRAMA

J316

For first teaching in 2016

J316/04 Summer 2019 series

Version 1

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Introduction

Our examiners' reports are produced to offer constructive feedback on candidates' performance in the examinations. They provide useful guidance for future candidates. The reports will include a general commentary on candidates' performance, identify technical aspects examined in the questions and highlight good performance and where performance could be improved. The reports will also explain aspects which caused difficulty and why the difficulties arose, whether through a lack of knowledge, poor examination technique, or any other identifiable and explainable reason.

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. A full copy of the question paper can be downloaded from OCR.

Paper 4 series overview

It was evident this year that most centres had prepared candidates thoroughly for this exam and centres and candidates are again to be congratulated on their approach. There was an overall increase in the quality of candidate responses and it was clear that most centres had responded well to the areas for improvement highlighted in the 2018 Examiners' report. Examiners once again commented very favourably on the quality of the work presented for examination in all nine questions. Most candidates were organised and had prepared well for the examination. Examiners reported that it was evident that most candidates were well informed and often highly detailed in their responses and it was clear that many centres had engaged in much excellent preparation and exploratory work in order to develop the candidates' knowledge and understanding of their chosen text. It was also evident that the majority of candidates knew their texts well and they had risen to the challenges of the component, especially in relation to planning and preparing for this exam.

In general, many candidates had performed effectively and there were more candidates who performed well this year and fewer candidates who scored very low marks. All examiners noted that as most candidates had been prepared well for the examination element, they therefore wanted to give full and precise answers to demonstrate their knowledge and understanding. It was pleasing to see how knowledgeable some candidates were in using specialist terminology and examiners reported how encouraged they were with the way centres had prepared candidates to be able to meet the variety of requirements in this paper. It was also noted many times by all examiners that most candidates had coped well with the requirements of this examination and were very well prepared for most aspects of the paper. It was also pleasing that all seven set texts had once again been utilised by centres in the exam. This was reflected in the wide range of responses to the paper.

Guidance for centres on key areas for improvement

Practical exploration of the text aids candidate understanding. Candidates who had clearly explored the text from different perspectives were able to write confidently and creatively, demonstrating their knowledge and understanding. Candidates who did not, tended to rely on seen live performances of the text, which can prevent candidates from giving fully justified responses or drawing on their own practical exploration.

Understanding of key terminology as outlined in the specification needs to be addressed throughout the course to aid candidates understanding of the demands of the questions.

Make sure that candidates are familiar with all theatrical terms and concepts and that they are aware of the context/rationale/intentions of the play. It is advisable that some centres review the specification and familiarise themselves and candidates with key terminology.

Encourage candidates to use the keywords from exam questions to make sure that candidates are answering the question's focus. (Centres should emphasise to all candidates to read the questions very carefully and underlined the key words in the question.)

Encourage candidates to better understand the difference between description and analysis.

Examiners reported that a number of candidates had poor handwriting which was often aggravated by the use of a thick pen. Centres should impress on candidates that their writing must be legible and use an appropriate pen, as this can only enhance understanding for the examiner.

Section A overview

This section of the examination requires candidates to study and explore one chosen text from a list of seven identified within the specification. There are eight questions, each requiring a different response to a variety of skills needed to explore, develop and perform their chosen text. Candidates need to develop a good knowledge of the whole of the play from a director, actor and designer perspective with understanding informed by the original intentions of the playwright; the context of when it was written in relation to the social, cultural and political context; the creative challenges of the text for the director, actor and designers and how they could be met; the impact of the text on an audience and the potential responses to key moments; the role and impact of characters within the piece and how characterisation can be explored, developed and presented in performance.

It was evident that centres had taken on board advice from last year's report and advised candidates to be more concise with their responses to early questions in this section. Candidates were better at offering a level of detail required to meet the requirements of each question and answers were often precise, well constructed and informative. All examiners reported on how well candidates had developed their understanding in most areas of their chosen text, and how the candidate responses within the exam were often well informed and creative, with many candidates often successfully giving full and developed answers to most questions. Many candidates demonstrated a clear understanding and justified/explained their responses in this section. There was a real sense that many candidates were engaged in the texts chosen by centres and they demonstrated a clear understanding of the social, political contexts of their chosen texts.

Blood Brothers – Willy Russell
Death of a Salesman – Arthur Miller
Find Me – Olwen Wymark
Gizmo – Alan Ayckbourn
Kindertransport – Diane Samuels
Missing Dan Nolan – Mark Wheeler
Misterman – Enda Walsh

State the performance text you have studied:

1 From the list below, select the character from the performance text you have studied. Describe **two** ways an actor playing this role could deliver the line effectively in performance.

Blood Brothers

Mrs Lyons: 'They ... they say that if either twin learns that he was once a pair, they shall both immediately die.'

Death of a Salesman

Linda: 'I love him. He's the dearest man in the world to me, and I won't have anyone making him feel unwanted and low and blue.'

Find Me

Mark: 'I wish I didn't have to live at home. You never know what she's going to do next. I can't bring my friends to our house.'

Gizmo

Ben: 'And he smiles. It was the most frightening smile I've ever seen in my life. And then he turns and looks straight at me.'

Kindertransport

Helga: 'We all die one day, but jewels never fade or perish. Through our children we live. That's how we cheat death.'

Missing Dan Nolan

Pauline: 'I find myself feeling guilty if I enjoy myself ... feeling guilty about getting into a warm bed ... feeling guilty about having a hot meal.'

Misterman

Thomas: 'And I run! And run fast up over the hill and past the church! My good words sent burning about me. Inishfree once more all bad and diseased.'

Question 1

Name of character:

1

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.....

.....

2

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[4]

This question was answered well by most candidates. Candidates often accurately identified two clear ways of delivering the line as well as describing how and why this is effective in performance. Exemplar 1 exemplifies this, with the candidate being very clear on how they could deliver the line and the reaction/effect that this will have on all characters in the scene and the overall potential dramatic impact.

What did candidates do well?

Examiners reported many candidates structured their response in good detail, the most successful addressing the question in a way which allowed them to clearly state how they would deliver the line and then describing concisely the dramatic impact this would have. The majority of candidates focused on the delivery in terms of vocal skills and some successful responses referred to the use of physicality in order to bring an attitude to the forefront or a particular response from the audience. It was noted by examiners that most candidates were concise in their detail on this question for the marks available.

What did candidates find a challenge?

Some candidates did not address what was asked for by the question and did not offer a way of delivering the line or any description of how they could make the line effective in performance. Some candidates were not specific about the way in which the line could be delivered or simply stated a way of delivery with no description of how this would be effective. Some weaker responses suggested a vocal response but did not give any indication of the impact it might create or an understanding of the importance of the line and the character's situation when delivering it.

Exemplar 1

Name of character: Mrs Lyons

- 1 The actor would speed up after the pause went when saying 'they say that' to show she has thought of an idea and will stick to it. This shows her confidence that her plan will work and she doesn't feel guilty about exploiting Mrs Johnstone's lack of education.
- 2 The actor would use a serious tone at the end of the line to show that she wants to frighten Mrs Johnstone into leaving her child with her. It would show she has made up her mind and is determined to get what she wants.

[4]

Question 2

2 Describe **two** ways lighting **and/or** sound could be used to show tension at **one** moment in the performance text you have studied.

Moment:

1

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2

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[4]

This question was answered well by most candidates. Most candidates clearly identified a specific moment and then described a lighting/sound effect suitable to enhance/show the tension this would create, with many candidates offering an understanding of the potential impact their chosen effect will have on the moment. Exemplar 2 exemplifies this with the candidate being very clear on what lighting (a spotlight), and sound effect (a heartbeat), they would use and how this would enhance tension/reaction/effect within their chosen moment.

What did candidates do well?

Most candidates structured their response in good detail, the most successful addressing the question in a way which allowed them to clearly state their chosen moment and then describe the lighting/sound effect they would use to enhance the moment of tension. Examiners noted that there were some strong responses as to how the candidates chosen technical element would bring out tension and even move the action forward, with a good understanding of how lighting and sound can create mood and atmosphere. The best responses were often where candidates clearly justified how and why lighting and sound would be used in the moment chosen to successfully add tension.

What did candidates find a challenge?

Some candidates did not state their chosen moment or offered a response that addressed how lighting and sound could be used in two separate moments. Also, some stated the lighting/sound they would use but did not state how they could be used to show tension.

Exemplar 2

Moment: The end where Mickey shoots Eddie

- 1 I would have a spotlight on both twins and the lights dim on the rest of the stage to show that they have been broken apart. It would force you to look at them and focus on the action, creating tension as you cannot look away.
- 2 I would use recorded in sound of a heartbeat getting louder and louder to show panic rising in the two boys and create tension as the increasing volume leads to a climax.

Question 3

3 Select and name a **different** character from the performance text you have studied to the one you wrote about in Question 1.

Name of character:

Complete the boxes below to briefly describe **three** ways an actor playing this character could use physicality for their performance. Give a justified example for each, using the selected character.

Use of physicality	Justified example

[6]

This question was answered well by most candidates. Most clearly identified specific aspects of physicality for their chosen character and were able to offer some very sound justification of how this may be used/communicated in performance. Exemplar 3 exemplifies this with the candidate being clear on how an actor could use three aspects of physicality with justification of the reasons and effect that this will have on the character in performance.

What did candidates do well?

Most candidates used the table to good effect and were concise in their responses, listing the aspect of physicality clearly and justifying how this would be communicated by the character, in a precise manner. Strong answers often revealed that the candidate knew the character concerned well and had good suggestions as to how they might use physicality to convey meaning. Candidates were able to draw on their practical exploration of the text and this was evident in high scoring candidate responses, who could clearly explain and link physicality to their chosen character. The best responses were often where candidates had clearly explored characterisation in a practical way and could successfully demonstrate the elements they had used to develop the character.

What did candidates find a challenge?

Some candidates did not respond to this question from an 'actor' perspective. There were some responses which focused on how costume, staging and lighting could be used, rather than how the actor would use physicality. Some candidates also discussed voice and proxemics and although the question is an acting question and is looking for a response from an actor perspective, voice and proxemics are not physicality. A few candidates did not read the question fully and had used the same character listed in Question 1.

Exemplar 3

Name of character: Mickey

Complete the boxes below to briefly describe **three ways** an actor playing this character could use physicality for their performance. Give a justified example for each, using the selected character.

Use of physicality	Justified example
<p>Very bouncy and lively over the top movement</p>	<p>This would emphasise Mickey's young age, especially in the scene where his singing about being "nearly eight"</p>
<p>Having a swagger in his gait</p>	<p>This would show how outgoing and cocky Mickey is compared to Eddie. This could be shown in the scenes where both of the boys go to the cinema.</p>
<p>Having very closed off body language and shaking hands.</p>	<p>Showing Mickey's change mentally from being in prison and being on medication. expressions pronounced in the scene where Linda is trying to convince Mickey to stop taking his medication.</p>

Question 4

4 Imagine the performance text you have studied is to be staged in a **promenade** performance style.

Explain **three** advantages and/or disadvantages of staging the performance text in this style.

Advantage/Disadvantage 1

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Advantage/Disadvantage 2

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Advantage/Disadvantage 3

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[6]

There was a mixed response to this question. Examiners commented that some candidates did not understand what a Promenade performance style was. Those who did had answered with good knowledge and understanding and clearly identified the key aspects of this performance style and were able to offer very practical advantages/disadvantages, with very sound explanation. This question clearly outlined those candidates who were fully prepared for the examination and their understanding of key terminology as outlined in the specification. Exemplar 4 exemplifies this with the candidate being very clear on what Promenade style is and offering three clear aspects of this style which they explain in relation to their chosen performance text. It should be noted that the candidate's response for 1 and 3 are almost contradictory. Credit was given as the explanations for the advantage and disadvantage were different and clearly reflected the candidates reasoning.

What did candidates do well?

The best responses were often where candidates had explored the use of a Promenade style practically in rehearsal and given three full justifications of advantages/disadvantages for this performance style. Strong responses often revealed that candidates were able to use technical vocabulary well and were able to identify the impact on the audience of moving from location to location as well as challenges for the set and lighting designs.

What did candidates find a challenge?

Candidates' not understanding what Promenade style is was an issue. Several candidates confused Promenade with a Thrust style, whilst others focused on the performance style they had seen the text performed in. Some candidates did identify advantages/disadvantages but then did not explain or justify the reasoning behind this. Weaker responses often identified simple possible issues that could often relate to more than one staging idea and could not provide an explanation to support what they had identified.

Exemplar 4

Advantage/Disadvantage 1 ...A...disadvantage...of...using...promenade.....
...staging...is...that...when...the...audience...move...and...to.....
a...different...area...their...focus...could...be...lost...This...would...lead...
...to...them...becoming...uninterested...in...the...performance...as...
...the...story...would...feel...stagnant.....

Advantage/Disadvantage 2 ...A...advantage...of...using...promenade.....
...staging...for...this...performance...would...be...that...the...different...
...areas...and...sets...could...be...effectively...used...to...
...symbolise...settings...of...the...play,...therefore...
...enhancing...the...audience's...enjoyment.....

Advantage/Disadvantage 3 ...Another...advantage...about...using...
...the...use...of...this...staging...is...that...it...allows...the...
...audience...to...feel...involved...in...the...play.../story...
...as...the...audience...physically...move...with...the...action...
...happening.....

Question 5

5 Describe briefly **three** suitable stage (prop) items for **one** character from the performance text you have studied. Explain how each prop helps to reveal things about the character to the audience.

Name of character:

Prop 1

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Prop 2

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Prop 3

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[6]

This question was answered with good knowledge and understanding by most candidates. Candidates clearly identified the character and discussed suitable props; either used or could be used in performance, and were able to offer very practical ways of how each would help reveal aspects of character to the audience, often with very sound explanation/justification. Exemplar 5 exemplifies this with the candidate being clear on what props would be suitable for their chosen character (Verity), as well as offering three clear explanations of what each will say/reveal to the audience in relation to their chosen performance text.

What did candidates do well?

Many candidates were highly creative and suggested examples that were not specifically listed in the text, or used in a 'seen' performance, to good effect. In strong responses, candidates displayed their understanding of the text and explained how ideas are conveyed to an audience. Most candidates were able to clearly explain how each prop could be used to say something about the character and how props convey meaning to the audience, in a precise manner. Although not a requirement, strong responses from candidates also often identified a specific moment when a prop could be used for maximum audience impact. The best responses were often where candidates had discussed the chosen prop in a practical way and then suggested clear ways on how this could be used to reveal new aspects about the character with clear explanation which demonstrated a sound knowledge and understanding of the character.

What did candidates find a challenge?

Some candidates did not understand what a prop is or had not read the question fully and listed three props used by three different characters. Some candidates also discussed in detail how they would use a piece of set or an item of costume which was clearly not a prop. Credit was given for items of costume which could be used as a prop, for example Mrs Lyons, 'new shoes on the table'.

Exemplar 5

Name of character: Venity

Prop 1 Venity would have a yellow blanket, as yellow is her favourite colour. The blanket symbolises safety as many children have 'comfort blankets'. This shows to the audience that throughout her life Venity is looking for somewhere to feel safe and comforted, reassured by her favorite color that shows calmness.

Prop 2 Venity would have swimming goggles which emphasise her passion and love of swimming showing that just like any normal child, Venity has hobbies that bring her joy but that the goggles show that she just expresses these passions in a different way.

Prop 3 Venity would have a little poem book, showing to the audience that she forms is no different to any other children and shows that her love for poetry (in bonfire scene) relays that Venity is capable of connecting to other people through words and poems, and so just connects with people in a unique way. [6]

Question 6

6 When rehearsing, explain what improvisation methods could be used by **one** actor to develop the maximum impact in the **final scenes** or **final section** of the performance text you have studied.

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[8]

The responses to this question were varied. The wording of the question was highlighted as a potential issue as some candidates struggled with the term 'improvisation methods'. Thus, candidates tended to focus on this term rather than the opening two words, 'When rehearsing...', which in essence is what this question was about (the Improvisation methods an actor could employ in rehearsal to aid their performance in the final scenes of the play). There was also a clear distinction between candidates who understood the rehearsal process and those that focused purely on the term 'improvisation'. This was acknowledged within the mark scheme, and candidates were rewarded for discussing how/what improvisation could be used in performance, rather than purely in rehearsal, and credit was given for this. Candidates who did grasp the essence of this question, answered with good knowledge and understanding of how an actor can prepare through improvisation/rehearsal, to create impact/mood in the final scenes of their chosen text. Exemplar 6 shows this, with the candidate being very clear on what improvisation and rehearsal methods an actor could use to prepare for the final scenes (Stanislavski's 'Magic If', Hot Seating, Character research), as well as offering justification/explanation of how this will aid the actor in performance

What did candidates do well?

The strongest responses came from candidates who focused on the improvisation methods in rehearsal that an actor can employ to create mood and atmosphere, enhancing their preparation to perform the final scenes of the play. Some very successful responses were often where candidates had discussed how they had explored the moments in rehearsal and reflected the practical work they had produced, focusing clearly on one character and how the candidate would employ a variety of improvisation skills to create impact.

What did candidates find a challenge?

Some candidates responded to this question from a directorial viewpoint, stating how they would direct the final scenes with no link to improvisation. Others also focused on a technical and designer perspective, rather than how an actor can prepare to develop impact. It was also common for candidates to refer to several actors, not the one the question required.

Exemplar 6

For the character of Willy, the technique of the 'magic if', used by Stanislavski, would could place the actor in the mindset of character. ~~In the final scene~~ This would help them see why Willy decided to kill himself as they would place themselves in different scenarios and see how the character would react. This the actor could also use hot seating as a way of understanding Willy's mindset and how he sees the world around him. They would see his deep love for his family and perhaps feel sorry that he has been driven to such lengths for to make them prosper. By questioning the actions of Willy, the actor could see his reasoning. ~~and the~~ The actor ~~in~~ ~~the~~ ~~final~~ ~~scene~~ could also create a biography up to the point of the final scene to show ~~the~~ ~~character~~ the circumstances of Willy and everything that has led Willy up to his choice of suicide.

[8]

Question 7

7 Explain what important challenges there are for the set designer in communicating meaning to an audience at **one** key moment in the performance text you have studied.

Key moment:

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[8]

The responses to this question were varied and was answered well by some candidates. There was sometimes a lack of understanding of the role of a set designer, what constituted set and how meaning is communicated through set design. Those candidates who did understand the role of the set designer had a vision of what the set should look like and how meaning was to be communicated. Many candidates answered with very detailed knowledge and understanding in relation to period and discussed the historical, social, cultural and political context of the text, but did not link this clearly to the challenges faced by the set designer. Exemplar 7 exemplifies a strong response to this question with the candidate being very clear on what potential challenges a set designer would face at one key moment (when Mickey and Eddie first meet), as well as clear justification and explanation of how this will aid the communication of meaning, especially in relation to the social context of the play, in performance.

What did candidates do well?

Some candidates clearly discussed set design in relation to how meaning is communicated, often in relation to the period of their chosen text and justified the impact this would have on set design aspects. The best responses were often where candidates had highlighted one key moment from the text and discussed the challenges/potential set design with the meanings clearly highlighted. Strong responses were also often given by candidates who were able to highlight problems with set design and the most effective answers were able to convey a coherent, logical and effective design idea, with clear justification. Candidates who scored well on this question were able to identify a few challenges and were explicit about the challenges that faced the set designer. Clear examples of key moments within the moment were identified and discussed. Examples of how the challenge could be overcome were often provided and were fully justified.

What did candidates find a challenge?

Some candidates construed this question as one asking for an insight into the social context of the text and responded by detailing the amount of knowledge they had for the period in which the play was written or set. They negated to link this to potential challenges with set design elements and often offered only brief or no response to this. Some candidates' understanding of the role of a set designer was lacking which made it very difficult for candidates to do this question justice. There was often no discussion of set design ideas in relation to their knowledge and many candidates provided ideas that were not set design based at all. Candidates who struggled to attain higher marks for this question had usually did not answer the question in relation to set design.

Exemplar 7

- Key moment: When the boys meet. It may be hard for the set designer to communicate the joining of two social classes as they boys meet. This would be a challenge as the limited stage space would make it hard to exaggerate the differences between the neighbourhoods. It may also be a challenge to show that the two boys live in Liverpool. This is important as Willy Russell the play writer to set the play in Liverpool in order to highlight the challenges faced by those living there when the play was written. Another challenge for the set designer would have would be making the time period clear. This is important as the social context greatly influences the play's meaning therefore the audience must know the time period for the references in the play to be meaningful. Another important challenge would be to design the set that clearly communicates the importance of the boys first meeting as for the play audience to understand the significance of the meeting, the set design cannot distract from or impact the acting on stage.

Question 8

8 As a director, justify how you would direct the actors to highlight social context at **two** key moments in the performance text you have studied.

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[8]

This question was answered with good knowledge and understanding by most candidates. Many candidate responses justified clearly how a director could explore and highlight social context through direction of the actors in performance and identified two key moments within the text where they would do this to very good effect. Exemplar 8 exemplifies this, with the candidate being clear on what decisions a director could make towards highlighting social context, explaining how they would direct the actors to enhance this. Credit was given for the suggested costumes as it was deemed relevant to the directorial and social context impact and there was also reference to how this could/would be used to enhance this impact on the audience.

What did candidates do well?

Candidates who did well on this question had thought carefully about the decisions a director could make in relation to proxemics, use of voice, body language, gesture and other directorial aspects. These candidates had also discussed in some depth how directorial decisions can highlight social context and had identified what social context was. Many candidates clearly discussed positioning of characters on stage and the decisions a director would make in relation to characterisation at two key moments within the play and justified the impact this would have on the social context, often from both an actor and audience perspective. The best responses were often where candidates had highlighted clearly the social context and then had discussed how this could be conveyed in relation to directorial decisions, with justification of what and how a director would achieve this practically. Candidates who scored well on this question were able to identify two key moments and provide clear ideas on how they would direct the actors to explore the social context. They would be consistent in their approach for both key moments.

What did candidates find a challenge?

Some candidates focused solely on proxemics or levels and negated to discuss other aspects a director could employ to help to highlight social context, their response often in relation to one moment only. There was little discussion of the role of the director within this. There was a tendency from some candidates to focus on character costumes also and not discuss or justify the potential importance of this in highlighting social context. Some candidates also responded to this question in relation to the social historical and cultural elements of the text only, and this led to a number of candidates providing often detailed information about the events, time and period of the text, but little or no response of how/why a director could convey these elements through their directorial decisions toward the actors. Several potentially strong candidate responses also only focused on one key moment, rather than the two required for this question.

Exemplar 8

During the scene in the school playground, I would ~~not~~ direct all the mothers to stand waiting for their children in immaculate dresses and perfect hair, with Jean standing slightly apart and wearing a ~~dark~~ ^{dark} nice dress but with dishevelled hair, hunching over slightly. As Verity comes out the mothers would huddle together and turn their backs as Jean struggles. This would reflect the social expectation of a mother to look perfect whilst be a perfect mother, and those who didn't were regarded as ~~inferior~~ ^{inferior}. It also highlights ~~how~~ ^{the} the mothers' lack of understanding of Jean's position, their empathy overshadowed by the need to dissociate themselves with a 'lesser standard'. Their proxemics reflect this as Jean is not accepted. Another moment is the scene in which Verity has ~~an~~ ^{an} manic behaviour and screams 'I'm a bomb'. I would direct the other family members to look frightened and back away, as at this time there was a looming threat of nuclear war, and so Verity describing herself this way underlines the impact she had on others. I would direct Verity to use an excited tone and very loud ~~deep~~ ^{deep} voice to portray the intense meaning of her words, in order to reflect the threat she had, allowing the audience to draw a parallel to a real atom bomb.

Section B overview

This section of the examination requires candidates to evaluate the impact of the artistic intention in a piece of live theatre chosen by the centre or candidate.

The question is asking the candidate to analyse how successfully the artistic intention was communicated and the impact it had on them as an audience member.

It was noted by examiners that there were more candidates who did well on this question this year and far fewer candidates who scored very low marks. All examiners stated that it was clearly evident that most candidates had been taught and prepared really well for this aspect of the examination and therefore wanted to give full, informative responses, demonstrating a detailed knowledge and understanding. Most candidates had analysed from a personal perspective whilst demonstrating that they had a clear understanding of many key aspects of a live theatrical performance. Many candidate responses were insightful and balanced often revealing the candidate's detailed understanding of how drama and theatre are developed and performed and offering concise and thoughtful evaluation of the success of the artistic intention in performance.

It was again pleasing to note that only a handful of candidates had answered this question referring to the same performance text to the one they had studied for Section A. Also, nearly all candidates completed the 'Live performance information box' at the start of this question, writing the name, venue and date (month and year) of the live performance they have seen at the start of their response.

The variety and style of live performances offered was again immense, ranging from Pantomime to Greek tragedy, which is strength of this question. All pieces used had clear artistic intentions which could be discussed by the candidate. Examiners noted that most candidates seemed to have engaged with the productions seen, and often responded well as members of the audience. There were many very good examples of candidate responses this year and the knowledge and understanding of the performances artistic intentions, were clearly discussed and evaluated in many candidates answers. Some of the best responses revealed clear planning evidence, which although does not score marks, demonstrated that some thought into the structure and meeting the demands of the question has taken place, ensuring a more concise response.

It was also noted that there were a few prepared theatre reviews where candidates did not focus on the specifics of the question, rather offering an overall review of the performance. This was often prevalent when the candidate did not state what they thought the artistic intention was but just evaluated the performance.

Question 9

You must answer this question referring to a different performance text to the one you have studied for Section A.

Write the name, venue and date (month and year) of the live performance you have seen below. Include examples from this performance in your answer.

Name of live performance

Venue

Date (month and year)

9* Evaluate how successfully the artistic intention was communicated to you in the live performance you have seen.

In your answer, you should consider:

- what you felt the artistic intention was
- how effectively the actors communicated meaning to you in relation to the artistic intention
- how successful the directing and design were in helping you understand the artistic intention.

You should use appropriate drama and theatre terminology.

[30]

Exemplar 9 exemplifies a high level response with the candidate being very clear on what the artistic intention was and evaluating the decisions the director and designers have made towards communicating the meaning of the play. There discussion of how the actors were used, with accomplished description of acting techniques and key directorial decisions made to enhance the impact of the artistic intention, was consistent throughout this response, as well as the candidate explaining in depth how this has impacted on them, as an audience member.

What did candidates do well?

The most successful responses from candidates were those rooted in the question and which clearly discussed and evaluated the performances artistic intentions in relation to how meaning was communicated to them, as an audience member, rather than simply listing all aspects of potential intentions within the performance with no analysis. The best responses were often those that had a good blend of describing the key decisions made by the director, actors and designers to create meaning for the audience and were able to offer very strong, creative analysis of these decisions, both those which were effective and those that were unsuccessful in the production. Candidates who scored highly on this question were concise and had a clear structure, providing examples and analysis throughout whilst referring back to what they felt the artistic intentions was, throughout. It was evident that most centres had encouraged their candidates to write in a very positive manner about their experiences and this often revealed that candidates had genuinely enjoyed their live performance experience. Examiners commented that the technical vocabulary and line of reasoning offered by many candidates this year was pleasing and often revealed a strong sense of knowledge and understanding towards the overall evaluation.

Candidates who scored well in this question discussed and evaluated many of the following aspects:

- The impact the performance had on the candidate as an audience member.
- The impact of the artistic intentions on the audience was discussed in detail and showed an interpretation of themes and meanings for the audience.
- Clear evaluation of the decisions made by the director/designers/actors in relation to the style of the performance and the impact this had on the meaning of key themes/issues in communicating this to the audience.
- Clear evaluation of the strengths and weaknesses of how the artistic intentions were conveyed in the performance and the impact this had on them as an audience member with specific and detailed reference to the production.
- The positive and/or negative impacts of the artistic intentions within the performance were discussed with focus.
- Clear identification of the main artistic intentions and understanding of how some meaning could be conveyed to them as an audience member. High level responses constantly referred back to the artistic intention.
- What the actors did to enhance the communication of meaning in relation to the artistic intention by actions, voice, gestures, presence, costume, make up, etc.
- Clear examples used to support their evaluative statements about the performances artistic intentions and the impact of these on them, as an audience member and the overall impact in general.
- Clear examples used which were relevant to the performance seen, not dependent on the script.
- Higher grade responses from candidates offered effective examples throughout their response with detailed reference to the impact of many theatrical elements in creating meaning.
- The candidate's use of specialist drama and theatre terminology was highly developed and integrated throughout their response.
- Candidates offered a highly developed understanding of how the artistic intentions/meaning was communicated to an audience in a live performance and their line of reasoning throughout their response was well-developed, sustained, relevant and logically structured.

What did candidates find a challenge?

Some candidates did not respond to the question in a meaningful manner. Several candidates had also clearly responded to last year's question, 'the impact of one actor', with no reference to the artistic intentions. Their use of subject specific language and terminology was also often highly limited. Lower level responses tended to be more descriptive rather than analytical and evaluative and tended to present basic or limited opinions on the impacts of the artistic intentions in the production which focused on description. The examples given to support the candidates analysis lacked specific detail and tended to focus on only one or two aspects of the performance only and there was usually only a very tentative link made between the potential impact of the artistic intention and the audience's response.

Exemplar 9

The artistic intention of how Christopher's mental health and autism can affect his family relationships is shown throughout the play. At the beginning, the actor playing Christopher, Joshua Jenkins, Christopher was confronted by a policeman as he told the policeman in a monochrome tone with a low pitch, 'the dog is dead'. The actor playing Christopher, Joshua Jenkins, was stood with a straight posture, open and relaxed body language to present Christopher's obliviousness to the problem and how it looks like he did it. ~~He~~ When the policeman ~~find~~ tries to touch Christopher, Jenkins instantly ~~moves~~ changes the proxemics to far away and closes and tensed up his body language and curling into a ball. Jenkins also screams in a loud and high pitch tone and this contrast to his relaxed atmosphere as Christopher doesn't like to be touched and this was emphasised to the audience. This shows the artistic intention of Christopher's mental health and also presents the trust that Christopher has to his dad, mom and ~~Sibboham~~ as he allows them to sometimes touch him. This was successful because it warned me about his autism and struggles to interact with others.

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